

Public Health Accreditation

Background

The Utah Department of Health (UDOH) received accreditation status by the Public Health Accreditation Board (PHAB, the Board) on November 14, 2017. The PHAB, a nonprofit organization, was established 10 years ago from the desire to improve service, value, and accountability to stakeholders with support from a variety of national organizations, including the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation. The Board sets standards against which the nation's nearly 3,000 governmental public health departments can continuously improve the quality of their services and performance.



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

To receive accreditation, a health department must undergo a rigorous, multi-faceted, peer-reviewed assessment process to ensure it meets or exceeds a set of nationally recognized, practice-focused and evidence-based quality standards and measures.

UDOH is the fourth nationally accredited public health department in Utah, joining health departments from Tooele County, Salt Lake County, and Davis County. Nationally, UDOH is the 30th state to become an accredited public health state health department.

As of June 2018, a total of 32 states, 191 local, and one tribal health departments have been accredited. Additionally, 10 others public health state health departments are working towards being accredited. Accreditation is a continuous process; once accredited, a public health department must be reaccredited every five years.

Public Health Accreditation Standards and Measures

The Public Health Accreditation Board (PHAB) has developed a set of standards that assess the functioning of health departments based on the 10 Essential Public Health Services, which define public health and serve as the foundation for quality and performance improvement efforts nationwide.

Accreditation assesses health department capabilities to address the following domains:

1. **ASSESS:** Conduct and disseminate assessments focused on population health status and public health issues facing the community
2. **INVESTIGATE:** Investigate health problems and environmental public health hazards to protect the community
3. **INFORM & EDUCATE:** Inform and educate about public health issues and functions
4. **COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT:** Engage with the community to identify and address health problems
5. **POLICIES & PLANS:** Develop public health policies and plans

6. PUBLIC HEALTH LAWS: Enforce public health laws
7. ACCESS TO CARE: Promote strategies to improve access to health care services
8. WORKFORCE: Maintain a competent public health workforce
9. QUALITY IMPROVEMENT: Evaluate and continuously improve processes, programs, and interventions
10. EVIDENCE-BASED PRACTICES: Contribute to and apply the evidence base of public health
11. ADMINISTRATION & MANAGEMENT: Maintain administrative and management capacity
12. GOVERNANCE: Maintain capacity to engage the public health governing entity (the body with the legal authority over the public health functions of a jurisdiction)



Scoring

There are total of 108 measures in these 12 domains, and documents that are submitted are rated by 'fully demonstrated'; 'largely demonstrated'; 'slightly demonstrated'; 'not demonstrated'. An overall rating of 'largely demonstrated' is needed to be accredited.

UDOH received 86 'fully demonstrated', 20 'largely demonstrated', and two 'slightly demonstrated' ratings. Narrative reports must be submitted by highlighting the quality and performance improvement efforts throughout the Department on annual basis, and Utah Department of Health will be up for the reaccreditation in 2022.

Return on Investment

Through this multi-year, department-wide accreditation process, UDOH rigorously engaged in establishing culture of continuous quality and performance improvement. In addition, the Department demonstrated that the services it provides to the public meet or exceed peer-set national standards in most of the areas, placing the UDOH in a good position to potentially receive additional funding from non-state resources. In addition, the process enhanced our collaborations with partners and fostered coordination rather than the duplication of efforts.

For more information about public health accreditation, visit:

- Public Health Accreditation Board (PHAB) Website: <http://www.phaboard.org/>
- Accreditation Standards and Measures version 1.5: http://www.phaboard.org/wp-content/uploads/PHABSM_WEB_LR1.pdf
- Journal of Public Health Management and Practice May/June 2018, Volume 24, Supplement 3, Impact of Public Health Accreditation: <https://journals.lww.com/jphmp/toc/2018/05001>