

Just the Facts: Public Health and Accreditation

What is Public Health?

Public health is the practice of preventing disease and promoting good health within groups of people, from small communities to entire countries.

Who does it Impact?

- **Parents** – Public health efforts educate parents on proper nutrition and prenatal care to increase the chances of a healthy family.
- **Children** – Public health ensures that children are fully immunized, have healthy food options in school, and enjoy swimming in clean public pools.
- **You** – Public health protects the safety of the food we eat, the water we drink, and health of the environment in which we live.

"Health care is vital to all of us some of the time, but public health is vital to all of us all of the time."

*- C. Everett Koop
Former Surgeon General*

Who Promotes Public Health?

Local health departments (LHDs) are the backbone of the public health system, working in partnership with public and private entities to ensure the health of communities. All local health departments should operate according to the standards laid out by NACCHO in the *Operational Definition of a Functional Health Department*. These standards served as the basis for a process of national health department accreditation, rolling out in 2011.

What is Accreditation?

A process ensuring that a public health agency is committed to self-study and external review by peers in meeting standards and continuously enhancing the quality of services offered.

Who will Accredit Public Health Departments?

The Public Health Accreditation Board (PHAB) is a not-for-profit agency formed to develop and implement the voluntary national accreditation program for state, local, Tribal and territorial health departments.

How can a Local Governing Entity assist its LHD in Earning Accreditation?

- Encourage your LHO to apply for accreditation
- Sign a letter of support
- Budget for costs of accreditation
- Work towards meeting accreditation standards focused on governing boards and health department administration
- Celebrate and publicize successful accreditation applications
- Learn more about accreditation at www.naccho.org/accreditation