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Media Release
April 19, 2019

Weber-Morgan Health Department Nationally Recognized for Emergency Preparedness

(Ogden, UT) – Weber-Morgan Health Department has been recognized by the National Association of County and City Health Officials and the Centers of Disease Control and Prevention for its ability to plan, respond and recover from a public health emergency.

The designation, "Project Public Health Ready," follows a rigorous 18-month evaluation and national peer review of the health department's emergency planning to assess its ability to align with federal government requirements and other best practices. Only 500 of the nearly 3,000 local health departments across the country have received the designation. Project Public Health Ready is a partnership between NACCHO and the CDC to help local health department leaders develop public health policies and programs to ensure that communities have access to vital programs and services that people need to keep them protected from disease and disaster.

"To meet this level of preparedness takes a lot of time, focus and effort," says WMHD Health Officer Brian Bennion. "We are proud to have been recognized for our high level of preparedness and feel confident that we meet national standards and are doing all we can to be ready to respond in the event of a public health emergency."

The road to receiving Project Public Health Ready status required the completion of 289 objectives that became an integral part of 12 emergency plans, a workforce development plan, a training needs assessment and a comprehensive multi-year training and exercise plan for health department staff.

"PPHR recognition confirms that Weber-Morgan Health Department has a thorough and coordinated emergency response plan in place and that staff have the training to protect the health of the community during an emergency," says Cathy Bodily, WMHD's Emergency Services Program Manager.

PPHR recognition also requires health departments to collaborate with their state, local, and community partners to develop plans that work in conjunction with all the

constituents in their jurisdictions. Bodily said the plans are used in exercises such as the fully functional earthquake exercise that took place April 10 when several partners from public health, emergency management, local hospitals, law enforcement, volunteers and faith-based organizations came together to test their ability to respond.

“Public health preparedness planning, response, and recovery begins at the local level. Local health departments play an essential role in creating healthy, resilient communities that can respond to and recover from disaster,” said NACCHO Chief Executive Officer Lori Tremmel Freeman. “We commend Weber-Morgan Health Department for being a model of public health emergency preparedness.”

To learn more about our Project Public Health Ready, see www.naccho.org/PPHR. For more information about the Weber-Morgan Health Department’s programs and services, see www.webermorganhealth.org.

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