



National Association of County & City Health Officials

*The National Connection for Local Public Health*

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**National Association of County and City Health Officials Applauds the Introduction of Public Health Workforce Loan Repayment Act in the Senate**

Washington, DC, May 14, 2020 – The [National Association of County and City Health Officials](#) (NACCHO), on behalf of the nation’s nearly 3,000 local health departments, released the following statement regarding today’s introduction of the Senate version of the Public Health Workforce Loan Repayment Act.

“Health department staff are on the front lines of the coronavirus response, protecting the public from this devastating virus. And they are doing so despite workforce cuts and tight budgets that make it difficult to recruit and retain the key talent needed to keep our communities healthy and safe. A federal Public Health Workforce Loan Repayment program is an important investment in strengthening health departments across the country,” said Lori Tremmel Freeman, NACCHO’s Chief Executive Officer. “We thank Senators Smith and Booker for taking this step to establish a system to help recruit and retain talented professionals to these critical jobs to support the coronavirus response and to strengthen health department capacity in the years to come.”

“The public health workforce is the backbone of our nation’s governmental public health system at the county, city, and state levels. Unfortunately, since 2008, local and state health departments have lost almost a quarter of their workforce, while still facing

challenging barriers to recruiting key positions and retaining experienced staff. That's why a coalition of more than 60 organizations has [joined together](#) to support the creation of a public health loan repayment program to help address some of these workforce pressures. New staff are joining many health departments to be part of the COVID-19 response. This bill would incentivize these new staff to stay in health departments and recent graduates to join health departments across the country. NACCHO calls on Congress and the Administration to advance this important program without delay and invest in the public health workforce overall and for the COVID-19 public health response."

The Public Health Workforce Loan Repayment Act would:

- Establish a loan repayment program for public health professionals who agree to serve two years in a local, state, or tribal health department.
- Make individuals accepted into the program eligible for up to \$35,000 annually for loan repayment each year of the program.
- Authorize \$200 million each year, starting in the current fiscal year until FY2025.

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### **About NACCHO**

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](http://www.naccho.org)