



Public Health Accreditation Board
1600 Duke St., Suite 200
Alexandria, VA 22314
703.778.4549, www.phaboard.org

For Immediate Release:
Wednesday, Aug. 24, 2016

Contact: Teddi Nicolaus
Phone: (703) 778-4549 ext. 118
Email: tnicolaus@phaboard.org

Public Health Accreditation Board Awards Five-Year Accreditation to 16 Public Health Departments

Cherokee Nation Becomes First Tribal Public Health Department in U.S. to Achieve PHAB Accreditation

Alexandria, VA — In keeping with their mission to improve the conditions in which their communities can be healthy, another 16 governmental public health departments have achieved five-year accreditation through the Public Health Accreditation Board (PHAB). With this week's decisions, the transformational benefits of being served by a PHAB-accredited health department now reach more than 170 million people, or 55 percent of the U.S. population. Today's announcement also heralds the attainment of another historic mile marker with the accreditation of the first Tribal public health department in the nation.

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

"With these decisions, PHAB has now accredited 150 health departments and one integrated local public health department system, collectively covering more than half the U.S. population," said PHAB President and CEO Kaye Bender, PhD, RN, FAAN. "These health departments were so interested in ensuring a high quality of public health services that they put their work out for peer review against national standards, and were found to be in conformity. That's government at its finest."

Marking another crucial milestone for the national accreditation program, the Cherokee Nation this week became the first Tribal public health department in the United States to achieve accreditation through PHAB.

"PHAB is honored to award national accreditation to Cherokee Nation — the first Tribal health department in the country to achieve this designation," Dr. Bender said. "Cherokee Nation has set an outstanding example for other Tribes across the country in achieving national public health department accreditation. Their commitment to the members of their Tribes and the people they serve is well-represented by their hard work."

At Cherokee Nation Health Services in Tahlequah, Oklahoma, staff see the achievement of national accreditation as an affirmation of the crucial role of public health in their communities and as a demonstration of their serious commitment to both improving health and delivering quality public health services to all.

"Achieving accreditation is important to Tribes, as we must focus on the strengths we possess in our communities for solving problems and improving the health status of our People," said Lisa Pivec, MS, Senior Director of Public Health for Cherokee Nation. "We must focus on prevention, protection, and promotion of our resources and our Elders. Accreditation helps us examine our public health practices and improve the quality of the services we have been entrusted with to deliver to our communities. In exploring and embracing the PHAB standards we can both learn new strategies while sharing those customs that make each of our Tribes great."

The 16 health departments accredited by PHAB this week range in size from the Waushara County Health Department in Wautoma, WI, which serves a population of 24,500, to Gwinnett, Newton and Rockdale County Health Departments in Lawrenceville, Georgia, which serves more than 1 million people. Several large city health departments also achieved national accreditation this week, including Minneapolis Health Department, which provides public health services to a population of nearly 400,000.

"The Minneapolis Health Department is delighted to have received accreditation from PHAB," said Commissioner of Health Gretchen Musicant, MPH. "Our accreditation site visit was an affirmation of our community engagement and our commitment to cultural competency across the agency — key strengths for serving our urban population. The process has helped formalize best practices within our agency. We look forward to being part of the cohort of accredited agencies — continuing to improve the quality of our services to the community."

According to a report published in the August 12, 2016 edition of *Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report* (MMWR), the benefits of PHAB's national accreditation program are far-reaching. The report, "Evaluating the Impact of National Public Health Department Accreditation — United States, 2016," draws from surveys of accredited health departments conducted by NORC at the University of Chicago and finds that the overwhelming majority of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that accreditation stimulated quality and performance improvement opportunities within the health department, allowed the health department to better identify strengths and weaknesses, helped the health department document the capacity to deliver the three core functions of public health and the 10 Essential Public Health Services, stimulated greater accountability and transparency within the health department, and improved the management processes used by the leadership team in the health department, among other benefits. The full report is available at <http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/65/wr/mm6531a3.htm>.

PHAB awarded five-year accreditation status on August 17, 2016 to:

- Benton-Franklin Health District, Kennewick, Washington
- Bloomington Public Health/Public Health Alliance of Bloomington, Edina, and Richfield; Bloomington, Minnesota
- Cherokee Nation Health Services, Tahlequah, Oklahoma
- Dakota County Public Health Department, West St. Paul, Minnesota
- Gwinnett, Newton and Rockdale County Health Departments, Lawrenceville, Georgia
- La Crosse County Health Department, La Crosse, Wisconsin
- Lake County General Health District, Painesville, Ohio
- Lorain County General Health District, Elyria, Ohio
- Louisville Metro Public Health and Wellness, Louisville, Kentucky
- Minneapolis Health Department, Minneapolis, Minnesota
- Mohave County Department of Public Health, Kingman, Arizona
- Portland Public Health Division, Portland, Maine
- Prince William Health District, Manassas, Virginia
- Saint Paul-Ramsey County Public Health, St. Paul, Minnesota
- Waushara County Health Department, Wautoma, Wisconsin
- Williamson County and Cities Health District, Georgetown, Texas

For more information, contact Teddi Nicolaus at (703) 778-4549, ext. 118, or email tnicolaus@phaboard.org. Learn more about PHAB and accreditation at <http://www.phaboard.org>.

About 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](#).