

Public Health Infrastructure

(Revised 06/28/2018)

The New Hampshire Public Health Association (NHPHA) recognizes that the purpose of public health is to prevent disease, injury and disability, promote health and wellbeing and protect the community. It is a shared responsibility among public, private and volunteer entities in NH and is best achieved through strong integration at state, regional and local levels. Public health approaches its work through three core functions: assessment, policy development, and assurance.

New Hampshire has a unique public health infrastructure when compared with many states across the country, where public health is generally delivered through a health department as part of city, town or county government. New Hampshire has been building regional public health infrastructure in the form of 13 Public Health Networks (PHN) that each serve a defined geographic region inclusive of all 234 municipalities in the state. Each PHN has a host agency that serves as a fiscal agent and builds on partnerships among sectors in the community such as municipal and local government, public safety, education, health care services, transportation, community based and civic organizations and others interested in public health. In some cases, this host agency is the municipal health department but more often, it is a local non-profit agency. In those areas where the host agency is not based in municipal government, enforcement activities such as restaurant inspection may be carried out by the NH Division of Public Health Services.

Public Health Advisory Councils (PHAC) have been developed in each region to identify regional public health priorities based on assessments of community health; guide the implementation of programs, practices, and policies that are evidence-based to achieve improved health outcomes; and advance the coordination of services among partners. In addition, each PHN region has a Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIP) in place to effectively address regional priorities following a collective impact approach, with measurable goals, objectives and strategic approaches.

NHPHA also supports and actively participates in the Public Health Services Improvement Council, created via HB491(2007) as it works to broaden the scope and increase the capacity of the Division of Public Health Services and the PHNs to address NH public health issues.

NHPHA is committed to the vision of a public health system that provides the Ten Essential Services of Public Health. These can be found at <http://www.cdc.gov/nphpsp/essentialServices.html>

NHPHA supports the accreditation of New Hampshire's eligible health departments through the Public Health Accreditation Board's (PHAB) state and territorial health agency accreditation process. This national voluntary process requires the demonstration of compliance with standards and measures aligned with the Ten Essential Services of Public Health. The goal of accreditation is to improve and protect the health of the public by advancing and ultimately transforming the quality and performance of Tribal, state, local, and territorial public health departments.

Public Health Infrastructure (cont'd)

NHPHA actively supports components of a strong public health infrastructure in NH including:

- Adequate funding that is equitable and sustainable
- Access to timely data and information to assess and respond to public health needs
- Promotion of public health as a shared responsibility among public, private and volunteer entities in NH
- Support for education to inform and empower communities.
- Collaborative involvement of partnerships among sectors in the community
- Implementation of policies and evidence-based programs that improve health outcomes, prevent disease and reduce costs for NH.
- Capacity to evaluate effectiveness, accessibility and quality of policies and programs to support implementation of performance improvement plans and management
- Academic programs leading to degrees in public health
- Workforce development based on core public health competencies
- Accreditation of eligible health departments

Resources

<http://www.cdc.gov/nphpsp/essentialServices.html>

<https://www.dhhs.nh.gov/dphs/rphn/index.htm>

<http://nhphn.org/>

<https://www.healthypeople.gov/2020/topics-objectives/topic/public-health-infrastructure> <http://www.phaboard.org/>