



For Immediate Release:
September 21, 2009

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**PHAB Announces the 30 Public Health Departments that will
Test Accreditation Program Nationwide**
Test Will Help to Shape the Future of Public Health

WASHINGTON, DC – The Public Health Accreditation Board (PHAB) today announced the 30 public health departments that will participate in a test of the national voluntary public health accreditation program. From fall 2009 through the end of 2010, the 30 sites, including 19 local, eight state, and three tribal health departments, will complete the accreditation process and provide valuable feedback that will be used to make improvements in the accreditation program prior to its national launch in 2011. The goal of the public health accreditation program is to improve and protect the health of every community by advancing the quality and performance of public health departments.

A list of the participating health departments is available at
<http://www.phaboard.org/>.

PHAB received over 145 applications from state, local and tribal health departments. To ensure that the test sites represented a diverse cross-section of the population, PHAB carefully selected health departments that vary in size, structure, population served, governance, geographic region, and degree of preparedness for accreditation.

“The test of the program is a critical step that moves us closer to a national voluntary accreditation program that is practical and promotes continuous quality improvement in health departments,” said PHAB President and Chief Executive Officer Kaye Bender, RN, PhD, FAAN. “The overwhelming response of applications signals that public health departments recognize the need for national standards and see their value. With accreditation status, public health departments will be able to demonstrate increased accountability and credibility to the public, funders, elected officials, and other stakeholders.”

“The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, as part of its efforts to improve health and health care for all Americans, is pleased to support PHAB and this the first testing of the national accreditation program” said James S. Marks, M.D., senior vice president and director of the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation’s Health Group. “We believe public health accreditation will be a big step to ensure that Americans everywhere can expect a high quality of public health services no matter where they live. We need *all* public health departments to be strong in order to make us a healthier nation.”

“A national program for public health agency accreditation is a key component in CDC’s efforts to strengthen the public health system across the country,” said Dr. Dennis Lenaway of the Office of Chief of Public Health Practice at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. “In the era of health reform, new threats like H1N1 influenza, and increased interest in having safe and healthy communities, public health agencies need to improve quality, accountability, and effectiveness in addressing health concerns nationwide.”

PHAB has the support of leading national public health organizations, including the Association of State and Territorial Health Officials (ASTHO), National Association of County and City Health Officials (NACCHO), National Association of Local Board of Health (NALBOH), and the National Indian Health Board (NIHB).

For more information about public health accreditation or the test of the program, contact Kaye Bender, President and CEO of PHAB, at 703-778-4554 or kbender@phaboard.org.

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PHAB is dedicated to advancing public health performance. With support from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, PHAB is working with leading public health experts from the field to develop a voluntary national accreditation program that will help public health departments assess their current capacity and guide them to become even better providers of quality service, thus promoting a healthier public.