

February 21, 2021

The Honorable Patty Murray
Chair
Senate Health, Education, Labor
and Pensions Committee
428 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Richard Burr
Ranking Member
Senate Health, Education, Labor
and Pensions Committee
428 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chair Murray and Senator Burr,

On behalf of the National Association of County and City Health Officials (NACCHO) and the nearly 3,000 local health departments that we represent, I write to express our strong support for the nomination of Rachel Levine, MD, to be the next Assistant Secretary of Health for the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Her extensive qualifications and strong grounding in governmental public health make her an excellent choice for the role, especially as we continue to respond to the largest public health challenge in more than 100 years.

An accomplished physician and academic medical researcher, Dr. Levine has a firm grounding in the many challenges faced by both individuals and the health care system as a whole. However, as we enter a second year of addressing COVID-19, it is her strong familiarity with and commitment to public health that makes her such a valuable asset to HHS. No matter what stage of the pandemic, governmental public health has led the way and that perspective is critical for the Department as they work to improve our nation's response to the virus. As the Secretary of the Pennsylvania Department of Health, she saw firsthand the unique role that governmental public health plays and the importance of collaboration and coordination across all governmental sectors to make the changes needed to improve health and wellbeing. As a former President of the Association of State and Territorial Health Officials, she has collaborated with NACCHO leaders as part of our Joint Council and understands the importance of, and how to activate, strong partnerships across the local-state-federal public health enterprise.

Dr. Levine is also a great communicator and skilled expert. She has a strong understanding of the areas of health and wellbeing that have been impacted by the current global pandemic, as well as the many other public health challenges that do not make the headlines. She has written extensively on numerous health issues, including the opioid crisis, eating disorders, and LGBTQ medicine and, if confirmed, would bring a unique and needed perspective to the federal government as the first openly transgender federal official confirmed by the Senate.

We are so pleased to see a strong public health practitioner nominated for this important post. Her commitment to the local and state public health partnership is clear and, if confirmed, will be an incredible asset at the federal level. We urge swift consideration and confirmation by the Senate. If you have any questions, please contact Adriane Casalotti, NACCHO's Chief of Government and Public Affairs, at acasalotti@naccho.org.

Sincerely,



Lori Tremmel Freeman, MBA
Chief Executive Officer

