



February 9, 2018

The Honorable Alex Azar
Secretary, Department of Health and Human Services
200 Independence Ave. SW
Washington, DC 20201

Dear Secretary Azar:

On behalf of the National Association of County and City Health Officials (NACCHO) and the Association of State and Territorial Health Officials (ASTHO), we strongly urge you to move quickly to appoint a permanent director of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). The time element is crucial given the nation is facing an influenza epidemic and an opioid crisis amongst other public health issues.

The public health enterprise is comprised of local health departments, state health departments, and federal agencies including the CDC. Together, they form a crucial and symbiotic partnership critical to domestic and global health security. Strong leadership at CDC is essential to the strength, economic well-being, and productivity of the American public, and must be maintained.

As the nation's expert resource and response center, CDC provides critical funding and technical assistance for state, local, and national programs to strengthen public health capacity, share timely and critical information, and improve health to save millions of lives annually. CDC is critical to protecting the American public from preventable death and disease, safeguarding national security, and promoting optimal health. CDC collects essential data that enables policymakers to make informed decisions on how to direct federal resources for disease control and prevention.

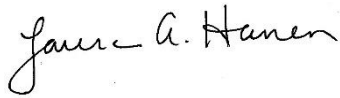
NACCHO and ASTHO stand ready to support the permanent CDC director, with the depth of experience in leading a state, local, and/or territorial public health agency as well as the expertise in leading the response to a public health emergency. It is also important the permanent CDC director continues to value state, local, and territorial public health leaders as primary partners in the implementation of the agency's work.

We are available for consultation and advice as you make this important decision. Please feel free to call on us for further information and counsel.

Sincerely,

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Executive Director, Harris County Public Health
NACCHO President

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