Healthy Counties Forum explores changes in health care delivery and effect on counties

WASHINGTON, D.C. – DeKalb and Fulton counties hosted the National Association of Counties’ (NACo) 2012 Healthy Counties Forum Nov. 27-28 in Atlanta, led by Healthy Counties Initiative Advisory Board Chair Roy Brooks, commissioner, Tarrant County, Texas.

The forum brought together more than 50 leaders in county government from across the country to examine broad health care policy and system changes; discuss the implications of those policy changes for county health care delivery systems; highlight successful examples of Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) funded projects, and explore key issues for counties concerning the Medicaid expansion under the Affordable Care Act.

The forum featured a variety of speakers including Dr. Karen Minyard, director and associate research professor, Georgia Health Policy Center, Georgia State University; Trisha Hardy, director of child wellness, Children’s Healthcare of Atlanta; and a panel presentation from the CDC. The forum also featured a tour of Grady Memorial Hospital and presentations by key hospital staff.

In addition to Brooks, county speakers included Lenny Eliason, NACo immediate past president and vice chair, Healthy Counties Advisory Board; Joan Garner, commissioner, Fulton County, member of NACo’s Health Steering Committee and Healthy Counties Advisory Board; and Larry Johnson, commissioner, DeKalb County, and chair of NACo’s Health Steering Committee.

“The country is heading into a period of significant change in national, state and local health policies affecting every family in America,” Brooks said. “Counties are on the front lines of delivering health services to the communities we serve. The Healthy Counties Forum in Atlanta is an important part of our efforts through NACo to be sure counties continue to provide health care services as effectively as possible.”

Garner said the forum was very timely as counties begin to prepare for the implementation of the Affordable Care Act from President Obama.

“Fulton has been on the forefront of local healthcare reform by establishing a policy that addresses the social determinants of health and healthcare disparities within our communities and developing model healthcare facilities that serve as one-stop-shops for citizens which include primary care, dental
care, behavioral health, workforce development, libraries, childcare and community gardens,” Garner said.

Johnson said he was pleased that NACo held the forum in the metro Atlanta area.

“This is a great opportunity for participants from across the country to get information on the changing landscape of healthcare,” Johnson said. “As chair of the NACo Health Steering Committee and former vice chair of the Healthy Counties Advisory Board we are providing access to up-to-date information to representatives from member counties to take back and continue to work of improving the health outcomes for the residents.”

Click here to read the full forum agenda. More information is available at www.naco.org or by contacting Jim Philipps at 202.942.4220 or jphilipps@naco.org.

###

The National Association of Counties (NACo) is the only national organization that represents county governments in the United States. Founded in 1935, NACo provides essential services to the nation’s 3,068 counties. NACo advances issues with a unified voice before the federal government, improves the public’s understanding of county government, assists counties in finding and sharing innovative solutions through education and research, and provides value-added services to save counties and taxpayers money. For more information about NACo, visit www.naco.org.