A Local Journey To National Public Health Accreditation

Health departments across the state work every day to combat new public health threats and keep people healthy. They provide services such as ensuring safe food and water, collecting data on diseases that affect our community, and providing life-saving vaccines. Local health departments across the state have long been certified by the Illinois Department of Public Health to meet certain requirements to carry out these basic core functions in public health. New measurements against rigorous national public health standards now advance and transform public health with a wider, national emphasis on increased performance, quality improvement, and community leadership. This commitment to transformative public health is defined by the Public Health Accreditation Board, which currently provides this advanced accreditation to 213 local and state public health departments and providers.

Here is our journey and what it means for our community:

The Peoria City/County Health Department (PCCHD) gained national accreditation in May 2015 as one of only 35 health departments nationwide. The real work of this accreditation process actually started several years before that. Our accreditation journey has been a long one; however, the endeavor has been worth the effort for our health department and the community. At the beginning of the journey we wanted to apply for accreditation to find best practices, as well as new, improved and innovative ways to conduct public health activities and provide services. One area of best practice we found was by creating a Performance Management Plan for the agency.

Performance Management and quality improvement are now embedded at PCCHD. Each program area develops a performance management plan for the year. The goals are national standards and align with our overall vision and mission for the agency. Each quarter, staff review and evaluate their programs’ progress for any need for quality improvement. These findings are provided to the Peoria County Board of Health, our governing body, which identified Performance Management within their own Strategic Plan goals. The addition of a Performance Management...
Plan for the agency has helped each program area set and achieve goals and objectives that are timely, monitored and evaluated.

Community leadership is another focus area for PCCHD since our journey began. We increased the use of data analysis with community agencies to address identified reproductive health issues. This use of data combined with the collaboration of community agencies led to health and program policy changes within organizations and schools, benefitting our community at large.

Another benefit we have experienced is coalition building on a state and national level. We have been able to build relationships, not only with other accredited health departments, but also with public health agencies that are going through their own accreditation process. We have been fortunate to participate in a local accreditation group here in Illinois, as well as a national accreditation group. These coalitions have been instrumental in sharing information, new policies, and best practices in human resources, environmental health, and infectious disease.

As a nationally accredited public health department, PCCHD continues to see performance benefits as we look forward to strengthening our public health system.

Learn more about the benefits of public health policies and programs at [www.pcchd.org](http://www.pcchd.org) Peoria City/County Health Department, a nationally accredited public health department.

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The Peoria City/County Health Department continues efforts to improve community health in Peoria County with the overarching goal “to increase the number of people who are healthy at every stage of life.”