

NACCHO

National Association of County & City Health Officials

The National Connection for Local Public Health

April 8, 2009

Michael R. Taylor, J.D.
Research Professor of Health Policy
School of Public Health
The George Washington University
2021 K Street, NW, Suite 800
Washington, D.C. 20006

Dear Mr. Taylor:

On behalf of the National Association of County and City Health Officials (NACCHO), I write to endorse the *Stronger Partnerships for Safer Food: An agenda for strengthening state and local roles in the nation's food safety system* report being released on April 17, 2009 by The George Washington University with support from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation. The report highlights the critical value of local and state health departments and regulators and the importance of an integrated, prevention-oriented, national food safety system.

Local health departments across the country are on the front lines of food safety with essential roles in both prevention and response. They protect the public's health playing a critical part in the national food safety system. The report brings to the forefront how local health departments protect people every day by helping to keep their food supply safe. At the same time, the report reinforces the need for effective partnerships among, and a greater allocation of resources to, federal, state and local governmental public health agencies so as to enhance both collaboration and capacity at all times, but especially during economic downturns and periods of workforce shortages.

I hope the report will lead to increased funding, and clarity of roles within the nation's food safety system and will, through greater communication and collaboration result in more effective work to prevent foodborne illness and assure the rapid discovery and mitigation of problems when they do occur. In addition, I look forward to the development of a culture of quality improvement to best assure that the health of our nation is protected.

Sincerely,



Robert M. Pestronk
Executive Director



