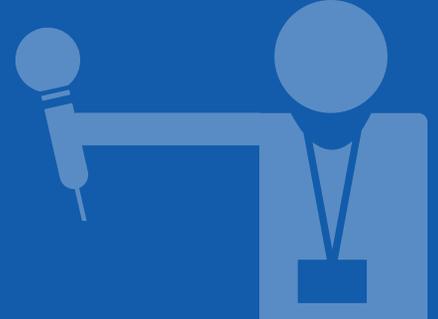




*Advancing  
public health  
performance*



PHAB Toolkit Document

# SAMPLE INTERVIEW

## Congratulations on achieving PHAB accreditation!

Once your news release goes out to the world, it's likely that a member of the press will want to interview your health department's director or designated spokesperson about your accomplishment. This is your chance to share the good news of your accreditation with thousands, maybe even millions, through newspapers, television, radio, websites, and blogs.

It's been said that many folks would rather have a root canal than be interviewed by the press. But chatting with a reporter is painless — even fun — if you are prepared. Use these mock interview questions to practice your technique. Also, many reporters might not immediately grasp what accreditation is all about, and might appreciate receiving some suggested questions from you — such as the following — prior to the interview.

**Best of luck to you!**

## Sample Interview

**Your health department is one of the first in the nation to receive accreditation through the Public Health Accreditation Board. What does it mean to receive accreditation status?**

It means that our health department [use name] stands out among the best in the nation. People expect their hospitals and schools to be accredited. Now their public health department is also accredited. Accreditation means that the [use health department's name] has met national standards for high quality public health services, leadership, and accountability. With accreditation, we are telling the community that our health department is a top performer and that we are meeting the public health needs of those we serve as effectively as possible. With accreditation, we are demonstrating increased accountability and credibility to everyone — the public, funders, elected officials, and partner organizations with which we work.



# SAMPLE INTERVIEW

## What is the goal of the public health department accreditation program?

The goal of the national program is to improve and protect the health of the public by advancing the quality and performance of all health departments in the country – state, local, territorial, and tribal. The accreditation program provides standards and a process that promotes ongoing quality improvement in public health departments.

## What are some of the benefits of accreditation?

For public health departments, accreditation makes a lot of sense. It provides valuable, measurable feedback about how we are performing, which allows us to better protect, promote, and preserve our community's health. Accreditation can help public health departments ensure the community that we are spending money wisely and providing the quality of services the public wants and needs. Also, in these difficult economic times, accreditation gives us a framework for setting priorities. With all of the vital public health services health departments provide to their communities, we have to be as smart as possible with existing resources.

## We are told that accreditation also promotes consistency in meeting standards. How so?

With an ever-increasing number of health departments now applying for and becoming accredited, you will be able to expect to receive the same quality of public health services wherever you go in the United States, whether you live in a city in the Northeast, a suburb on the West coast, or a Midwest town. The expectation is that accreditation will strengthen public health departments and the services they provide.

## Why have we not had a national accreditation program for public health until now?

Public health departments play a critical — but often unrecognized — role in promoting and preserving the health of people in communities across the country. Despite the important role health departments play in our communities, there has not been a national accreditation program for ensuring their accountability and quality — until now. Other community services and organizations have seen the value of accreditation, such as schools, daycare centers, police departments, and hospitals. Also, as the public health field faces increasing challenges from epidemics and disaster preparedness, it is more important than ever that systems are in place to ensure public health's effectiveness and promote a high quality of services.

## Was the accreditation process that your health department underwent rigorous?

Very much so. The process looked at our programs, policies, procedures, tasks, and day-to-day operations, including how we work with our local board of health, who oversees how we spend our money and how we engage the public. We underwent a thorough review that included a site visit by public health peers who assessed our performance against standards. When you look at our seal of accreditation, you can rest assured that it means the [name of your health department] has undergone a rigorous, multi-faceted, peer-reviewed assessment process to ensure it meets or exceeds a set of quality standards.



# SAMPLE INTERVIEW

## Do most people understand what health departments do, and what services they provide?

That's a very good question, and the answer is that many people are unaware of what public health is or does. In fact, public health workers perform their duties so well that their accomplishments are often invisible to the community. Public health departments work to create conditions in which people can be healthy in their communities — where they live, work, and play. In cities, towns, and states across the nation, public health departments play a critical role in 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.

## Public health departments know better than anyone the health needs of their communities. What are some of the health challenges facing our community?

Note: This is where you can make a connection as to how accreditation will allow your health department to address important health issues even better by setting new standards for your health department. In just a few sentences, provide some specific examples or a compelling snapshot of your community's greatest health challenges and how you are addressing them. For example, are you working on campaigns targeting childhood obesity or smoking? Describe how you are working with the schools, churches, or other sectors of the community to promote health.

## Who administers the national public health accreditation program?

The program is managed by the Public Health Accreditation Board, or PHAB, which is a nonprofit organization that was created specifically to develop, implement, and manage the national program. PHAB is jointly funded by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation. The national accreditation program was developed over a decade-long process with input from thousands of public health professionals, public health researchers, academics, and other technical experts. The program is supported by the nation's leading public health organizations, including the American Public Health Association, Association of State and Territorial Health Officials, National Association of County and City Health Officials, National Association of Local Boards of Health, and National Indian Health Board.