



Public Health Accreditation Board
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Public Health Accreditation Board Awards Five-Year Accreditation to 17 Public Health Departments

PHAB-Accredited Health Departments Now Serving 45 Percent of U.S. Population

Alexandria, VA — The Public Health Accreditation Board (PHAB) has awarded five-year national accreditation status to 17 governmental public health departments. The 14 local and 3 state health departments accredited November 10, 2015 represent the largest group of candidates to achieve the prestigious designation since the national accreditation program began in 2011. With these accreditation decisions, 45 percent of the U.S. population, or nearly 139 million people, are now served by health departments that meet PHAB's rigorous national standards for delivering quality programs and services to their communities.

PHAB, the nonprofit organization that administers the national public health accreditation program, aims to improve and protect the health of the public by advancing the quality and performance of the nation's state, local, Tribal, and territorial public health departments.

National accreditation status was awarded November 10, 2015 to:

- City of Wauwatosa Health Department, Wauwatosa, Wisconsin
- Clay County Public Health Center, Liberty, Missouri
- Davis County Health Department, Farmington, Utah
- Erie County Health Department, Sandusky, Ohio
- Huron County Public Health, Norwalk, Ohio
- Jefferson County Department of Health, Birmingham, Alabama
- Knox County Health Department, Knoxville, Tennessee
- Medina County Health Department, Medina, Ohio
- Mid-Michigan District Health Department, Stanton, Michigan
- Naugatuck Valley Health District, Seymour, Connecticut
- New Mexico Department of Health, Santa Fe, New Mexico
- Ohio Department of Health, Columbus, Ohio
- Philadelphia Department of Public Health, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
- Rhode Island Department of Health, Providence, Rhode Island
- Tarrant County Public Health, Fort Worth, Texas
- Tazewell County Health Department, Tremont, Illinois

- Township of Bloomfield Department of Health & Human Services, Bloomfield, New Jersey

“We are so proud of these 17 health departments for demonstrating their commitment to improving the conditions in which their communities can be healthy,” said PHAB President and CEO Kaye Bender, PhD, RN, FAAN. “We are also excited because these 17 accreditations include health departments in five new states — Alabama, New Jersey, New Mexico, Rhode Island, and Tennessee — all part of the growing family of states that are home to one or more PHAB-accredited health departments.”

The accreditation decisions bring the number of PHAB-accredited health departments to 96, with 33 states plus the District of Columbia now home to at least one PHAB-accredited health department within their borders. Two states — Illinois and Ohio — currently have 9 PHAB-accredited health departments each. The benefits of accreditation are far reaching. According to a recent evaluation of PHAB’s accreditation program conducted by NORC at the University of Chicago, health departments accredited for one year agreed that accreditation stimulates quality improvement and performance improvement opportunities, stimulates greater accountability and transparency, strengthens management processes, and helps health departments document their capacity to deliver critical public health services to their communities.

Nicole Alexander-Scott, MD, MPH, director of the newly accredited Rhode Island Department of Health, praised the rigorous assessment process required for PHAB accreditation, noting, “We have built on our strengths and put quality improvement projects in place that have made the Rhode Island Department of Health a more efficient, effective organization. The national standards of quality and performance to which we will now be held will be instrumental in our work to eliminate health disparities and promote health equity by improving health outcomes for all Rhode Islanders in every ZIP code throughout the state.”

In Tennessee, Knox County Health Department Director Martha Buchanan, MD, said the honor of becoming the first health department in Tennessee to achieve PHAB accreditation is “a reflection of the dedication of our staff, who work every day to protect the health and improve the lives of everyone in Knox County. Our intention in seeking accreditation is about doing the right things for the right reasons and improving the health of everyone in our community. I am grateful for our staff and community partners who supported, and continue to support, our efforts toward achieving and maintaining accreditation.”

Commenting on the accreditation of the Philadelphia Department of Public Health, Philadelphia Health Commissioner James W. Buehler, MD, emphasized that becoming accredited is not just a one-time “stamp of approval” but an ongoing process. “It means that we have committed to a path of ongoing improvement as we strive to fulfill our commitment to provide the best possible service to our city,” Buehler said. “The Philadelphia Department of Public Health has demonstrated that we have the full range of capacities needed to fulfill our mission to protect and promote the health of all Philadelphians.”

Public health departments are on the front lines of improving and protecting the health and well-being of people and communities. Across the nation, health departments provide services aimed at promoting healthy behaviors; preventing diseases and injuries; ensuring access to safe food, water,

clean air, and life-saving immunizations; and preparing for and responding to public health emergencies.

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About the Public Health Accreditation Board

The Public Health Accreditation Board (PHAB) was created to serve as the national public health accrediting body and is jointly funded by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation. The development of national public health accreditation has involved, and is supported by, public health leaders and practitioners from the national, tribal, state, local, and territorial levels. Learn more about PHAB or sign up for the PHAB e-newsletter by visiting www.phaboard.org.