

For Immediate Release

Contact:

Theresa Spinner

Director, Media and Public Relations

Direct: 202-783-5551

tspinner@naccho.org

NEW STUDY EXAMINES PERSISTENT PUBLIC HEALTH WORKFORCE SHORTAGE

Washington, DC, May 3, 2016—A newly released study co-authored by LaMar Hasbrouck, MD, MPH, executive director of NACCHO examines the longstanding public health agency workforce shortage and why the current surplus of public health graduates may be reluctant to apply for available jobs in governmental public health. The study, "[Educational Pipeline / Public Health Workforce Mismatch—Can It Be Reconciled?](#)" was published in the May/June 2016 edition of [Public Health Reports](#).

Dr. Hasbrouck said, "We know that public health agencies have faced workforce shortages for well over a decade. And yet, schools of public health are graduating 69 percent more students than ten years ago. What explains this supply and demand imbalance? For instance, are salaries too low? Is applying for a governmental job so complicated that it discourages potential applicants? Do public health graduates feel they have acquired the right skills to succeed in a public health agency career? Our study is important, because we have made an evidence-based inquiry into the issue. We cannot rely on assumptions if we want to tackle the problem of public health agency workforce shortages."

Among their findings, the researchers learned that on average, public health salaries are not as low as commonly assumed. In addition, they noted that while a protracted hiring process has been cited in previous research to explain low job application rates, there is little real evidence to support this.

The researchers also asked whether the workplace shortages are, in fact, real. They concluded that much more study of these questions is needed. "Lacking research

examining these issues, including to what extent graduates desire vacant positions within the field and whether agencies feel they are qualified for these vacancies, public health agencies will remain uninformed and possibly misaligned with strategies to resolve these issues with evidence-based approaches.”

ABOUT NACCHO

The National Association of County and City Health Officials (NACCHO) is the national non-profit association representing the approximately 2,800 local health departments (LHDs) in the United States, including city, county, metro, district, and tribal agencies. NACCHO’s vision is health, equity, and security for all people in their communities through public health policies and services. NACCHO’s mission is to be a leader, partner, catalyst, and voice for local health departments in order to ensure the conditions that promote health and equity, combat disease, and improve the quality and length of all lives.

#