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Contact:

Theresa Spinner
Director, Media and Public Relations
Direct: 202-783-5551
tspinner@naccho.org

The Foundation for the Public’s Health to Fund Medical Reserve Corps and WomenHeart: The National Coalition for Women with Heart Disease

Washington, DC, June 20, 2016—The Trustees of [The Foundation for the Public's Health](#) (TFPH) met in late April 2016 to establish the organization’s strategic priorities. TFPH champions public health philanthropy, collaborating with local and tribal health departments, private enterprise, and other nonprofits to secure the health and safety of hundreds of millions of Americans. TFPH’s first initiative is to mobilize funds to support the [Medical Reserve Corps](#) (MRC).

With close to 1,000 units and 200,000 volunteers, the MRC provides critical public health assistance through emergency response and preparedness, as well as community resilience projects. This work, often done in conjunction with local health departments, is at risk from budget cuts.

In partnership with the [National Association of County and City Health Officials](#) (NACCHO), which helps to coordinate funding to MRC units, TFPH is seeking philanthropic dollars to sustain and grow MRC public health programming. MRC units have limited experience of how private philanthropy can benefit them; with rare exceptions, most MRC units secure funds through government grants and challenge awards coordinated through NACCHO. As a result, many MRC units are underfunded, and the public’s health suffers as a result.

“TFPH will offer an array of fundraising, consulting, and training opportunities tailored to MRC-specific challenges and opportunities,” says George Roberts, Chair of the Foundation. “Through grants, sponsorships and fees, and community coalitions, MRC units will have many opportunities to build sustainable funding sources for their most important programs,” says LaMar Hasbrouck, MD, MPH, NACCHO Executive Director and Secretary of the Foundation.

The Foundation for the Public's Health's second initiative is a partnership program with [WomenHeart: The National Coalition for Women with Heart Disease](#). WomenHeart was founded in 1999 by three women who had heart attacks while in their 40s. They were faced with many obstacles, including misdiagnosis, inadequate treatment, and social isolation. WomenHeart's mission is to improve the health and quality of life of women living with or at risk of heart disease, and to advocate for their benefit. With local health departments as conveners, TFPH and WomenHeart will work with young women to develop an advocacy program to prevent chronic illness in the communities where they live. *WomenHeart Champions*, volunteers who are women living with heart disease and raise awareness and share information about women and heart disease, can act as mentors to young women and help them craft messages to encourage preventative care.

With government funding for chronic disease in decline, jeopardizing many important public health programs, the TFPH/WomenHeart partnership comes at a critical time. Local health departments are being asked to play an increasingly larger role in chronic disease prevention. However, the importance of our nation's public health infrastructure, which is central to sustaining population health and safety, remains undersupported.

“Investing in young women as advocates for health accomplishes two goals – 1) we empower those whose voices are critical to the health of our nation, and 2) we empower the women behind those voices with the education and confidence to address public health epidemics, like heart disease in women,” says Mary McGowan, CEO of WomenHeart.

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About the Foundation for the Public's Health

Founded in 2015 by the National Association of County and City Health Officials (NACCHO), The Foundation for the Public's Health was created with the goal of mobilizing dollars and partnerships to support the 2,800 local health departments that provide critical public health services to communities across America. The Foundation fills a critical void in the public health space: creating a culture of giving to support our nation's vital public health programs. The Foundation also provides a conduit between the public and the public's health by supporting local public health department agendas based on the needs of their communities. The Foundation exists to raise awareness about the enormous value of public health, identify creative ways to improve public health, and forge promising partnership models to help meet the nation's complex public health needs.

About the Medical Reserve Corps

The Medical Reserve Corps (MRC) is a national network of volunteers, organized locally to improve the health and safety of their communities. The MRC network comprises 989 community-based units and almost 200,000 volunteers located throughout the United States and its territories. MRC volunteers include medical and public health professionals, as well as other community members without healthcare backgrounds. MRC units engage these volunteers to strengthen public health, improve emergency response capabilities and build community resiliency. They prepare for and respond to natural disasters, including wildfires, hurricanes, tornados, blizzards, and floods, as well as other emergencies affecting public health.

About WomenHeart: The National Coalition for Women with Heart Disease

WomenHeart: The National Coalition for Women with Heart Disease is the nation's only patient centered organization serving the 43 million American women living with or at risk for heart disease – the leading cause of death for women. WomenHeart is solely devoted to advancing women's heart health through advocacy, community education, and the nation's only patient support network for women living with heart disease. WomenHeart is both a coalition and a community of thousands of members nationwide, including women heart patients and their families, healthcare professionals, and health advocates, all committed to helping women live longer, healthier lives. To join or donate, visit www.womenheart.org.