



**National Public Health Performance Standards**

**Public Health  
Governing Entity  
Assessment Instrument  
Version 3.0**



**National Association of  
Local Boards of Health**



## Acknowledgements

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## Introduction

The National Public Health Performance Standards (NPHPS) instruments help users answer questions such as, “How well are we ensuring that the essential public health services are being provided in our system?” and with the governance instrument, “How can we as a governing body better ensure that we are contributing as much as possible to the essential public health services being met in our jurisdiction?” This discussion helps identify strengths and weaknesses within the governing body and ways that public health services can be more effectively coordinated. In addition, the results from this Assessment provide a better understanding of the governing body’s performance in key areas. This information helps decision makers make more effective policy, program, and resource decisions to improve the public’s health.

## Understanding the Benefits of Conducting the Assessment

The NPHPS is a valuable tool in identifying areas for system improvement, strengthening state and local partnerships, and assuring that a strong system is in place for effective response to everyday public health issues as well as public health emergencies. NPHPS Governance Assessment users report numerous benefits, including:

- Identifying the governing body’s strengths and weaknesses
- Setting an optimal standard to which governing bodies can aspire
- Building awareness of the range of governing body responsibilities
- Informing the strategic planning process
- Informing policy development activities

## Four Key Concepts

There are four key concepts that provide a framework for the NPHPS:

1. The standards are designed around the **Ten Essential Public Health Services**. The use of the essential services assures that the standards cover the range of public health action needed at all levels.
2. The governance assessment tool focuses on the **individual governing body**. However, the state and local standards and assessment tools focus on the **overall public health system**. A public health system includes all public, private, and voluntary organizations that contribute to public health activities within a given area.
3. The standards describe an **optimal level of performance** rather than provide minimum expectations. This ensures that the standards may be used for continuous quality improvement.
4. The standards are intended to support a process of **quality improvement**. System partners and governing bodies should use the assessment process and the performance standards results as a guide for learning about public health activities throughout the system and determining how to make improvements.

## Defining Public Health

The mission of public health is to fulfill society’s desire to create conditions so that people can be healthy. Public health includes the activities that society undertakes to assure the conditions in which people can be healthy. These include organized community efforts to prevent, identify, and counter threats to the health of the public (Institute of Medicine, 1988; Public Health Accreditation Board, 2011; Turnock, 2009; Winslow, 1952). Public health is:

- The science and the art of preventing disease, prolonging life, and promoting physical health and mental health and efficiency through organized community efforts toward a sanitary environment
- The control of community infections; the education of the individual in principles of personal hygiene
- The organization of medical and nursing service for the early diagnosis and treatment of disease



- The development of the social machinery to ensure to every individual in the community a standard of living adequate for the maintenance of health

## The Six Functions of Public Health Governance

During initial development of the NPHPS tools in 1999, five interlocking functions of governing entities were identified by a working group and they have remained the foundation of thinking about how governing entities work. With this updated version of the NPHPS governance tool, the functions have been modernized to remain current with research in the fields of governance and public health. The initial five functions have remained essentially the same, and one additional function (oversight) has been strengthened.

Depending upon its legal position, not all governing entities are responsible for all functions to the same extent. However, all governing entities are responsible for some aspects of each function. No one function is more important than another. More information on the governance functions, including examples of each, can be found on NALBOH's website at [www.nalboh.org](http://www.nalboh.org).

## Definitions of the Six Functions of Public Health Governance

- **Policy development:** Lead and contribute to the development of policies that protect, promote, and improve public health while ensuring that the agency and its components remain consistent with the laws and rules (local, state, and federal) to which it is subject.
- **Resource stewardship:** Assure the availability of adequate resources (legal, financial, human, technological, and material) to perform essential public health services.
- **Legal authority:** Exercise legal authority as applicable by law and understand the roles, responsibilities, obligations, and functions of the governing body, health officer, and agency staff.
- **Partner engagement:** Build and strengthen community partnerships through education and engagement to ensure the collaboration of all relevant stakeholders in promoting and protecting the community's health.
- **Continuous improvement:** Routinely evaluate, monitor, and set measurable outcomes for improving community health status and the public health agency's/governing body's own ability to meet its responsibilities
- **Oversight:** Assume ultimate responsibility for public health performance in the community by providing necessary leadership and guidance in order to support the public health agency in achieving measurable outcomes.

## Link to Public Health Accreditation

This Governance Assessment is a useful tool for the governing entity to complete while their public health department is preparing to apply for accreditation by the Public Health Accreditation Board (PHAB). While the public health accreditation process is designed to only accredit the public health department using pre-determined standards, the Governance Assessment is a method for the governing entity to also measure its performance against a set of optimal standards.

Domains 1-10 of the PHAB Standards and Measures Version 1.0 are referenced in the relevant Essential Public Health Service chapters of this document. Domain 11, Maintain Administrative and Management Capacity, has two standards for health departments seeking accreditation:

- 11.1 Develop and Maintain an Operational Infrastructure to Support the Performance of Public Health Functions
- 11.2 Establish Effective Financial Management Systems

Domain 12 of the Standards focuses on the relationship between a health department and its governing entity. A governing entity that completes the NPHPS assessment will better understand how it supports the health department

and where gaps may lie. This can help a health department and its governing entity improve their ability to serve the public and their participation in the public health system as they work towards accreditation.

Domain 12, Maintain Capacity to Engage the Public Health Governing Entity, has three Standards:

- 12.1 Maintain current operational definitions and statements of the public health roles, responsibilities, and authorities
- 12.2 Provide information to the governing entity regarding public health and the official responsibilities of the health department and of the governing entity
- 12.3 Encourage the governing entity's engagement in the public health department's overall obligations and responsibilities

## Governance Assessment Format

Each essential service chapter in this document has three pages.

### Page 1: Essential Service Definition

The text on this page includes the essential service description and key definitions/concepts. Other key terms that are underlined but not defined on the page can be found in the glossary. Many definitions are adapted from academic references and those sources are indicated throughout by a superscript number (#) and listed at the end of the document.

### Page 2: Public Health Department and Public Health Governing Entity Responsibilities

This first section of this page describes the public health department's responsibilities as they relate to the Public Health Accreditation Board's (PHAB) standards for the essential service. A public health department applying for accreditation will need to demonstrate how they meet each of these standards. The public health governing entity should provide oversight and support as the public health department works to meet these standards. More details about public health department responsibilities can be found in PHAB Standards and Measures Version 1.0 at [www.phaboard.org](http://www.phaboard.org).

Also on page 2 of each essential service chapter is the public health governing entity model standard. This section describes the ideal activities that public health governing entities should be undertaking to support and oversee the public health department. While public health governing entities may not see themselves reflected in all activities listed, all public health governing entities should see themselves reflected in some activities.

### Page 3: Public Health Governing Entity Assessment Questions

Each public health governing entity model standard is measured through 3-8 assessment questions, listed on the third page of the essential service chapter. Additional key definitions/concepts are on this page as well. The governing entity should review the model standard on the second page and then use the assessment questions on the third page to determine how well they are meeting the model standard. The PHAB standards, the essential service text, and the key definitions provide additional context.

There are six response options to each question:

- No activity (0% of the activity is being met): The governing entity does not participate in this activity at all, but does have the legal authority to do so.
- Minimal (1-25% of the activity is being met): The governing entity participates in this activity in a limited way, and there is opportunity for substantial improvement.



- Moderate (26-50% of the activity is being met): The governing entity participates in this activity, and there is an opportunity for improvement.
- Significant (51-75% of the activity is being met): The governing entity participates a great deal in this activity, and there is opportunity for minor improvement.
- Optimal (76-100% of the activity is being met): The governing entity is doing absolutely everything possible for this activity under its legal authority, and there is no room for improvement at this time.
- Not applicable: This activity is not legally part of this governing entity's responsibilities; it is outside the public health governing entity's mandate to participate in this activity. This option should **ONLY** be selected if the governing entity has no authority to complete a particular assessment activity. If the governing entity has evidence that another entity has authority over a particular activity, it should work with the other entity to measure their activity level to the extent possible.

No Activity (0%)	The governing entity does not participate in this activity at all, but does have the legal authority to do so.
Minimal Activity (1-25%)	The governing entity participates in this activity in a limited way, and there is opportunity for substantial improvement.
Moderate Activity (26-50%)	The governing entity participates in this activity, and there is opportunity for improvement.
Significant Activity (51-75%)	The governing entity participates a great deal in this activity, and there is opportunity for minor improvement.
Optimal Activity (76-100%)	The governing entity is doing absolutely everything possible for this activity under its legal authority, and there is no room for improvement at this time.
Not Applicable	The activity is not legally part of this governing entity's responsibilities; it is outside the public health governing entity's mandate to participate in this activity.



## Essential Service I: Monitor Health Status to Identify Community Health Problems

What's going on in our community?  
Do we know how healthy we are?

### This service includes:

- Accurate, periodic assessment of the community's health status, including:
  - Identification of health risks, determinants of health, and determination of health service needs
  - Attention to the vital statistics and health status indicators of groups that are at higher risk than the total population
  - Identification of community assets that support the public health system in promoting health and improving quality of life
- Utilization of appropriate methods and technology, such as geographic information systems (GIS), to interpret and communicate data to diverse audiences.
- Collaboration among all public health system components, including private providers and health benefit plans, to establish and use population health registries, such as disease or immunization registries.

### Key definitions/concepts:

#### Community health assessment

A systematic examination of the health status indicators for a given population that is used to identify key problems and assets in a community (Turnock, 2009).

#### Public health system

The constellation of governmental and nongovernmental organizations that contribute to the performance of essential public health services for a defined community or population (Scutchfield & Keck, 2009).

#### Health status

The current state of a given population using a variety of indices, including morbidity, mortality, and available health resources.



## Public Health Department Responsibilities

The following are the Public Health Accreditation Board (PHAB) standards for this essential service. A public health department applying for accreditation will have to demonstrate to PHAB how the department meets these standards. The public health governing entity should provide oversight and support the efforts of the health department to meet these standards.

Domain I: Conduct and disseminate assessments focused on population health status and public health issues facing the community.

- 1.1 Participate in or conduct a collaborative process resulting in a comprehensive Community Health Assessment
- 1.2 Collect and maintain reliable, comparable, and valid data that provide information on conditions of public health importance and on the health status of the population
- 1.3 Analyze public health data to identify trends in health problems, environmental public health hazards, and social and economic factors that affect the public's health
- 1.4 Provide and use the results of health data analysis to develop recommendations regarding public health policy, processes, programs, or interventions

### Public Health Governing Entity Model Standard I

The public health governing entity provides oversight and support to assure that a collaborative and effective community health assessment process is in place. A governing entity's members may participate directly in a community health assessment. Many entities, including but not limited to the public health agency, should contribute to the collection and monitoring of health data. To accomplish this, the public health governing entity:

- Recommends a budget for public health agency resources to be used for a community health assessment
- Encourages active collaboration among all public health system stakeholder organizations involved in collecting, analyzing, and disseminating community health assessment data
- Recommends a budget for public health agency resources to be used for a community health assessment and community health data monitoring
- Reviews progress of a regular, quality community health assessment that includes identification of health risks, determinants of health, health needs, and community assets for all citizens in the jurisdiction

#### Key definitions/concepts:

##### Stakeholder organizations

Another term for partners or any persons, agencies, or organizations that could have an investment in the health of the people in the jurisdiction. Stakeholders may include, but are not limited to, businesses, hospitals, physician offices, pharmacists, youth groups, etc. (National Association of County and City Health Officials, 2004).

## At what level does the governing entity...

1a Advocate for policies that define a community health assessment process?

No Activity

Minimal

Moderate

Significant

Optimal

N/A

1b Encourage the public health department to actively collaborate with all public health system stakeholder organizations on a community health assessment?

No Activity

Minimal

Moderate

Significant

Optimal

N/A

1c Budget for public health department resources to be used for a community health assessment?

No Activity

Minimal

Moderate

Significant

Optimal

N/A

1d Set priorities for community health assessment improvements based on information from the community health assessment?

No Activity

Minimal

Moderate

Significant

Optimal

N/A

### Key definitions/concepts:

#### Advocate for

Discuss and encourage other public health governing entity members, elected officials, and/or other health-related organization boards to adopt a standardized policy (Public Health Accreditation Board, 2011).

#### Active collaboration

Make a commitment with other public health system stakeholder organizations to successfully develop and conduct a community health assessment. This could also be a board of health working with other organizations on a regular basis to meet common goals.

#### Measurable outcomes

Benefits that can be measured through terms such as how valuable, how reliable, how fast, and how expansive.



## Essential Service 2: Diagnose and Investigate Health Problems and Health Hazards

Are we ready to respond to health problems or threats?  
How quickly do we find out about problems?  
How Effective is our response?

### This service includes:

- Epidemiologic investigations of disease outbreaks, patterns of infections, chronic diseases, injuries, environmental hazards, and other public health threats and emergencies.
- Active infectious disease epidemiology programs.
- Access to a public health laboratory capable of conducting rapid screening and high volume testing.

### Key definitions/concepts:

#### Public health threat/emergency

Situations that have already unfolded in a community. These emergencies may include, but are not limited to, natural disasters, chemical release and exposure, mass casualty incidents, recent outbreaks of disease (i.e., influenza, *E. coli*, Salmonella), and bioterrorism (Goslin et al., 2002).

#### Outbreak

The occurrence of more cases of disease, injury, or other health condition than expected in a given area or among a specific group of person during a specific period. Usually the cases are presumed to have a common cause or to be related to one another in some way (Dicker, Coronado, Koo, & Parrish, 2006).

## Public Health Department Responsibilities

The following are the Public Health Accreditation Board (PHAB) standards for this essential service. A public health department applying for accreditation will have to demonstrate to PHAB how the department meets these standards. The public health governing entity should provide oversight and support the efforts of the health department to meet these standards.

Domain 2: Investigate health problems and environmental public health hazards to protect the community

- 2.1 Conduct timely investigations of health problems and environmental public health hazards
- 2.2 Contain/mitigate health problems and environmental public health hazards
- 2.3 Ensure access to laboratory and epidemiologic/environmental public health expertise and capacity to investigate and contain/mitigate public health problems and environmental public health hazards
- 2.4 Maintain a plan with policies and procedures for urgent and non-urgent communications

### Public Health Governing Entity Model Standard 2

The public health governing entity is responsible for assuring that the jurisdiction is protected against health problems and health hazards. To accomplish this, the public health governing entity:

- Facilitates access to appropriate resources for public health surveillance
- Facilitates access to resources to respond to public health threats
- Recommends policies to ensure the diagnosis and investigation of public health threats and emergencies in the community
- Encourages the public health agency to collaborate with public health system stakeholder organizations for the diagnosis and investigation of public health threats and emergencies

### Key definitions/concepts:

#### Environmental public health hazard

Situations or materials that pose a threat to human health and safety in the built or natural environment, as well as to the health and safety of other animals and plants, and to the proper functioning of an ecosystem, habitat, or other natural resource (Public Health Accreditation Board, 2010).

#### Stakeholder organizations

Another term for partners or any persons, agencies, or organizations that could have an investment in the health of the people in the jurisdiction. Stakeholders may include, but are not limited to, businesses, hospitals, physician offices, pharmacists, youth groups, etc. (National Association of County and City Health Officials, 2004).



## At what level does the governing entity...

2a Facilitate access to resources for the surveillance of public health threats?

No Activity

Minimal

Moderate

Significant

Optimal

N/A

2b Facilitate access to resources to respond to public health threats?

No Activity

Minimal

Moderate

Significant

Optimal

N/A

2c Recommend policies that address the surveillance of public health threats?

No Activity

Minimal

Moderate

Significant

Optimal

N/A

2d Encourage ongoing collaboration among public health system stakeholder organizations to address public health threats?

No Activity

Minimal

Moderate

Significant

Optimal

N/A







## Essential Service 3: Inform, Educate, and Empower People About Health Issues

How well do we keep all people and segments of our community informed about health issues?

### This service includes:

- Health information, health education, and health promotion activities designed to reduce health risk and promote improved health.
- Health communication plans and activities such as media advocacy and social marketing.
- Accessible health information and educational resources.
- Health education and health promotion program partnerships with schools, faith-based communities, work sites, personal healthcare providers, and others to implement and reinforce health promotion programs and messages.

### Key definitions/concepts:

#### **Empower**

Engage participants so they learn more effectively and are motivated to maintain their commitment to healthier living. This could include citizen participation in health policy initiatives as well as individuals learning more about their own health (Health Empower Initiative, n.d.).



## Public Health Department Responsibilities

The following are the Public Health Accreditation Board (PHAB) standards for this essential service. A public health department applying for accreditation will have to demonstrate to PHAB how the department meets these standards. The public health governing entity should provide oversight and support the efforts of the health department to meet these standards.

Domain 3: Inform and educate about public health issues and functions

- 3.1 Provide health education and health promotion policies, programs, processes, and interventions to support prevention and wellness
- 3.2 Provide information on public health issues and public health functions through multiple methods to a variety of audiences

### Public Health Governing Entity Model Standard 3

Informing, educating, and empowering people about health issues depends on appropriate health education and community-based health promotion activities. To accomplish this, the governing entity:

- Facilitates access to resources that could be used to reduce health risks and promote better health
- Ensures public health agency is using health communication plans and promotion activities that are culturally and linguistically appropriate
- Recommends public health agency policies to support activities that inform, educate, and empower people about public health issues
- Encourages all citizens in a jurisdiction to provide input on community health issues to the public health governing entity

#### Key definitions/concepts:

##### Health communication plan

A way for staff at the public health agency to inform, influence, and motivate persons and organizations in a jurisdiction about public health issues and prevention (Riegelman, 2010).

##### Culturally and linguistically appropriate

Materials and messages that take into account customs, beliefs, values, and influences of various racial, ethnic, religious, or social groups. Making culturally and linguistically appropriate materials available for audiences is vital to the success and adoption of health promotion programs, policies, and interventions (Department of Health and Human Services Office of Minority Health, 2001).

## At what level does the governing entity...

3a Recommend budget items for community health promotion programs?

 No Activity

 Minimal

 Moderate

 Significant

 Optimal

 N/A

3b Ensure the public health department is using a health communications plan?

 No Activity

 Minimal

 Moderate

 Significant

 Optimal

 N/A

3c Recommend policies that support culturally appropriate health promotion activities?

 No Activity

 Minimal

 Moderate

 Significant

 Optimal

 N/A

3d Encourage citizens to provide input on community health issues to the public health department governing entity?

 No Activity

 Minimal

 Moderate

 Significant

 Optimal

 N/A

### Key definitions/concepts:

#### Community health

More reflective of the health of a jurisdiction rather than a group of people with similar characteristics. Often defined by a series of population health measurements such as smoking rates or access to prenatal care (Public Health Accreditation Board, 2011; Turnock, 2009).



## Essential Service 4: Mobilize Partnerships to Identify and Solve Health Problems

How well do we really get people and organizations engaged in health issues?

### This service includes:

- Identifying potential stakeholders who contribute to or benefit from public health and increasing their awareness of the value of public health.
- Building coalitions, partnerships, and strategic alliances to draw upon the full range of potential human and material resources to improve community health.
- Convening and facilitating partnerships and strategic alliances among groups and associations (including those not typically considered to be health-related) in undertaking defined health improvement projects, including preventive, screening, rehabilitation, and support programs.

### Key definitions/concepts:

#### Partnership

A partnership is a relationship among individuals and groups that is characterized by mutual cooperation and responsibilities (Scutchfield & Keck, 2009).

#### Stakeholder organizations

Another term for partners or any persons, agencies, or organizations that could have an investment in the health of the people in the jurisdiction. Stakeholders may include, but are not limited to, businesses, hospitals, physician offices, pharmacists, youth groups, etc. (National Association of County and City Health Officials, 2004).



## Public Health Department Responsibilities

The following are the Public Health Accreditation Board (PHAB) standards for this essential service. A public health department applying for accreditation will have to demonstrate to PHAB how the department meets these standards. The public health governing entity should provide oversight and support the efforts of the health department to meet these standards.

Domain 4: Engage with the community to identify and address health problems

- 4.1 Engage with the public health system and the community in identifying and addressing health problems through collaborative processes
- 4.2 Promote the community's understanding of and support for policies and strategies that will improve the public's health

### Public Health Governing Entity Model Standard 4

The public health governing entity is responsible for supporting traditional and nontraditional partnerships and strategic alliances to identify and solve health problems. To accomplish this, the governing entity:

- Facilitates access to resources for jurisdictional development, partnership, and strategic alliance building activities
- Recommends policies to support constituency development, partnership, and strategic alliance building
- Promotes the inclusion of public health in policies developed by traditional and nontraditional partners

### Key definitions/concepts:

#### Traditional and nontraditional partnerships

Traditional partners are those stakeholders that the public health agency typically collaborate with including other public health agencies, hospitals, Federally Qualified Health Centers, mental health institutions, and child services. Nontraditional partners may include, but are not limited to, faith-based organizations, academic institutions (including higher education), media, businesses and corporations, and other government agencies.

#### Jurisdictional development

Includes any methods to improve or expand the health and safety of a particular territory. For example, if the governing body represents a district within a state, they should strive to improve the health and safety of the entire district and not a particular county seat or select community within the district.

## At what level does the governing entity...

4a Support coordination of resources for strategic alliance building activities?

No Activity

Minimal

Moderate

Significant

Optimal

N/A

4b Encourage the public health department to engage in strategic alliances with public health system stakeholder organizations to solve community health problems?

No Activity

Minimal

Moderate

Significant

Optimal

N/A

4c Promote the inclusion of public health in policies developed by other governing entities?

No Activity

Minimal

Moderate

Significant

Optimal

N/A

### Key definitions/concepts:

#### Strategic alliance

Partnerships formed among organizations to advance mutual interests. In the case of health, strategic collaboration with business, education, government, faith, and community partners to protect and improve health (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2007).

#### Other governing entities

The public health department may not be the only community group or organization with a governing entity. Other community departments, corporations, hospitals, and nonprofit organizations often have governing boards as well, and these other public health governing entities could engage with them in a variety of ways.

#### Constituency development

The process of developing relationships with community members who benefit from or have influence over community public health actions (Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry, 2011).





## Essential Service 5: Develop Policies and Plans That Support Individual and Statewide Health Efforts

What policies promote health in our community?  
How effective are we in planning and setting health policies?

### This service includes:

- Effective public health governance.
- Development of policy, codes, regulations, and legislation to protect the health of the public and to guide the practice of public health.
- Systematic public health system and state-level planning for health improvement in all jurisdictions.
- Alignment of public health system resources and strategies with community health improvement plans.

### Key definitions/concepts:

#### **Governance**

The process of governing, including concepts such as meeting management (minutes, procedural rules, institutional recordkeeping) and information flow (open meeting requirements, etc). Governance can also focus on the responsibility that a board has with respect to exercising their authority to fulfill the mission of the public health agency and meet the needs of the community served.

#### **Public health policies**

Used broadly to include laws, rules, and regulations intended to accomplish certain goals. Can be defined as “a system of laws, regulatory measures, courses of action, and funding priorities concerning a given topic promulgated by a governmental entity or its representatives” (Kirkpatrick, n.d.)

#### **Legal authority**

The legal authority of a public health governing body is often detailed in state statutes as well as through home rule charters, court rulings, or other mandated documents. It is essential that the public health governing body learn about their legal authority and execute it to their fullest ability.



## Public Health Department Responsibilities

The following are the Public Health Accreditation Board (PHAB) standards for this essential service. A public health department applying for accreditation will have to demonstrate to PHAB how the department meets these standards. The public health governing entity should provide oversight and support the efforts of the health department to meet these standards.

### Domain 5: Develop public health policies and plans

- 5.1 Serve as a primary and expert resource for establishing and maintaining public health policies, practices, and capacity
- 5.2 Conduct a comprehensive planning process resulting in a tribal/state/community health improvement plan
- 5.3 Develop and implement a health department organizational strategic plan
- 5.4 Maintain an all-hazards emergency operations plan

### Public Health Governing Entity Model Standard 5

Public health planning and policy development requires that individual members of the governing entity understand, exercise, and advocate for the authority to improve public health. The governing entity should operate under the framework of statutory charter, mission statement, or other similar strategic planning statement. To accomplish this, the governing entity:

- Annually requests that all governing entity members are provided appropriate documentation on their statutory charter describing their legal authority, mission statement, strategic planning document, and agency operating procedures
- Budgets for appropriate public health agency resources to implement a community health improvement plan
- Participates in the development of strategic plans for both the public health agency and governing entity
- Develops public health policies (which may include codes, regulations, and ordinances) to protect the jurisdiction's health and to guide the practice of public health
- Recommends policies based upon community health assessments, community health improvement plans, strategic plans, and evidence-based recommendations
- Monitors the development and implementation of plans (e.g., community health improvement plans, all-hazards emergency preparedness and response plans, risk communication plans, strategic plans, etc.) that protect the health of the public
- Supports aligning jurisdiction resources with state-level plans for health improvement

## At what level does the governing entity...

5a Annually review documentation of its legal authority?

 No Activity

 Minimal

 Moderate

 Significant

 Optimal

 N/A

5b Annually review the governing entity's guiding documents?

 No Activity

 Minimal

 Moderate

 Significant

 Optimal

 N/A

5c Budget appropriate public health department resources to implement a community health improvement plan?

 No Activity

 Minimal

 Moderate

 Significant

 Optimal

 N/A

5d Participate in the public health department's strategic planning process (every 3-5 years)?

 No Activity

 Minimal

 Moderate

 Significant

 Optimal

 N/A

5e Develop a governing entity strategic plan?

 No Activity

 Minimal

 Moderate

 Significant

 Optimal

 N/A

5f Recommend evidence-based policies to address identified health priorities?

 No Activity

 Minimal

 Moderate

 Significant

 Optimal

 N/A

5g Monitor the establishment of the public health department's all-hazards emergency response plan?

 No Activity

 Minimal

 Moderate

 Significant

 Optimal

 N/A

5h Support aligning jurisdiction resources with state-level plans for health improvement?

 No Activity

 Minimal

 Moderate

 Significant

 Optimal

 N/A

Key definitions/concepts for these questions are on the next page due to space limitations.



## **Key definitions/concepts:**

### **Guiding documents**

A collection of documents that outline the public health governing body's statutory charge, structure, function, roles, and responsibilities. May include bylaws, mission, vision, strategic plan, and operating procedures.

### **Health priorities**

Areas or facets of the public health system that need to be addressed through program and/or policy development, implementation, and evaluation to positively impact and benefit the public's health. Priority areas can be social, physical, behavioral, or environmental.

### **All-hazards emergency operations plan**

An action plan for the jurisdiction developed to mitigate, respond to, and recover from a natural disaster, terrorist event, or other emergency that threatens people, property, business, or the community. The plan identifies persons, equipment, and resources for activation in an emergency and includes steps to coordinate and guide the response and recovery efforts of the jurisdiction (Federal Emergency Management Agency, 2007).

### **Community health improvement plan**

A Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIP) should be used to develop policies and define actions to target efforts that promote health (Public Health Accreditation Board, 2011).

### **Strategic plan**

A strategic plan should be developed for both the public health governing entity and the public health department. The strategic plan should include a vision, mission, objectives, strategies, and action plans that will move either the governing entity or health department forward in improving the public's health (Public Health Accreditation Board, 2011).

## Essential Service 6: Enforce Laws and Regulations That Protect Health and Ensure Safety

When we enforce health regulations, are we up-to-date, technically competent, fair, and effective?

### This service includes:

- Assurance of due process and recognition of individuals' civil rights in all procedures, enforcement of laws and regulations, and public health emergency actions taken under the governing entity's authority.
- Review, evaluation, and revision of laws and regulations designed to protect health and safety, reflect current scientific knowledge, and utilize evidence-based practices for achieving compliance.
- Education of persons and entities obligated to obey and agencies obligated to enforce laws and regulations to encourage compliance.
- Enforcement activities in a wide variety of areas of public health concern under authority granted by local, state, and federal rule or law including, but not limited to: abatement of nuisances, animal control, childhood immunizations and other vaccinations, food safety, housing code, sanitary code, on-site wastewater disposal (septic systems), protection of drinking water, school environment, solid waste disposal, swimming pool and bathing area safety and water quality, tobacco control, enforcement activities during emergency situations, and vector control.

### Key definitions/concepts:

#### Evidence-based practice

A strategy for explicitly linking public health or clinical practice recommendations to scientific evidence of the effectiveness and/or other characteristics of such practices (The Guide to Community Preventive Services, n.d.).

#### Legal counsel

Attorney who provides advice or assistance to or represents a government agency (Garner, 2004).



## Public Health Department Responsibilities

The following are the Public Health Accreditation Board (PHAB) standards for this essential service. A public health department applying for accreditation will have to demonstrate to PHAB how the department meets these standards. The public health governing entity should provide oversight and support the efforts of the health department to meet these standards.

### Domain 6: Enforce public health laws

- 6.1 Review existing laws and work with governing entities and elected/appointed officials to update as needed
- 6.2 Educate individuals and organizations on the meaning, purpose, and benefit of public health laws and how to comply
- 6.3 Conduct and monitor public health enforcement activities and coordinate notification of violations among appropriate agencies

### Public Health Governing Entity Model Standard 6

The public health governing entity is responsible for assuring that public health policies (which may include codes, regulations, and ordinances) designed to protect the health of the jurisdiction are appropriately adopted, enforced, and evaluated. To accomplish this, the governing body:

- Confirms that appropriate legal authority exists for the adoption, enforcement, and evaluation of public health policies designed to protect the health of the jurisdiction
- Annually reviews bylaws, rules, and procedures for compliance with local, state, and federal statutes and regulations
- Budgets for resources to be used for public health inspection and enforcement activities
- Has access to and utilizes legal counsel
- Advocates for the enforcement of public health policies that protect community health and ensure safety
- Encourages development and implementation of programs that educate those who are impacted by public health policies to encourage compliance

### Key definitions/concepts:

#### People impacted by public health policies

Public health policies can be established at federal, state, and local levels. Examples of people impacted by public health policies may include the general public (tobacco control laws), restaurant owners (food safety procedures), and septic installers (wastewater regulations).

## At what level does the governing entity...

6a Confirm legal authority exists for the enforcement of public health policies?

No Activity

Minimal

Moderate

Significant

Optimal

N/A

6b Annually review its legal documents to ensure that they comply with other existing statutes?

No Activity

Minimal

Moderate

Significant

Optimal

N/A

6c Budget for resources to be used for enforcement activities?

No Activity

Minimal

Moderate

Significant

Optimal

N/A

6d Utilize legal counsel?

No Activity

Minimal

Moderate

Significant

Optimal

N/A

6e Advocate that public health policies are appropriately enforced?

No Activity

Minimal

Moderate

Significant

Optimal

N/A

6f Encourage those impacted by public health policies to participate in programs developed to improve compliance?

No Activity

Minimal

Moderate

Significant

Optimal

N/A





## Essential Service 7: Link People to Needed Personal Health Services and Assure the Provision of Health Care When Otherwise Unavailable

Are people receiving the medical care they need?

### This service includes:

- Assuring the identification of populations with barriers to personal health services.
- Assuring identification of personal health service needs of populations with limited access to a coordinated system of clinical care.
- Assuring the linkage of people to appropriate personal health care services through coordination of provider services and development of interventions that address barriers to care (e.g., culturally and linguistically appropriate staff and materials, transportation services).

### Key definitions/concepts:

#### **Culturally and linguistically appropriate**

Materials and messages that take into account customs, beliefs, values, and influences of various racial, ethnic, religious, or social groups. Making culturally and linguistically appropriate materials available for audiences is vital to the success and adoption of health promotion programs, policies, and interventions (Department of Health and Human Services Office of Minority Health, 2001).



## Public Health Department Responsibilities

The following are the Public Health Accreditation Board (PHAB) standards for this essential service. A public health department applying for accreditation will have to demonstrate to PHAB how the department meets these standards. The public health governing entity should provide oversight and support the efforts of the health department to meet these standards.

Domain 7: Promote strategies to improve access to health care services

- 7.1 Assess health care capacity and access to health care services
- 7.2 Identify and implement strategies to improve access to health care services

### Public Health Governing Entity Model Standard 7

The public health governing entity works to assure outreach and services designed to link people to personal health services, with special attention to those who experience barriers to care. To accomplish this, the governing entity:

- Advocates for services for all citizens in the jurisdiction
- Encourages linkages between the public health agency and other public health system stakeholder organizations to reduce barriers to care
- Assures the implementation of policies supporting outreach to all citizens in the jurisdiction

#### Key definitions/concepts:

##### Barriers to care

Anything which prevents someone from receiving needed services. Examples include physical, emotional, social, and financial obstructions, such as not owning a car, being mobility-impaired, not speaking English, or not being able to find a provider who will accept public insurance.

##### Outreach

Activities which reduce barriers to care and make it easier for people to receive needed services. Examples of outreach activities include offering culturally sensitive health promotion materials to subpopulations, providing satellite offices in rural communities, developing directories of providers in the community, or offering extended hours for services and educational programs.



## At what level does the governing entity...

7a Advocate for services for all citizens in a jurisdiction?

No Activity

Minimal

Moderate

Significant

Optimal

N/A

7b Encourage linkages between the public health department and other public health system stakeholder organizations to reduce barriers to care?

No Activity

Minimal

Moderate

Significant

Optimal

N/A

7c Assure the implementation of policies supporting outreach to all citizens in the jurisdiction?

No Activity

Minimal

Moderate

Significant

Optimal

N/A



## Essential Service 8: Assure a Competent Public and Personal Health Care Workforce

Do we have a competent public health staff?  
How can we be sure that our governing entity has  
the most up-to-date information?

### This service includes:

- Education, training, and assessment of personnel (including volunteers and other lay community health workers) to meet community needs for public and personal health services.
- Efficient processes for licensure of professionals.
- Adoption of continuous quality improvement and lifelong learning programs that include determinants of health.
- Active partnerships and strategic alliances with professional training programs to assure community-relevant learning experiences for all students.
- Continuing education in management and leadership development programs for those charged with administrative/executive roles.

### Key definitions/concepts:

#### **Workforce development**

The coordination of public and private-sector policies and programs that provides individuals with the opportunity for a sustainable livelihood and helps organizations achieve exemplary goals (Jacobs & Hawley, 2009).

#### **Leadership development program**

Formal and informal training and professional development designed for all management and executive-level employees to assist them in development of the leadership skills and styles required to deal with a variety of situations (Lockwood, 2007).



## Public Health Department Responsibilities

The following are the Public Health Accreditation Board (PHAB) standards for this essential service. A public health department applying for accreditation will have to demonstrate to PHAB how the department meets these standards. The public health governing entity should provide oversight and support the efforts of the health department to meet these standards.

Domain 8: Maintain a competent public health workforce

- 8.1 Encourage the development of a sufficient number of qualified public health workers
- 8.2 Assess staff competencies and address gaps by enabling organizational individual training and development.

### Public Health Governing Entity Model Standard 8

The public health governing entity is responsible for assuring the competence of the public health agency workforce, including the availability of workforce training and leadership development programs for both the workforce personnel and members of the governing entity. To accomplish this, the governing entity:

- Provides for the training and continuing education of the governing body that includes an annual self-assessment
- Establishes policies designed to ensure position descriptions are based on core competencies for public health professionals
- Reviews position descriptions and standards for public health agency job classifications, both paid and unpaid
- Conducts an annual performance review for the public health agency executive

### Key definitions/concepts:

#### Core competencies for public health professionals

A set of skills desirable for the broad practice of public health, reflecting the characteristics that staff of public health organizations may want to possess as they work to protect and promote health in the community through the delivery of the 10 Essential Public Health Services (Council on Linkages Between Academia and Public Health Practice, 2010).



## At what level does the governing entity...

8a Conduct an annual self-assessment?

- No Activity
  Minimal
  Moderate
  Significant
  Optimal
  N/A

8b Participate in board development opportunities (e.g., orientation, conference trainings, webinars, National Association of Local Boards of Health, etc.)?

- No Activity
  Minimal
  Moderate
  Significant
  Optimal
  N/A

8c Establish policies designed to ensure public health department job classification requirements are based on core competencies for public health professionals?

- No Activity
  Minimal
  Moderate
  Significant
  Optimal
  N/A

8d Review public health department job classifications?

- No Activity
  Minimal
  Moderate
  Significant
  Optimal
  N/A

8e Conduct annual performance review of the public health department executive?

- No Activity
  Minimal
  Moderate
  Significant
  Optimal
  N/A

### Key definitions/concepts:

#### Self-assessment

A process by which an organization or individual evaluates their own performance. This instrument is an example of a self-assessment.





## Essential Service 9: Evaluate Effectiveness, Accessibility, and Quality of Personal and Population-Based Health Services

Are we doing the best job we can?  
What opportunities for improvement do we see?

### This service includes:

- Assurance of ongoing evaluation and critical review of health program effectiveness, based on analysis of health status and service utilization data.
- Assurance of the provision of information necessary for allocating resources and reshaping programs.

### Key definitions/concepts:

#### Quality improvement

The process of bringing services to the next level with the aim to improve the overall health of a community (Public Health Foundation, n.d.).

#### Performance management

A systematic process aimed at helping achieve an organization's mission and strategic goals by improving effectiveness, empowering employees, and streamlining the decision-making process (Public Health Foundation, n.d.).



## Public Health Department Responsibilities

The following are the Public Health Accreditation Board (PHAB) standards for this essential service. A public health department applying for accreditation will have to demonstrate to PHAB how the department meets these standards. The public health governing entity should provide oversight and support the efforts of the health department to meet these standards.

Domain 9: Evaluate and continuously improve health department processes, programs, and interventions

- 9.1 Use a performance management system to monitor achievement of organizational objectives
- 9.2 Develop and implement quality improvement processes integrated into organizational practice, programs, processes, and interventions.

### Public Health Governing Entity Model Standard 9

The public health governing entity is responsible for the overall quality of public health services provided to the community. The quality of the service can be evaluated based on the scope, timeliness, frequency, and cost-effectiveness. The governing entity is also responsible for assuring that the results of evaluations are used to improve the public's health. To accomplish this, the governing entity:

- Facilitates access to the necessary resources to conduct routine evaluations of population-based services provided in its jurisdiction to create quality improvement plans
- Establishes policies supporting evaluations of population-based and personal health services, leading to quality improvement of those services
- Encourages all public health system stakeholder organizations to provide input into evaluation and quality improvement processes
- Utilizes information, including outcomes and evaluation results, for allocating resources to effective programs
- Encourages evaluation on the impact of public health policies (which may include codes, regulations, and ordinances) on the jurisdiction's health and safety

### Key definitions/concepts:

#### Population-based services

The framework of public health since public health focuses on providing interventions or programs to an entire community. Examples of population-based services may include, but are not limited to, lead screening, violence prevention programs at schools, educational programs to increase physical activity and nutrition, and tobacco/drug/alcohol use prevention and control (Institute of Medicine, 1996).

#### Personal health services

Those that only affect a single person such as treatment for an illness, rehabilitation for an injury, respiratory therapy for a heart attack patient, etc. (Turnock, 2009).

## At what level does the governing entity...

9a Establish policies supporting a quality improvement plan for public health services?

No Activity

Minimal

Moderate

Significant

Optimal

N/A

9b Advocate for appropriate resources to support quality improvement activities?

No Activity

Minimal

Moderate

Significant

Optimal

N/A

9c Encourage public health system stakeholder organizations to contribute to the quality improvement process?

No Activity

Minimal

Moderate

Significant

Optimal

N/A

9d Use evaluation findings to allocate resources to effective programs?

No Activity

Minimal

Moderate

Significant

Optimal

N/A

9e Encourage evaluation on the impact of public health policies?

No Activity

Minimal

Moderate

Significant

Optimal

N/A

### Key definitions/concepts:

#### Evaluation

A systematic way to improve and account for public health actions by involving procedures that are useful, feasible, ethical, and accurate (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 1999).



## Essential Service 10: Research for New Insights and Innovative Solutions to Health Problems

Are we identifying and using new ways to get the job done?

### This service includes:

- Public health research activities
  - Initiating research
  - Participating in research by others
  - Reporting results
  - Implementing policy based on these results

### Key definitions/concepts:

#### Evidence-based practice

A strategy for explicitly linking public health or clinical practice recommendations to scientific evidence of the effectiveness and/or other characteristics of such practices (The Guide to Community Preventive Services, n.d.).

#### Research

A systematic investigation, including research development, testing, and evaluation, designed to develop or contribute to generalized knowledge (Department of Health and Human Services, n.d.).



## Public Health Department Responsibilities

The following are the Public Health Accreditation Board (PHAB) standards for this essential service. A public health department applying for accreditation will have to demonstrate to PHAB how the department meets these standards. The public health governing entity should provide oversight and support the efforts of the health department to meet these standards.

Domain 10: Contribute to and apply the evidence base of public health

- 10.1 Identify and use the best available evidence for making informed public health practice decisions
- 10.2 Promote understanding and use of research results, evaluations, and evidence-based practices with appropriate audiences

### Public Health Governing Entity Model Standard 10

The public health governing entity is responsible for supporting and encouraging innovation to complete community-based research activities. To accomplish this, the governing entity:

- Recommends policies reflecting the public health agency's commitment to public health research and evidence-based activities
- Encourages the incorporation of research results and best practices into policies and programs to support the highest current standard of public health practice
- Facilitates access to resources for research and identification of evidence-based practices, including encouraging collaboration between academic or other health-related institutions and public health entities to carry out community-based research activities

#### Key definitions/concepts:

##### Community-based participatory research

Focuses on studies that will involve and impact an entire jurisdiction. This type of research should include as many community partners as possible and serve to study programs, policies, or services that create social change through improved health outcomes (Minkler & Wallerstein, 2003).

##### Evidence-based policy

A policy process that helps planners make better informed decisions by putting the best available evidence at the center of the policy process (United Nations Statistical Commission and Economic Commission for Europe, Conference of European Statisticians, 2008).

## At what level does the governing entity...

I0a Ensure the public health department implements evidence-based policies to support practices in its jurisdiction?

No Activity

Minimal

Moderate

Significant

Optimal

N/A

I0b Encourage collaboration between the public health department and academic institutions for community-based research?

No Activity

Minimal

Moderate

Significant

Optimal

N/A

I0c Facilitate access to resources for research?

No Activity

Minimal

Moderate

Significant

Optimal

N/A



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