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CONTACTS: For NACo: Brian Namey, bnamey@naco.org, 202-942-4220

For NLC: Ashley De Smeth, desmeth@nlc.org, 202.626.3003

For USCM: Elena Temple-Webb, etemple@usmayors.org, 202.286.1100

Local leaders join forces to curb prescription drug abuse, heroin epidemic

New cooperative purchasing effort to offer public agencies access to lifesaving medications

WASHINGTON, D.C. – In conjunction with President Obama’s announcement of local, state and federal efforts to address the growing problem of opioid misuse and abuse, local leaders today announced a new cooperative purchasing agreement to expand public agencies’ access to potentially lifesaving opioid withdrawal medications.

The National Association of Counties, National League of Cities and United States Conference of Mayors, with the [U.S. Communities Purchasing Alliance](#) and [Premier, Inc.](#), have secured industry-leading discounts for naloxone and medications containing buprenorphine. These medications help prevent painful withdrawal symptoms when a person stops taking opioid drugs. The program pools the purchasing power of more than 62,000 agencies in state and local government and the non-profit sector.

“Medication-assisted opioid treatment programs can mean the difference between life and death,” said **National Association of Counties President Sallie Clark**, commissioner, El Paso County, Colo. “Counties are uniquely situated at the intersection of the local health, human services, justice and public safety systems. We see firsthand the devastating effects of prescription drug abuse and heroin use. This is a non-partisan issue, and we are implementing smart strategies to address this growing problem in our communities.”

Additionally, as part of its Safe and Secure Counties Initiative, NACo is working with state associations of counties to develop policy recommendations and promote promising practices to address the opioid epidemic plaguing communities.

“Healthy communities are made stronger by thriving residents. Access to drugs like these, that help people end their dependencies on opioids, is critical in the fight against opiate abuse,” said **Clarence Anthony, CEO and executive director of the National League of Cities**. “Increasing access to this type of treatment is an important step in addressing a very serious issue that faces U.S. cities of all sizes.”

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“Mayors across this nation are grappling with solutions to address the exponential rise in opioid overdoses occurring in our cities. We believe the expanded availability of this treatment is another tool for mayors and cities to use in their efforts to stem this epidemic,” stated **U.S. Conference of Mayors CEO & Executive Director Tom Cochran**.

Announced at the organization's recent Fall Leadership Meeting, Conference of Mayors President Baltimore Mayor Stephanie Rawlings-Blake has created a special mayors’ task force on substance abuse, prevention and recovery services, which will be headed by Boston Mayor Martin Walsh.

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The [National Association of Counties](http://www.naco.org) (NACo) unites America's 3,069 county governments. Founded in 1935, NACo brings county officials together to advocate with a collective voice on national policy, exchange ideas and build new leadership skills, pursue transformational county solutions, enrich the public's understanding of county government and exercise exemplary leadership in public service. More information at: www.naco.org.

The National League of Cities (NLC) is dedicated to helping city leaders build better communities. NLC is a resource and advocate for 19,000 cities, towns and villages, representing more than 218 million Americans.

The U.S. Conference of Mayors is the official nonpartisan organization of cities with populations of 30,000 or more. There are nearly 1,400 such cities in the country today, and each city is represented in the Conference by its chief elected official, the mayor. Like us on Facebook at facebook.com/usmayors, or follow us on Twitter at twitter.com/usmayors.