



**Public Health Accreditation Board
Seeks a Commissioned Paper on the
Role of Public Health Departments in Achieving Health Equity**

October 2017

Public Health Accreditation Board

The Public Health Accreditation Board (PHAB) is the national non-profit organization that administers the voluntary accreditation process for state, Tribal, local and territorial public health departments. PHAB was incorporated in 2007 and is located in Alexandria, VA.

To date, there are 198 accredited health departments in the US, plus the integrated local public health department system in Florida. Another 162 health departments are going through the accreditation process, and are at varying steps in the process. PHAB is continually working to ensure that the accreditation requirements that health departments must meet for accreditation are current with the state-of-the-art public health practice, as public health evolves in its science-base and best practice identification.

Standards and Measures, Version 2.0

PHAB has published two versions of its accreditation standards and measures (Versions 1.0 and 1.5) and is currently initiating work on Version 2.0, which is expected to be completed for public vetting in late 2019. Steps that PHAB will take to develop Version 2.0 of the accreditation standards and measures include:

- A review of the published and gray literature is being conducted to identify potential topic areas in the accreditation standards and measures where the science-base has changed or the best practices have evolved.
- Now that PHAB has a large and varied number of accredited health departments, we have initiated tracking the psychometrics of the measures to see how health departments perform, as well as how well the measures actually measure what they were intended to measure. PHAB will also review questions and feedback PHAB has received about specific measures. PHAB will use these analyses as indicators of measures that may need to be reviewed for revision.
- PHAB is identifying topic areas for which additional information or conversation is needed in order to consider revisions of the standards and measures. Depending on the topic area, PHAB will either commission papers on the topics and/or will convene think tanks or expert panels to explore potential revisions.

Health Equity and Public Health Departments

The concept of health equity is increasingly being adopted and emphasized in the work that public health departments do. When PHAB held its first Health Equity Think Tank in February 2013, the work was just beginning to take shape, especially concerning what public health departments should be expected to do. Since that time, many health departments have recognized inequities as a fundamental cause of poor health outcomes among certain populations. Many of these health departments have undertaken concerted efforts to address structural inequities that are obstacles to good health. At the same time, organizations have been developing information and technical assistance resources to assist public health departments begin to address health inequities in the populations they serve (for example, The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the Health Equity Institute at San Francisco State University, and Human Impact Partners in Oakland,). PHAB's partner organizations (the Association of State and Territorial Health Officials, the National Association of County and City Health Officials, and the American Public Health Association) have also developed health equity technical assistance resources. Public health professionals' interest in the topic of health equity is evidenced by sizable attendance of webinars on the topic (for example, webinars provided by the Public Health National Center for Innovations, Human Impact Partners, and the Association of State and Territorial Health Officials).

Purpose of this Commissioned Paper

As PHAB is planning for the development of Version 2.0 of the accreditation standards and measures, health equity has been identified as an area where updated information needs to be obtained to inform that work. PHAB has done a literature review but, at this point, a limited amount of the health equity work that health departments do is in the published literature. PHAB is commissioning a paper in order to better understand the state of the art and direction of public health work on health equity. Once the paper has been completed, PHAB will convene a think tank of thought leaders to review the recommendations from the paper. A set of proposed requirements for Version 2.0 will be submitted to the Board of Directors for approval for public vetting.

Information to be Provided by this Commissioned Paper

PHAB is interested in (1) understanding what health departments are currently doing to address health equity (best and promising practices), (2) learning what guidelines and tools are now available to assist health departments' work in health equity, and (3) capturing model practices that could lead to changes in the accreditation standards and measures.

The commissioned paper will (1) describe health equity efforts where public health departments are either the leader or a strong, key partner; (2) provide descriptions of technical assistance resources, models, or tools that are available to public health departments; and (3) make recommendations concerning the types of activities that health departments should be expected to do to address health equity in the population they

serve. This information will be used by PHAB for further discussion and consideration for future accreditation standards.

Budget and Timing

The budget for this paper is \$25,000. The final paper is due to PHAB by close of business, January 31, 2018.

Letter of Interest

If interested in developing this commissioned paper, a letter of interest must be received by PHAB, no later than 5:00 p.m., eastern time, October 25, 2017. The letter may be submitted by email to Robin Wilcox at rwilcox@phaboard.org.

The letter should include a description of the individual(s) experience and/or expertise specific to health equity. The letter should also provide a short description of the proposed approach to be used to develop the paper. The letter should be 500 words or less.

PHAB will respond to all individuals who submit a letter of interest, no later than November 8, 2017.

For Further Information

Interested faculty may contact Robin Wilcox, PHAB Chief Program Officer, rwilcox@phaboard.org or Jessica Kronstadt, PHAB Director of Research and Evaluation, jkronstadt@phaboard.org to discuss their potential interest in performing this work.