

NEWS RELEASE SAMPLE



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NACCHO RECOGNIZES ELEVEN LOCAL PUBLIC HEALTH AGENCIES FOR PUBLIC HEALTH EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS

Project Public Health Ready Launches New Preparedness Measurement System

WASHINGTON, D.C. – As concerns over bioterrorism and other public health crises continue to plague U.S. communities, the National Association of County and City Health Officials (NACCHO) has recognized eleven local public health agencies for significant improvements in their ability to respond to public health emergencies. The agencies underwent reviews conducted by Project Public Health Ready, a first-of-its-kind partnership program developed by NACCHO with support from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the Columbia University Center for Public Health. Project Public Health Ready was established to help define local public health preparedness and develop a standard set of goals by which preparedness could be measured.

“These eleven local public health agencies have established models for ensuring complete public health emergency preparedness for the citizens of our country,” said Patrick Libbey, executive director of NACCHO. “There is much to be done at every level of the public health system, but this project gives local public health agencies a roadmap for meeting a core set of preparedness standards.”

To gain recognition, Project Public Health Ready required each site to achieve goals in three key areas: preparedness planning; individual worker competence; and demonstration of readiness through drills and exercises. The recognition confirms that a local public health agency has an emergency response plan in place, the plan is appropriately connected to other emergency response plans, agency staff members are trained, and the plan is exercised and used during public health and other community emergencies.

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Those agencies recognized are:

Allentown City Health Bureau - Allentown, PA
Berkeley City Public Health Department - Berkeley, CA
Cerro Gordo County Public Health Department - Mason City, IA
Kansas City Health Department - Kansas City, MO
Montgomery County Department of Health and Human Services - Rockville, MD
Seminole County Health Department - Sanford, FL
Tarrant County Public Health Department - Fort Worth, TX
Thurston County Public Health and Social Services Department - Olympia, WA
Tulsa City-County Health Department - Tulsa, OK
Needham Health Department - Needham, MA
Winnebago County Health Department - Rockford, IL

“NACCHO is already hearing from many more local public health agencies, and a number of states, asking if they can begin using the Project Public Health Ready process in their jurisdictions,” said Libbey. “Agencies realize that this is a valuable tool for improving local public health emergency preparedness.”

Local public health agencies that sought recognition underwent an evaluation process that included reviews by peer agencies and by three members of the Project Public Health Ready Oversight Council. The Council consists of eight local health officials and organizational liaisons from the Association of Schools of Public Health, the Association of State and Territorial Health Officials, the National Association for Local Boards of Health, the National Environmental Health Association, and the Public Health Foundation. NACCHO, CDC, and Columbia University Center for Public Health staff assist the Oversight Council.

For more information on Project Public Health Ready, go to www.naccho.org/project83.cfm.

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