



National Association of County & City Health Officials

The National Connection for Local Public Health

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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NACCHO Statement on the Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School Shooting: Gun Violence Is a Public Health Epidemic

By Laura Hanen, MPP, Interim Executive Director and Chief of Government Affairs

Washington, DC, February 15, 2018 — “The [National Association of County and City Health Officials](#), representing nearly 3,000 local governmental health departments across the county, is grieved by the horrific events that unfolded yesterday at the Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in Parkland, Florida. Gun violence in the United States has become a profound public health crisis. It is an on ongoing, deadly epidemic and we must work to reduce its toll.

“Yesterday’s massacre in Florida that took at least 17 lives is *the eighteenth school shooting this year* resulting in injury or death. This is a stunning statistic and I believe it is far past time for the nation to take preventative action against these tragedies. In the absence of federal leadership, local officials, including public health leaders, are taking critical steps to address this crisis, including community-based prevention programs and public outreach and education aimed at reducing violence.

“At the federal and/or state level, where applicable, NACCHO supports common-sense approaches to stem the tide of violence, including conducting background checks on all gun purchases, preventing individuals most at risk of violence from purchasing guns, banning assault weapons and large ammunition magazines, and engaging in research about how to effectively address violence. Moreover, health officials, government leaders, law

enforcement, faith communities, and concerned citizens, including lawful gun owners, must come together to address the social and cultural issues that cause individuals to, far too often, resort to violence. Indeed, we need a public health approach to the violence epidemic.

“Additionally, we urge Congress to allow the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention to conduct research on gun violence prevention, including suicide prevention.

“While none of these steps will stop all gun violence or prevent all mass shootings, they will be a significant step in turning the tide. NACCHO, its Board of Directors led by Board President Dr. Umair A. Shah, its members, and the public health community offer support and sympathy for the families and friends of the victims of the Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School. Our thoughts and prayers are with them. They will be living with their loss long after the news reports about what happened yesterday have stopped. This is a senseless and preventable loss that no family should ever have to bear.”

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About NACCHO

The National Association of County and City Health Officials (NACCHO) represents the nation's nearly 3,000 local 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.