Local Health Departments and Mayoral Offices:
A Strategic Partnership for Local Public Health
July 24, 2025

Why do some communities see stronger health outcomes than others?

On July 24, the National Forum for Heart Disease and Stroke Prevention and the National Association of County and City Health Officials spotlighted one answer: mayors and health departments working in partnership.

The briefing featured **Mayor Dr. Victor Treviño** and **Health Director Dr. Richard Chamberlain**, of Laredo, Texas — a city that's making real progress on chronic disease by aligning leadership, data, and funding around a "health first" vision.

Laredo's model is one that other municipalities can adopt.

Here's how:

- **Lead with a "health first" mindset.** Mayor Treviño brings his background as a physician into city leadership, treating constituents like patients and championing health across all departments. With support from a medically informed city council, Laredo adopted a "Health in All Policies" approach that integrates health considerations into all aspects of planning, from traffic management to library programming.

- **Secure lasting impact with sustainable funding.** Laredo committed city resources to chronic disease prevention by moving key public health roles from grant-dependent to general-funded positions. This shift ensures vital programs can continue serving the community even as state or federal funding changes.

- **Turn community events into public health access points.** Laredo's "Walk with the Mayor" events aren't just about fitness. They serve as a platform for social connection, health education, and on-the-ground services. These events, paired with the city's new lifestyle medicine initiative, are helping shift behavior, build trust, and drive long-term improvements in community well-being.

Laredo's example shows that building healthier communities isn't the job of public health alone. It's a shared responsibility. When mayors lead in partnership with local health departments, communities are healthier, more connected, and better prepared for the future.