



National Association of County & City Health Officials

The National Connection for Local Public Health

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## New NACCHO Survey Shows Local Health Departments Lost 16,000 Jobs in 2009

**Washington, D.C. (March 1, 2010)**—New data being released today illustrate the uphill battle that local public health departments are fighting as they struggle to provide Americans with basic disease prevention and emergency preparedness services in the face of budget cuts. The latest job loss survey by the National Association of County and City Health Officials (NACCHO) found that local health departments lost 8,000 jobs in the second half of 2009—compounding the loss of another 8,000 positions in the first half of the year. And a new report from Trust for America’s Health (TFAH) and the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (RWJF) underscores the survey results, finding that federal spending for public health has been flat for nearly five years while states around the country cut nearly \$392 million for public health programs.

In 2008, NACCHO found that local health departments had lost 7,000 jobs through budget-related cuts, layoffs, position eliminations and attrition. Combined with the 16,000 jobs lost in 2009, NACCHO estimates that about 15 percent of the local public health work force has disappeared in the last two years. For the better part of 2009, these strapped local health departments not only continued to make sure the school cafeteria and restaurant food that people ate was safe and to provide preventive services to reduce the toll of diseases such as diabetes and HIV/AIDS, but also responded to a new emerging threat—H1N1 influenza.

“While local health departments will do the best job they can with the resources available to them to protect Americans from public health threats, these data sound a warning,” said NACCHO Executive Director Robert M. Pestronk. “The cumulative effects of budget cuts and job losses have taken a major toll on the ability of health officials to respond not only to large-scale emergencies and disease outbreaks like H1N1 influenza, but to the everyday situations for which the health department is the first line of defense.”

Though its findings are sobering, NACCHO is grateful for the release of *Shortchanging America’s Health: A State-By-State Look at How Public Health Dollars Are Spent*, which recommends increased and sustained funding for public health. The report confirms NACCHO’s conclusions that, because public health jobs are being steadily lost, public health services are eroding at a time when increased investment in prevention is sorely needed to make America a healthier and more productive nation.

### About the National Association of County and City Health Officials

The National Association of County and City Health Officials (NACCHO) represents the nation's 2,800 local governmental health departments. These city, county, metropolitan, district and tribal departments work every day to protect and promote health and well-being for all people in their communities.

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