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State and Local Health Officials at the Capitol to Urge Congress to Prioritize Funding for Public Health

ARLINGTON, VA—Over 80 state, local, and territorial health officials from across the country will meet with members of congress on Capitol Hill together on March 13, 2019. The aim of their visits is to share the critical need to sustain investments in public health agencies that protect and promote the health of all Americans and prevent sequester cuts in the FY20 budget.

This is the first-time members of the Association of State and Territorial Health Officials (ASTHO) and the National Association of County & City Health Officials (NACCHO) will combine their annual Hill Days to show a collective voice for governmental public health at the Capitol.

Public health leaders are concerned about the impact of the potential \$55 billion cut to non-defense discretionary spending that will happen in FY2020 if Congress does not act to prevent it. ASTHO and NACCHO strongly urge Congress to work in a bipartisan manner to raise FY2020 budget caps and provide needed funding for non-defense discretionary programs, and support increasing CDC's budget 22 percent by FY22.

"Our entire governmental public health system is strained. My colleagues are on the ground dealing with several measles outbreaks, the opioid epidemic, and natural disaster recovery, all while continuing the core work of disease prevention—especially at the community level. Unfortunately, we are consistently underfunded and must do more with less. As a nation, we must do better and prioritize investing in public health," says Nicole Alexander-Scott, MD, MPH, ASTHO president and director of the Rhode Island Department of Health. "Every person and every community should have the opportunity to be as healthy as possible. As part of ASTHO's President's Challenge, additional federal resources will help equip health officials to mobilize community-led, place-based collectives to improve the way we live, work, and play."

"In the decade since the Great Recession, public health departments have lost about a fifth of their workforce due to funding issues and recovery has been slow at best. We see the impact of these resource losses on the health and well-being of our communities every day. In so many areas of public health, we know what works, but we don't have the resources to ensure that all Americans, no matter where they live, have access to the same basic public health infrastructure, services, and protections," says Kevin Sumner, NACCHO president and health officer/director for the Middle-Brook Regional Health Commission. "So much of our public health system operates silently in the background. By joining together on Capitol Hill, we will amplify our voice and spread the message of the importance of governmental public health in all sectors."

For more information on ASTHO's advocacy priorities, visit <http://www.astho.org/Advocacy-Materials/>.

For more information about the President's Challenge, visit <http://www.astho.org/ASTHO-Presidents-Challenge/2019/>.



For more information on NACCHO's advocacy priorities, visit [https://www.naccho.org/uploads/downloadable-resources/flyer legislativeagenda 2019.pdf](https://www.naccho.org/uploads/downloadable-resources/flyer_legislativeagenda_2019.pdf).

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ASTHO is the national nonprofit organization representing the public health agencies of the United States, the U.S. territories and freely-associated states, and the District of Columbia, as well as the more than 100,000 public health professionals these agencies employ. ASTHO members, the chief health officials of these jurisdictions, are dedicated to formulating and influencing sound public health policy and to ensuring excellence in public health practice.

The National Association of County and City Health Officials (NACCHO) represents the nation's nearly 3,000 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. For more information about NACCHO, please visit www.naccho.org.