

National Public Health Performance Standards Program

Overview

The National Public Health Performance Standards Program (NPHPSP) is a collaborative effort to enhance the Nation's public health systems. Seven national public health organizations have partnered to develop national performance standards for State and local public health systems.

The stated goals of the NPHPSP are to:

- Provide performance standards for public health systems,
- Collect and analyze performance and capacity data;
- Improve the quality and accountability of public health practice and performance of public health systems; and
- Develop a scientific basis for public health practice improvement.

The NPHPSP is a collaborative effort of seven national partners:

- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Public Health Practice Program Office (CDC / PHPPO),
- American Public Health Association (APHA),
- Association of State and Territorial Health Officials (ASTHO),
- National Association of County and City Health Officials (NACCHO),
- National Association of Local Boards of Health (NALBOH),
- National Network of Public Health Institutes (NNPHI), and
- Public Health Foundation (PHF).

These partners represent the organizations and individuals that will use the assessment

instruments. Through working groups and as field test sites, hundreds of representatives from these organizations were involved in the development, review, testing, and refinement of the three assessment instruments. Their feedback on the draft instruments assured that the final NPHPSP instruments are practice-oriented and user-friendly. Representatives from other organizations, such as academic partners from the Association of Schools of Public Health, also provided valuable input.

The Instruments

The NPHPSP includes three instruments:

- **The State Public Health System Assessment Instrument** focuses on the “state public health system,” which includes state public health agencies and other partners that contribute to public health services at the state level. This instrument was developed by ASTHO and CDC.
- **The Local Public Health System Assessment Instrument** focuses on the “local public health system” or all entities that contribute to public health services within a community. The local instrument was developed by NACCHO and CDC.
- **The Local Public Health Governance Assessment Instrument** focuses on the governing body accountable for public health at the local level. Such governing bodies may include boards of health, councils, or county commissioners. The governance instrument was developed by NALBOH and CDC.

The Concepts Applied in the NPHPSP

There are four concepts that have helped to frame the NPHPSP :

1. The standards are **designed around the ten Essential Public Health Services**. The use of the Essential Services assures that the standards fully cover the gamut of public health action needed at state and community levels.
2. The standards **focus on the overall public health system**, rather than a single organization. A public health system includes all public, private, and voluntary entities that contribute to public health activities within a given area. This assures that the contributions of all entities are recognized in assessing the provision of essential public health services.
3. The standards **describe an optimal level of performance** rather than provide minimum expectations. This assures that the standards can be used for continuous quality improvement. The standards can stimulate greater accomplishment and provide a level to which all public health systems can aspire to achieve.
4. The standards are intended to **support a process of quality improvement**. System partners should use the assessment process and the performance standards results as a guide for learning about public health activities throughout the system and determining how to make improvements.

Benefits

The use of these instruments should result in numerous benefits, including:

- **Improves organizational and community communication and collaboration**, by bringing partners to the same table.
- **Educates participants about public health and the interconnectedness of activities**, which can lead to a higher appreciation and awareness of the many activities related to improving the public's health.

- **Strengthens the diverse network of partners** within state and local public health systems, which can lead to more cohesion among partners, better coordination of activities and resources, and less duplication of services.
- **Identifies strengths and weaknesses** to address in quality improvement efforts. Responses to the assessment can be tracked over time to identify system improvements or changes.
- **Provides a benchmark for public health practice improvements**, by providing a “gold standard” to which public health systems can aspire.

National Implementation and Current Status

The state and local instruments are available nationally for use. These instruments are available for download as PDF files. Sites submit responses through a web-based site for data collection and report generation.

The NPHPSP is an activity that may be considered under Focus Area A of the CDC Grant Program, Public Health Preparedness and Response for Bioterrorism. The NPHPSP is a valuable tool in identifying areas for system improvement, strengthening state and local partnerships, and assuring a strong system is in place that can respond effectively to day-to-day public health issues and to public health emergencies.

Ideally, state and local public health systems will choose to conduct the performance assessment through a coordinated statewide approach. NPHPSP partners are available to support training and technical assistance needs as states move toward statewide implementation.



For More Information

Contact 1-800-747-7649

(1-800-PHPP049) or visit our Internet site at <http://www.phppo.cdc.gov/nphpsp>.