

PUBLIC HEALTH IMPROVEMENT PARTNERSHIP

STANDARDS FOR PUBLIC HEALTH IN WASHINGTON

The *Standards for Public Health in Washington State* are required by the Revised Code of Washington (RCW) 43.70.520. Local and state public health agencies worked to develop these standards for more than a decade. The standards are measures that evaluate the performance of Washington's public health system. They define public health services that communities need and measure the capacity of public health agencies to provide these services. The Public Health Standards Workgroup provides oversight to the standards review processes and the revisions to the standards.

MEASURING PERFORMANCE – CONTINUOUS QUALITY IMPROVEMENT

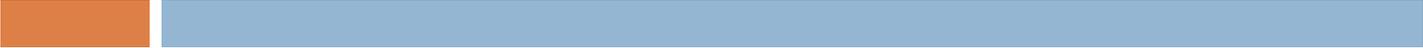
The first standards were jointly written by local and state public health representatives in 1998. Since that time, the standards have been updated four times. Currently, they are aligned with the National Public Health Accreditation Board standards and measures. Local and state standards are the same except for the measures that define the specific job that each agency should carry out.

The topics covered by the standards include:

- Data collection and assessment
- Education of the public
- Emergency preparation
- Disease control and investigation
- Collaboration with communities
- Administrative functions that each agency should have

Every three years, all local health jurisdictions and the State Department of Health are reviewed to measure their performance on the standards. The review identifies if the standards were met, partially met or did not meet specific measures as well as identifies strengths and opportunities for improvement. Each agency receives a report that can be used to plan improvements over the next three years.

Statewide results, which are a compilation of results from all local health jurisdictions and the state, are used to produce an "Overall Statewide Review Report" of the public health system. This report summarizes statewide performance by measure, progress from the last standards review, by size of agency, and differences between state and local programs. This report is used by public health leadership and policy makers to focus statewide improvement efforts.



The most recent round of local and state standards review was in the spring of 2008. Every local health department participated, as well as each division of the State Department of Health and the State Board of Health. The results of these visits are being used to improve performance.

The standards give the public health community a “system” view of public health performance. This allows public health leadership to identify common areas of strength, weakness, and opportunity from both local and state agencies. Standards can be viewed at www.doh.wa.gov/PHIP/PerfMgmt/07stds/main.htm

ACCREDITATION EFFORTS

National accreditation discussion originated with a 2003 Institute of Medicine report, *The Future of the Public's Health*. This report called for a national steering committee to study accrediting public health agencies. A year later, the national Exploring Accreditation Project drafted a model voluntary program, whose scope was consistent with the Washington Standards for Public Health and focused on quality improvement.

In 2007, a private, non-profit Public Health Accreditation Board (PHAB) received start-up funding from the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, the US Health Resources and Services Administration, and several public health groups. PHAB is developing a national accreditation for local, state, tribal, and territorial health departments by 2011. The process for accreditation will closely mirror the standards work in Washington State. For more information on the national accreditation efforts, go to www.phaboard.org/standards/default.asp

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PUBLIC HEALTH
ALWAYS WORKING FOR A SAFER AND
HEALTHIER WASHINGTON