



Accreditation Recommendations

State public health agencies exist to protect and improve the health of all persons living, working, and visiting their states. The successful performance of these agencies is contingent on having a solid infrastructure supporting services and tools to deliver health programs. To this end, ASTHO:

- **Supports the national voluntary accreditation program developed by the Public Health Accreditation Board (PHAB) to advance performance and drive continuous quality improvement in public health agencies.**
- **Recommends sustained funding and incentives to build the necessary infrastructure for performance management and quality improvement to achieve voluntary national public health accreditation of state and territorial health agencies.**

ASTHO recommends state and territorial health agencies take action to prepare for accreditation.

- Educate governing entities (governor, state legislature, board of health) on the national public health standards and accreditation program.
- Establish the attainment of national accreditation status as an agency strategic goal or priority.
- Identify leadership through a position, such as a performance improvement manager, to build, institutionalize, and implement performance management capacity within the agency.
- Designate or hire staff dedicated to performance management and continuous quality improvement that routinely evaluate and improve the effectiveness of the organization, practices, partnerships, programs, use of resources, and the impact the improvements have on the public's health.
- Conduct or update a state health assessment process, using reliable, comparable, and valid data to provide a complete picture of the health status of the population and conditions of public health importance.
- Conduct or update a state health improvement process, using data from the state health assessment to establish programmatic resource allocation and improvement targets.
- Conduct or update a strategic planning process, linking to the state health assessment and improvement plan, to establish organizational goals, strategies, and objectives to strengthen the organization to better serve the state's population.
- Conduct an agency self-assessment to identify gaps in agency performance that could be addressed through the use of quality improvement methods.

ASTHO recommends sustained funding for building infrastructure to improve quality and performance of public health practice and to support voluntary national public health accreditation in state and territorial health agencies.

- Public health accreditation appeared as a core public health infrastructure component in the original House health reform bill,¹ but not in the final version of the bill. Accreditation and infrastructure investments should be part of future Congressional appropriations.
- The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention released a funding opportunity in July 2010² with the explicit goal of improving the health of all Americans by increasing the performance management capacity of public health agencies to enable them to meet national standards, including the PHAB standards. Funding should be sustained, expanded, and have flexibility in application to build performance infrastructure.
- Continued funding should be provided to organizations supporting health agencies through the provision of technical assistance, training, and development of performance management and quality improvement.

¹ H.R.3200 – America's Affordable Choices Act of 2009, July 14, 2009.

² CDC-RFA-CD10-1011, Strengthening Public Health Infrastructure for Improved Health Outcomes. Accessed September 8, 2010.