

# PHAB Accreditation Impact Series

**Topic #1: Accreditation strengthens engagement in quality improvement (QI) and performance management in order to improve health departments' ability to serve community.**

## *What has PHAB Learned about Accreditation's Impact on Quality Improvement and Performance Management?*

Read how health departments describe how accreditation has advanced their quality improvement:



### **Quality Improvement: The 'New Way of Doing Business'**

*PHAB accreditation is fueling a culture of performance management and continuous quality improvement throughout Tarrant County Public Health in Fort Worth, Texas.* <http://www.phaboard.org/news-room/quality-improvement-the-new-way-of-doing-business/>



### **How Accreditation is Transforming Wood County Health Department**

*In Wisconsin Rapids, a culture of continuous quality improvement is no longer just another thing: 'It's a part of everything, as it should be.'* <http://www.phaboard.org/news-room/how-accreditation-is-transforming-wood-county-health-department/>

Below are additional findings about the link between accreditation and QI.

- 96% of health departments that had been accredited for one year agreed or strongly agreed that accreditation “stimulated quality improvement and performance improvement activities.”\*
- 96% of health departments that had been accredited for one year agreed or strongly agreed that they “use or plan to use information from QI processes to inform decisions.”
- 91% of health departments that had been accredited for one year agreed or strongly agreed that “As a result of the accreditation process, our health department has a strong culture of QI.”\*
- One health department said accreditation acts as a “stimulus...for continuous quality improvement and performance management in our daily practice.”\*
- In their Annual Reports, health departments describe a wide range of QI projects that they believe have led to improved efficiency and effectiveness. Here are selected projects:
  - Decrease human-resources processing time for new applications
  - Respond more efficiently to requests for proposals
  - Develop process to share surveillance data with surveillance sites, partners, staff
  - Respond more quickly to requests for environmental health information
  - Improve outreach and coordination of services for breastfeeding women
  - Increase the proportion of known animal bites reported within 48 hours
  - Decrease frequency of a particular food establishment violation
  - Improve process for gathering/analyzing customer satisfaction surveys

To read more about the link between accreditation and QI, see: Beitsch LM, Riley W, Bender K. Embedding quality improvement into accreditation: evolving from theory to practice. *Journal of Public Health Management and Practice*, 2014, 20(1), 57-60.

[http://journals.lww.com/jphmp/Fulltext/2014/01000/Embedding\\_Quality\\_Improvement\\_Into\\_Accreditation\\_.15.aspx](http://journals.lww.com/jphmp/Fulltext/2014/01000/Embedding_Quality_Improvement_Into_Accreditation_.15.aspx)

\* Findings from the ongoing evaluation of accreditation being conducted by NORC at the University of Chicago. As of December 2016, 69 health departments had responded to the survey one year after they were accredited. For more information on the evaluation, see: [www.phaboard.org/research-and-evaluation/](http://www.phaboard.org/research-and-evaluation/).

**Accreditation strengthens engagement in quality improvement and performance management in order to improve health departments' ability to serve community.**

**Messaging**

The table below summarizes some of the key messages related to the link between accreditation and QI and their potential audiences.

Message	HD Directors	HD Staff	Governing Entities	Policymakers	Community Partners	Funders	The Media	The Overall Community	CDC Transition
As public health resources have grown increasingly scarce yet demand for services has increased, strengthening engagement in QI helps health departments do more with less.			✓						
Engaging in QI can enable HDs to provide expanded and improved services to the community at the same, or at a potentially reduced, cost, since processes are more efficient and effective.	✓		✓						
Engaging in QI can help health departments identify ways to improve how they deliver services to the community.	✓						✓	✓	
Engaging in QI improves management processes used by the leadership team.	✓								
Information from QI processes can be used to inform policy implementation.	✓								
Having performance data can help the health department identify key areas for improvement.	✓								
Strengthened engagement in QI and the achievement of measurable improvements identifies critical areas (strengths and weaknesses) on which to focus.	✓	✓	✓	✓					
Engaging in QI and performance management helps develop a stronger customer focus by making processes more efficient and effective.								✓	
Fostering a culture of quality improves the capacity of the health department to better serve its community, which may result in an increase of community partnerships and funding.	✓								
QI improves the credibility and accountability of the HD within the community and thus assures community partners that collaborating with the health department is desirable and valuable.				✓	✓				

**Accreditation strengthens engagement in quality improvement and performance management in order to improve health departments' ability to serve community.**

Message	HD Directors	HD Staff	Governing Entities	Policymakers	Community Partners	Funders	The Media	The Overall Community	CDC Transition
Strengthened engagement in QI and the achievement of measurable improvements tells the community that the HD is committed to improving the delivery of services by achieving measurable improvements in efficiency, effectiveness, performance, and accountability.			✓						
Engaging in QI can help health departments operate more efficiently and effectively (time saved, reduced number of steps), and increase effectiveness of programs, services or processes.	✓					✓			
Engaging in QI helps health departments operate more efficiently and effectively, which can help you know that your investment in the health department is likely to get the biggest bang for the buck.						✓			
Engaging in QI improves communications across all departments, breaks down silos, encourages teamwork, sparks innovation and increases staff morale.	✓	✓							
Engaging in QI motivates staff; PHAB standards require training and hands-on practice in doing QI.		✓							
QI empowers staff by giving each staff member a voice in identifying ways to strengthen the HD.		✓							