Public Health Department Accreditation and the Public Health Nurse

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Objectives

• Discuss the current status of national public health accreditation.
• Describe lessons learned to date from early data on the benefits of accreditation.
• Discuss the relationship between public health nursing and accreditation.
• Describe the role of the public health nurse in accreditation.

Current Status
Public Health Accreditation Board (PHAB)

PHAB is a national accrediting organization for public health departments:

- State health departments
- Local (city, county, regional) health departments
- Tribal health departments
- Territorial health departments

The goal of the voluntary national accreditation program is to improve and protect the health of the public by advancing the quality and performance of state, local, tribal, and territorial public health departments.

What is Public Health Accreditation?

- The measurement of health department performance against a set of nationally recognized, practice-focused and evidenced-based standards.
- The issuance of recognition of achievement of accreditation within a specified time frame by a nationally recognized entity.
- The continual development, revision, and distribution of public health standards.
PHAB 12 Domains

**Based on Core Functions of Public Health & Ten Essential Public Health Services**

- Conduct assessments focused on population health status and health issues facing the community
- Investigate health problems and environmental public health hazards to protect the community
- Inform and educate about public health issues and functions
- Engage with the community to identify and solve health problems
- Engage with the community to identify and solve health problems
- Develop public health policies and plans
- Enforce public health laws and regulations
- Promote strategies to improve access to healthcare services
- Maintain a competent public health workforce
- Evaluate and continuously improve processes, programs, and interventions
- Contribute to and apply the evidence base of public health
- Maintain administrative and management capacity
- Build a strong and effective relationship with governing entity
Special Emphasis in 2015

- Public Health and Health Care Intersection
- Vital Records/Statistics Customization
- Army Public Health Customization
- Small/rural/frontier
- QI Leaders Academy
- Foundational capabilities

Why Were The Initial Health Departments Interested in Accreditation?

- Transparency and Accountability
- Most other governmental and health related services are accredited: hospitals, schools, child care centers, police departments, fire departments, etc.
- Provides a priority setting framework
- Commitment to improving their services
Why Were The Initial Health Departments Interested in Accreditation?

- Increased public engagement and support
- Increased staff morale
- Risk Management
- Potential for increased funding in the future; already using their accreditation certificate in grant proposals

The Relationship Between Accreditation and Quality Improvement

Accreditation

Quality Improvement

Lessons Learned to Date
Free Online Issue of JPHMP


Early Evaluation Results

• 97% of health departments that have had their PHAB site visit strongly agree that "Going through the accreditation process has improved the performance of our health department."
• According to HDs that have had their site visit, accreditation:
  – Identifies strengths and areas for improvement
  – Strengthens internal and external partnerships
  – Encourages HDs to prioritize and address long-standing concerns
  – Acts as a "stimulus…for continuous quality improvement and performance management in our daily practice"

^ From PHAB evaluation of 33 health departments.

Early Evaluation Results

• Among health departments applying for accreditation, 95% or more believe that accreditation will:*
  – Stimulate quality and performance improvement opportunities
  – Allow HD to better identify strengths and weaknesses
  – Improve management processes
  – Stimulate greater accountability and transparency within HD

* From NORC at the University of Chicago evaluation survey of 62 health departments that have applied for accreditation.
Early Evaluation Results

• Health departments also reported the following motivators for applying for accreditation:
  – Accountability to external stakeholders
  – Documentation of HD’s capacity to deliver the 3 core functions and 10 Essential Public Health Services
  – Credibility of HD within community
  – Relationships with community stakeholders
  – Competitiveness for funding opportunities
  – Communication with governing entity

*From NORC at the University of Chicago evaluation survey of 62 health departments that have applied for accreditation.

Late Breaking Accreditation Evaluation Information

Public Health Nurses and Accreditation
Scope & Standards of Public Health Nursing Practice

- Purpose: to document and guide public health nursing practice.
- What it says:
  - Public health nurses focus on population health
  - Incorporate ongoing surveillance and assessment
  - Goals are to promote health & wellness, prevent disease, disability & premature death, and improve quality of life in communities
  - Interventions to address health priorities are performed through the identification, implementation and evaluation of evidence based programs and services


Scope & Standards of Public Health Nursing Practice

- Core Public Health Functions (3 functions)
- Principles of Public Health Nursing Practice (8 principles)
- Essential Public Health Services (10 services)
- Core Competencies for Public Health Nursing Practice (8 Domains)
- ANA Standards of Public Health Nursing Practice (17 Standards)


Core Competencies for Public Health Nurses

- Domain 1: Analysis & Assessment
- Domain 2: Policy Development & Program Planning
- Domain 3: Communication
- Domain 4: Cultural Competency
- Domain 5: Community Dimensions of Practice
- Domain 6: Basic Public Health Sciences
- Domain 7: Financial Planning & Management
- Domain 8: Leadership & Systems Level Thinking

What are Public Health Nursing Standards of Practice?

“…authoritative statements of the duties that all registered nurses, regardless of role, population, or specialty, are expected to perform competently.”

Public Health Nursing Principles

- The client or unit of care is the population
- The primary obligation is to achieve the greatest good for the greatest number of people or the population as a whole.
- Public health nurses collaborate with the client as an equal partner.
- Primary prevention is the priority in selecting appropriate activities
- Public health nursing focuses on strategies that create healthy environmental, social, and economic conditions in which populations may thrive
- A public health nurse is obligated to actively identify and reach out to all who might benefit from a specific activity or service
- Optimal use of available resources and creation of new evidence-based strategies is necessary to assure the best overall improvement in the health of the population
- Collaboration with other professions, populations, organization and stakeholder groups is the most effective way to promote and protect the health of the people


Field of Public Health

3 core competencies
- Assessment
- Assurance
- Policy Development

10 Essential Services
- Monitor health status
- Diagnose & investigate
- Inform, educate & empower
- Mobilize community partnerships
- Develop policies & plans
- Enforce law & regulations
- Link people to health services
- Assure a competent workforce
- Evaluate
- Research

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2014). The public health system and the 10 essential public health services.
Public Health Nursing & Accreditation

Accreditation Domains
- Monitor Health
- Diagnose & Investigate
- Inform, Education, Empower
- Mobilize Community Partnerships
- Develop Policies
- Enforce Laws
- Link to/Provide Care
- Assure Competent Workforce
- Evaluate
- Research

Core Competencies Nrs.
- Analysis & Assessment
- Policy Development & Program Planning
- Communication
- Cultural Competency
- Community Dimensions of Practice
- Basic Public Health Sciences
- Financial Planning & Management
- Leadership & Systems Level Thinking

It's All Related
The important public health concepts correlate to the prioritized competencies in public health nursing!!

Conclusion
- The activities, skills, and knowledge of public health nurses relates to the process of accreditation
- Public health nurses model the efforts needed on the local, agency, or national scale to achieve accreditation
- The work of public health nurses contributes to the foundations that prepare health departments to pursue accreditation
- Public health accreditation engages health departments in critical thinking regarding their level of functioning in regards to the established essential services of public health

Contributions of Public Health Nurses to Accreditation
- Committees, expert panels, and think tanks
- Accreditation Coordinators, PM/QI Directors, and other leadership positions
- Working with health department accreditation process before and after accreditation
- Site visitors for PHAB
- Technical assistance providers
- Graduate students