

Why A Health Department Seeks Reaccreditation

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Reaccreditation Facts

A PHAB-accredited public health department is accredited for five years. When initial accreditation expires, the health department must apply for and achieve reaccreditation to maintain accreditation status.

If the health department does not submit the application by the specified due date, the account will expire, and the health department's status will change to Not Accredited. To be accredited, the health department will have to complete the initial accreditation process. Doing this will be costlier and time intensive.

PHAB reaccreditation builds on initial accreditation but is very different. The reaccreditation process provides health departments with the opportunity to describe how their department addresses essential public health services and provides the opportunity to reflect on how they plan continued improvement.

Under the reaccreditation fee structure, health departments pay an annual fee that covers maintenance of accreditation and future reaccreditation reviews to avoid larger one-time fees in the future

Questions?

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A health department celebrates becoming nationally accredited. Five years go by very quickly and it's time to apply for reaccreditation. A health department might ask why it is important to maintain their public health accreditation.

Sustained Recognition

Accreditation is not a one-time recognition. The required annual reports and reaccreditation process allow for the sustained acknowledgement of the health department meeting nationally recognized standards and achieving continued quality and performance improvement. The value of accreditation is long term, just like most public health work. Continual improvement, and having that improvement externally validated, is a hallmark of a 21st century organization; public health departments are no different than other organizations in wanting to be the best organizations they can be.

Value of Accreditation

The value of continued accreditation is the same as the value of initial accreditation. PHAB's external evaluation indicated that health departments view the accreditation process as having:

- Stimulated quality and performance improvement
- Improved relationships with local community stakeholders
- Improved accountability to external stakeholders
- Improved identification of strengths and weaknesses
- Validated the work that staff do
- Better positioned the health department to obtain additional funding

For more information on the evaluation of the impact of accreditation and stories from your peers, see PHAB's website, www.phaboard.org.

Continued Value

Importantly, the reaccreditation measures and process are not a do-over of initial accreditation. Reaccreditation has been designed to address the impact and contributions of health strategies that improve population health. Reaccreditation ensures that accredited health departments continue to evolve, improve, and advance, thereby becoming increasingly effective at improving the health of the population they serve.

Especially in times of scarce resources, health departments, more than ever, need support in assuring quality services and accountability. Performance standards and peer review help health departments stay on track in a systematic way in setting priorities and identifying gaps.

Future Benefits

Accredited health departments will soon have the benefit of being able to confidentially benchmark their performance against other accredited health departments. Additionally, reaccreditation showcases how health departments are selecting and tracking priority population health outcomes.