

# Boards of Health and Public Health Accreditation

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## Boards of Health are Governing Entities

PHAB uses the phrase governing entity to describe those bodies or individuals who have the legal authority for public health functions in the jurisdiction served by the health department. Governing entities perform critical roles and are important to the effective functioning of a health department. The governing entity is accountable for the health department's achievement of its mission, goals, and objectives. Health department governing entities across the country differ in their structure, definition, roles, and responsibilities. Governing entities may be boards of health.

## Public Health Accreditation

Public health accreditation establishes that the health department has the capacity, structure, and processes in place to implement its responsibility to protect and preserve the health of the population within its jurisdiction. Meeting PHAB standards and measures through public health accreditation assures that the health department has the capacity to perform the ten Essential Public Health Services.

## Boards of Health Support for Accreditation

A board of health plays a key role in its health department seeking public health accreditation. The board of health can provide leadership through the process. Their written support is required for a PHAB accreditation application. PHAB site visitors will ask to meet with representatives of the board of health.

## Maintaining Accreditation

Accreditation drives public health departments to continuously improve the quality of the services they deliver to their community. Accredited health departments report to PHAB annually on their continuous quality improvements.

## Roles of a Health Department Board of Health

- Provide the point of accountability for the health department.
- Directly and indirectly influence the direction of the health department.
- Advise, advocate, or consult in policy making, priority setting, resource allocation, collaboration, quality improvement, and/or governing.
- Maintain a working knowledge of roles and responsibilities of the health department.
- Maintain a working knowledge of the roles and responsibilities of the governing entity and its working relationship with the health department.
- Play a key role in the health department's accreditation efforts.

## Resources for Boards of Health to Learn About Public Health Accreditation:

- Review the overview of accreditation on the PHAB or NALBOH websites.
- Complete the PHAB Online Orientation (<http://www.phaboard.org/education-center/phab-online-orientation/>).
- Watch other support videos on PHAB's website and download PHAB materials.
- Review the PHAB **Standards and Measures, Version 1.5**, especially Domain 12, that addresses the engagement of the governing entity/board of health in the work of the health department.
- Meet with your health department's Director and Accreditation Coordinator to learn about the health department's accreditation efforts.

## Roles of the Board of Health in Seeking Accreditation:

- Make accreditation a standing agenda item at your regular meetings.
- Provide the letter of support that is required for the PHAB accreditation application.
- Participate in your health department's accreditation site visit. Meet with the PHAB site visitors.
- Celebrate the success of achieving accreditation.

## Roles of the Board of Health in Maintaining Accreditation:

- Read the Site Visit Report that outlines areas of excellence and opportunities for improvement.
- Assist the health department director and staff engage in continuous quality improvement.
- Make continuous quality improvement a standing agenda item at your regular meetings.