



Public Health Accreditation Board  
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## **154 Million U.S. Residents Now Protected by PHAB-Accredited Public Health Departments**

### ***Number of Health Departments Accredited through the Public Health Accreditation Board Now Surpasses the 100 Mark***

**Alexandria, VA** — State and local public health departments in the United States work every day to fulfill their crucial mission of protecting and promoting the health of the communities they serve. Through the achievement of national accreditation, a growing number of health departments have demonstrated a commitment to having their work reviewed against national standards. This week, the Public Health Accreditation Board (PHAB) announced it has awarded national accreditation status to 21 health departments and one integrated local public health department system. The decisions mark a new milestone as the number of governmental public health departments accredited through the nonprofit national organization now surpasses 100. Since the launch of the national accreditation program in 2011, 117 public health departments and one integrated local public health department system have achieved accreditation through PHAB, which aims to improve and protect the health of the public by advancing and ultimately transforming the quality and performance of the nation's state, local, Tribal and territorial public health departments. With this week's accreditation decisions, the transformational benefits of being served by a PHAB-accredited health department now reach 154 million people, or 50 percent of the U.S. population.

"Surpassing the 100 mark demonstrates the field's recognition of accreditation as a way to assure the public that their health department is doing all it can to protect and improve health," said PHAB Board of Directors Chair Ray M. (Bud) Nicola, MD, MHSA. "Given the young age of our accreditation system, this milestone moves us nationally toward the tipping point where the public expects their state and local health departments to meet national public health standards."

To receive national accreditation, a health department or integrated local public health department system must undergo a rigorous, multi-faceted, peer-reviewed assessment process to ensure it meets or exceeds a set of public health quality standards and measures.

"A recent Harvard Business Review article noted that administrators must identify new ways to ensure quality in their work," said PHAB President and CEO Kaye Bender, PhD, RN, FAAN. "The diverse array of health departments accredited this week indicates a growing commitment to improving the quality of the services provided to their communities. In this group, we have state health departments, large city health departments, medium-to-small health departments, and an entire local public health department system. The communities these health departments serve should be pleased that their governmental agencies have put their work out for national review and have been accredited as a result."

For the newly accredited Oregon Health Authority, Public Health Division, in Portland, Oregon, achieving PHAB accreditation "was a challenging journey, but well worth the benefits," said Director Lillian Shirley.

"The accreditation process was an opportunity for the Oregon Public Health Division to examine our entire organization from inside out," Shirley said. "Nearly all our staff participated in one way or another, and we

learned many ways to improve the practice of public health in our state. We're thrilled to be accredited, especially as we move forward into statewide public health modernization."

In Columbus, Nebraska, East Central District Health Department (ECDHD) this week became the first health department in Nebraska to achieve PHAB accreditation. Covering a 2,200 square-mile, four-county area, ECDHD serves a culturally diverse population of fewer than 52,000 people.

"We are so pleased to be the first of what we hope will be many departments in Nebraska to achieve accreditation," said Executive Director Rebecca J. Rayman. "One message we would like to convey is that accreditation is possible and worthwhile for rural departments. Going through the PHAB process has made us more community focused, more aware of our documentation, and has improved our services."

National accreditation status was awarded March 8, 2016 to:

- Bullitt County Health Department, Shepherdsville, KY
- City of Long Beach Department of Health and Human Services, Long Beach, CA
- Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment, Denver, CO
- DeKalb County Board of Health, Decatur, GA
- Delaware Division of Public Health, Dover, DE
- East Central District Health Department, Columbus, NE
- Florida Integrated Local Public Health Department System, Tallahassee, FL
- Franklin County Public Health, Columbus, OH
- Henry County Health Department, Napoleon, OH
- Lake County Health Department and Community Health Center, Waukegan, IL
- Mesa County Health Department, Grand Junction, CO
- Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services, Jefferson City, MO
- Oregon Health Authority, Public Health Division, Portland, OR
- Public Health-Idaho North Central District, Lewiston, ID
- Putnam County Department of Health, Brewster, NY
- Santa Clara County Public Health Department, San Jose, CA
- Stratford Health Department, Stratford, CT
- Washington County Department of Public Health and Environment, Stillwater, MN
- Whatcom County Health Department, Bellingham, WA
- Wicomico County Health Department, Salisbury, MD
- Worcester Division of Public Health/Central Massachusetts Regional Public Health Alliance, Worcester, MA
- Yavapai County Community Health Services, Prescott, AZ

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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](http://www.phaboard.org).