



*Advancing
public health
performance*



PHAB Toolkit Document

TIME TO CELEBRATE

Ten Ways to Celebrate Your Health Department's Accreditation

Congratulations on achieving the milestone of national accreditation of your health department! Accreditation demonstrates that your health department meets or exceeds the rigorous standards established by PHAB. Now it's time to celebrate your health department's accomplishment! Sharing the good news of your accreditation is a great way to raise awareness of your achievement within the community, including among the general public, your community partners, policymakers, and funders. There are lots of ways to celebrate your accreditation.

Here are ten ideas to get you started. We know you'll come up with your own great ideas, and we'd love to hear about them. PHAB invites you to [share photos](#) from your celebrations and other events, including brief, 200-word write-ups. With your permission, we might include your photos and news in future PHAB communications material, or display them on the PHAB website.

1 Get on the Media's Radar Screen

Your health department is one of the first in the nation to seek and successfully achieve national accreditation through PHAB. One of the first things you'll need to do is send a news release announcing your accreditation to local newspapers, radio and TV stations, magazines and trade journals. Make sure to print your [news release](#) on your health department's letterhead. Consider adding personalized quotes from your health department's director and representatives of your governing entity. This is also an opportunity to provide information about your health department's important role within the community. You might also want to conduct a news conference to announce your accreditation. Invite local reporters to your news conference, and have the director of your health department and other key public health officials discuss the benefits of national public health department accreditation in speeches and panel discussions.

2 Hold a Celebration

Grab the balloons and noisemakers! Holding a community celebration at your health department is an excellent way to raise the community's awareness of your achievement. It will take some planning, but such an event creates buzz, builds goodwill in the community and offers opportunities to educate and inform the public about the high-quality services your health department provides. Your invitation list could include the general public, elected officials, funders, community partners, and the local media. Your event can feature healthy snacks, tours of your facility, and free preventive screenings. The media will view your event as a "photo op", so be sure to invite them to your celebrations! You'll also want to show the brief, [congratulatory video](#) created for you by Dr. F. Douglas Scutchfield, chair of PHAB's Accreditation Committee.

3 Make it a Banner Day

Creating a banner to hang over your health department's front door or on a wall in your reception area is an excellent way to celebrate your accreditation. Vinyl banners are a great option for health departments looking to reduce their marketing costs. In addition to being huge attention-getters, banners are inexpensive, easy to create, and readily available on the internet or through retail outlets, such as sign shops. PHAB doesn't want to stifle your creativity by providing you with a banner template or limiting your choice of words. (Hey, we're cool with you saying "We did it!") However, we do request that the PHAB logo be used according to [PHAB's guidelines](#). For additional guidance, you may use the language that appears on your plaque: "Accredited [Month, day, year] for Five Years," or "Meeting the national standards of public health department performance." Consider using photos from your community in your banners, and don't forget to [send PHAB](#) some photos of your banners.

4 Get the Knack for Unveiling Your Plaque

Even if you don't hold a celebration, we strongly encourage your health department to unveil your plaque at an official ceremony – perhaps even during a news conference. Your plaque and certificate should arrive approximately two to three weeks after you receive notification of your accredited status. Invite the community, business leaders, elected officials, partner colleagues, and the media to attend your plaque-unveiling ceremony. Take time to share the meaning of the plaque with attendees through presentations by key staff and public health officials. You'll also want to show the brief, [congratulatory video](#) created for you by Dr. F. Douglas Scutchfield, chair of PHAB's Accreditation Committee. Consider combining the ceremony with a tour of your facility or other awareness programs.

5 Don't Hide Your Pride

Once you've unveiled your plaque at your official ceremony (see No. 4), you will want to prominently display your plaque at the main entrance to your health department, such as on a wall in the reception area, or in a glass showcase. Your plaque is a testament that your health department has been rigorously examined and meets or exceeds national standards that promote continuous quality improvement for public health. Your accreditation plaque and certificate should arrive approximately two to three weeks after notification of your accredited status. For a fee, you may order duplicate plaques and certificates by contacting PHAB Communications Manager Teddi Nicolaus at (703) 778-4549 ext. 118, or via email at tnicolaus@phaboard.org.

6 Put on Your Marketing Thinking Cap

Promoting your accreditation to your community will build awareness of your services and strengthen your health department's reputation. As an accredited health department, you are entitled to incorporate the PHAB logo into your marketing materials, including on your stationery, business cards, flyers and brochures. Keep in mind that the logo is proprietary to PHAB and must be used according to [PHAB guidelines](#). For additional guidance, you may use the language that appears on your plaque: "Accredited [Month, day, year] for Five Years," or "Meeting the national standards of public health department performance." Consider developing flyers or brochures to tell your community, in easy-to-understand language, about the [importance of accreditation](#). Distribute these materials in your reception area, include them with your mailings, and distribute them at community events such as health fairs. Encourage health department staff to attach a note about your accreditation to their email signatures. If you use a recorded message when callers are on hold, consider noting your accreditation in the message

7 Show Your True Colors

As an accredited health department, you are entitled to use the PHAB logo on your marketing materials, including on your stationery, business cards and flyers. Keep in mind that the logo is proprietary to the Public Health Accreditation Board and can only be used in the specified colors and according to the guidelines. For additional guidance, you may use the language that appears on your plaque: "Accredited [Month, day, year] for Five Years," or "Meeting the national standards of public health department performance." You may also use the PHAB logo on your newsletters, banners, posters, and other signage. If you have additional questions regarding the use of the PHAB logo, or questions about your marketing plans, please contact PHAB's Communications Manager at tnicolaus@phaboard.org.

8 Deliver the Letter (the sooner the better!)

Achieving accreditation through PHAB is a rigorous process that demonstrates your commitment to continuous quality improvement. Promptly sending a personalized letter on your health department's letterhead to community partners, local business leaders, friends, and elected officials is another way of announcing your accomplishment. For this particular exercise, a letter sent the old-fashioned way -- via U.S. mail -- has an edge over email, so make sure you have plenty of stamps on hand. Decide which audiences you wish to reach, and tailor this [simple letter](#) as needed. Keep in mind that accreditation can be difficult to explain, and many people are unfamiliar with the concept. Tuck an informational brochure inside the envelope explaining that their local hospital and schools have long seen the value of accreditation, and now their health department is also accredited.

9 Give Something Back

Participating in the rigorous accreditation process and achieving the milestone of national accreditation of your health department was a long journey. Now that your health department has earned the status of national accreditation, you might want to consider giving something back. As a nationally accredited health department, you are now an ambassador for public health department accreditation. There are a range of opportunities available to you for showing and sharing your support for national accreditation, including accepting and participating in speaking engagements and signing up for teaching opportunities and webinars. And while you're at it, don't hesitate to tell others about how accreditation has improved the quality and performance of your health department.

10 Finally ... Give Yourself a Pat on the Back!

Once again, PHAB congratulates you on achieving the status of national accreditation of your health department. We know it was a long and at times challenging journey leading up to the moment that you received notification of your accreditation -- but you did it! Now it's time to pat yourselves on the back for a job well done. Set aside a special time to show your health department staff that you appreciate their teamwork. Honor your staff's hard work by treating them to dinner, a picnic, or a catered lunch. Consider giving each of them a small gift as a token of your appreciation, such as a framed certificate. And don't forget to [send PHAB](#) a photo of your staff celebration.