



National Public Health  
Performance Standards Program

Local Public Health Governance  
Performance Standards



## Foreword

The purpose of the National Public Health Performance Standards Program (NPHPSP) is to provide measurable performance standards that public health systems can use to ensure the delivery of public health services. The NPHPSP includes three instruments:

- **The State Public Health System Assessment Instrument (State Instrument)** focuses on the “state public health system.” The state public health system includes state public health agencies and other partners that contribute to public health services at the state level.
- **The Local Public Health System Assessment Instrument (Local Instrument)** focuses on the “local public health system” or all entities that contribute to the delivery of public health services within a community. This system includes all public, private, and voluntary entities, as well as individuals and informal associations.
- **The Local Public Health Governance Assessment Instrument (Governance Instrument)** focuses on the governing body ultimately accountable for public health at the local level. Such governing bodies may include boards of health or county commissioners.

This foreword provides an introduction to the standards established for local public health system governance and found in the Local Governance Instrument. The primary goal of the Local Governance Instrument is to promote continuous quality improvement of local public health system governance. Use of the Local Governance Instrument can result in stronger connections among local public health system partners, greater awareness of the interconnectedness of public health activities, and the identification of strengths and weaknesses that can be addressed through improvement efforts.

## 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.

### **About this Document**

This document includes only the standards for local public health system governance. A full assessment instrument, with questions that address the concepts in each standard, also is available. The questions in the assessment instrument are used to determine how well a public health system is meeting each standard.

Sites may want to consider sharing this abbreviated document rather than the full instrument with participants. It can be used as an educational resource about key activities in public health practice. Additionally, some sites have found that focusing discussion on the standards rather than on the lengthier set of questions can allow for a more lively and engaged discussion around public health activities. The facilitator and recorder can use the discussion points to identify consensus responses for the questions under each standard. After the assessment discussions, sites submit responses through a web-based site for data collection and report generation.

Ideally, state and local public health systems will choose to conduct the state, local and governance performance assessments through a coordinated statewide approach. The resulting information will provide an in-depth understanding of the strengths and weaknesses at the state and local levels and allow for comprehensive systems improvement planning. NPHPSP partners are available to support training and technical assistance needs as states move toward statewide implementation.

### **Acknowledgment**

The Local Public Health Governance Performance Assessment Instrument was principally developed by the National Association of County and City Health Officials (NACCHO) and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Other collaborative partners include the Association of State and Territorial Health Officials, the National Association of Local Boards of Health, the American Public Health Association, the National Network of Public Health Institutes, and the Public Health Foundation. Academic partners representing the Association of Schools of Public Health also made considerable contributions. Finally we thank the numerous field test sites for their thoughtful application of and feedback on the instrument; their participation was extremely valuable in identifying areas for improvement.

### **For More Information**

The assessment instruments, User Guide, frequently asked questions, and other resources are available. These tools and other information about the National Public Health Performance Standards can be obtained at <<http://www.phppo.cdc.gov/nphpsp>> or by calling 1-800-747-7649.

**Essential Service #1: Monitor Health Status to Identify Community Health Problems**

**This service includes:**

- Accurate, periodic assessment of the community’s health status, including:
  - Identification of health risks (determinants of health) and determination of health service needs;
  - Attention to the vital statistics and health status indicators of groups that are at higher risk than the total population; and
  - Identification of community assets that support the LPHS in promoting health and improving quality of life.
- Utilization of appropriate methods and technology, such as geographic information systems (GIS), to interpret and communicate data to diverse audiences.
- Collaboration among all LPHS components, including private providers and health benefit plans, to establish and use population health registries, such as disease or immunization registries.

**Indicator G1: Oversight to Assure Community Health Status Monitoring**

**Governance Model Standard:**

Improving the quality of community health status monitoring depends in part on the degree of active support, guidance, and participation by the board of health or other governing body in the monitoring process.

To accomplish this, the board of health or other governing body assures:

- Appropriate resources (financial, personnel, and technical), guidance, and oversight for community health status monitoring;
- Promotion of broad-based participation and coordination among all entities active in collecting, analyzing, and disseminating community health status data;
- Development, implementation, and review of policies designed to facilitate the monitoring of community health status and progress towards meeting locally established health priorities; and
- A process of continuous evaluation and improvement of public health monitoring efforts.

**Essential Service #2: Diagnose and Investigate Health Problems and Health Hazards in the Community**

**This service includes:**

- Epidemiologic investigations of disease outbreaks, patterns of infections, chronic diseases, injuries, environmental hazards, and other health threats.
- Active infectious disease epidemiology programs.
- Access to a public health laboratory capable of conducting rapid screening and high volume testing.

**Indicator G2: Oversight to Assure Public Health Surveillance and Response**

**Governance Model Standard:**

The board of health or other governing body is responsible for assuring that the community is adequately served by a public health laboratory, an active infectious disease epidemiology program, and technical capacity sufficient to conduct appropriate epidemiologic investigations.

To accomplish this, the board of health or other governing body:

- Acts to assist the community in securing the needed resources to carry out these activities;
- Assures the development, implementation, and review of policies to ensure the diagnosis and investigation of health threats in the community;
- Assures collaboration among all relevant groups for the diagnosis and investigation of health threats to the community;
- Conducts periodic reviews of these activities and reports its conclusions and recommendations to the community; and
- Assures the development, implementation, and review of appropriate policies and procedures for public health emergencies.

**Essential Service #3: Inform, Educate, and Empower People about Health Issues**

**This service includes:**

- Health information, health education, and health promotion activities designed to reduce health risk and promote better health.
- Health communication plans and activities such as media advocacy and social marketing.
- Accessible health information and educational resources.
- Health education and health promotion program partnerships with schools, faith communities, work sites, personal care providers, and others to implement and reinforce health promotion programs and messages.

**Indicator G3: Oversight of Public Health Information, Education, and Empowerment Activities**

**Governance Model Standard:**

The informing, educating, and empowering of people about health issues depend on the board of health or other governing body assuring the implementation of appropriate community-based health promotion and individual health education activities.

To effectively inform, educate, and empower people about health issues the board of health or other governing body:

- Identifies and facilitates access to national, state, and local resources that could be used in support of these activities;
- Assures the development, implementation, and review of written policies encouraging these activities;
- Determines whether populations within the community are receiving culturally and linguistically appropriate public health information and education so that they can make positive choices about their individual health status; and
- Evaluates these activities in light of community needs, including assuring that all population subgroups have an opportunity to provide input on community health issues.

**Essential Service #4: Mobilize Community Partnerships to Identify and Solve Health Problems**

**This service includes:**

- Identifying potential stakeholders who contribute to or benefit from public health and increasing their awareness of the value of public health.
- Building coalitions to draw upon the full range of potential human and material resources to improve community health.
- Convening and facilitating partnerships among groups and associations (including those not typically considered to be health-related) in undertaking defined health improvement projects, including preventive, screening, rehabilitation, and support programs.

**Indicator G4: Oversight to Assure Constituency Building and Partnership Activity**

**Governance Model Standard:**

The board of health or other governing body is responsible for creating a supportive environment that assures traditional and nontraditional partnerships are nurtured in order to draw on the full range of potential human and material resources in the cause of community health.

For effective constituency building and partnership development the board of health or other governing body:

- Assures constituency building, partnership activities, and resource development partners to identify and solve health problems;
- Assures the development, implementation, and review of policies articulating commitment to these activities;
- Conducts annual evaluations of these activities and provides relevant feedback to its constituents and the community at large; and
- Implements strategies to enhance participation among current and potential constituents.

**Essential Service #5: Develop Policies and Plans that Support Individual and Community Health Efforts**

**This service includes:**

- Effective local public health governance.
- Development of policy, codes, regulations, and legislation to protect the health of the public and to guide the practice of public health.
- Systematic LPHS and state-level planning for health improvement in all jurisdictions.
- Alignment of LPHS resources and strategies with community health improvement plans.

**Indicator G5: Oversight of Public Health Policy Making and Planning**

**Governance Model Standard:**

Effective oversight in public health requires that individual members of the board of health or other governing body within a local jurisdiction understand, exercise, and advocate for the authority to improve public health and support the community health improvement process within the framework of a statutory charter, mission statement, or other similar strategic planning statement.

To accomplish this, the board of health or other governing body:

- Maintains and annually assures the availability of a handbook for its members, has a statutory charter, mission statement, or other strategic planning statement;
- Assures the availability of adequate resources (financial, personnel, and technical) and organizational support necessary to implement the Essential Services of Public Health;
- Assures the development, implementation, and review of policies that support the community health improvement process and works to strategically align community resources for health improvement;
- Convenes all relevant individuals, agencies, or organizations to implement and carry out a community health improvement process that includes the setting of public health objectives and leads to the strategic alignment of resources to improve community health;
- Routinely evaluates, sets goals for, and monitors improvement in community health status; and



- Assures that each member of the governing body understands, exercises, and advocates for appropriate legal authority to accomplish these assurance functions.

**Essential Service #6: Enforce Laws and Regulations that Protect Health and Ensure Safety**

**This service includes:**

- Assurance of due process and recognition of individuals' civil rights in all procedures, enforcement of laws and regulations, and in public health emergency actions taken under the board of health or other governing body's authority.
- Review, evaluation and revision of laws and regulations designed to:
  - protect health and safety;
  - reflect current scientific knowledge; and
  - utilize best practice for achieving compliance.
- Education of persons and entities obligated to obey and agencies obligated to enforce laws and regulations to encourage compliance.
- Enforcement activities in a wide variety of areas of public health concern under authority granted by local, state and federal rule or law including, but not limited to: abatement of nuisances, animal control, childhood immunizations and other vaccinations, food safety, housing code, local sanitary code, on site wastewater disposal (septic systems), protection of drinking water, school environment, solid waste disposal, swimming pool and bathing area safety and water quality, tobacco control, and vector control.
- Assuring prevention of illness and injuries by:
  - following-up on hazards;
  - reducing exposure to disease in occupational and community settings;
  - increasing vaccination rates.
- Assuring monitoring of the quality of medical services available to the LPHS.

**Indicator G6: Oversight of Public Health Legal and Regulatory Affairs**

**Governance Model Standard:**

The board of health or other governing body is responsible for assuring that public health laws, rules and regulations designed to protect the health of the community are appropriately adopted, disseminated, evaluated, improved, and enforced. All enforcement activities must be timely and complete.

To accomplish this, the board of health or other governing body:

- Assures that appropriate legal authority exists for the adoption, dissemination, evaluation, improvement, and enforcement of laws, rules, and regulations designed to protect the health of the community;

- Assures that its bylaws, rules, and procedures comply with local, state, and federal statutes and regulations;
- Assures its access to legal counsel;
- Identifies and advocates for national, state, and local resources that could be used for public health inspection and enforcement activities;
- Advocates for the enactment and retention of beneficial laws, rules, and regulations; and
- Assures an annual evaluation of laws, rules, and regulations that includes the participation of persons and groups that benefit from particular legal requirements as well as those who are regulated and may oppose particular legal requirements.

**Essential Service #7: Link People to Needed Personal Health Services and Assure the Provision of Health Care When Otherwise Unavailable**

**This service includes:**

- Assuring the identification of populations with barriers to personal health services.
- Assuring identification of personal health service needs of populations with limited access to a coordinated system of clinical care.
- Assuring the linkage of people to appropriate personal health services through coordination of provider services and development of interventions that address barriers to care (e.g., culturally and linguistically appropriate staff and materials, transportation services).

**Indicator G7: Oversight to Assure Public Health Outreach and Enabling Services**

**Governance Model Standard:**

The board of health or other governing body works to assure a supportive environment for the coordination of outreach and enabling services designed to facilitate access, service linkage, “care management,” transportation, and information for the entire community, with special attention to socially disadvantaged people and high-risk population groups.

To accomplish this, the board of health or other governing body:

- Identifies individuals, agencies, or organizations involved or responsible for the coordination of services;
- Assures or advocates for necessary authority to allow these people and organizations to provide necessary services;
- Assures culturally and linguistically appropriate materials and staff to provide adequate linkage to services for special population groups;
- Identifies and advocates for national, state, and local resources – both public and private – necessary to facilitate access to needed services for the entire community, with special attention to socially disadvantaged people and high-risk population groups;
- Assures the development, implementation, and review of policies supporting the employment of these resources in the development, coordination, and evaluation of outreach and enabling services; and

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- Conducts periodic evaluations including input and feedback regarding potential or actual outreach and enabling services from a wide spectrum of community participants, including representatives of socially disadvantaged and high-risk populations.

**Essential Service #8: Assure a Competent Public and Personal Health Care Workforce**

**This service includes:**

- Education, training, and assessment of personnel (including volunteers and other lay community health workers) to meet community needs for public and personal health services.
- Efficient processes for licensure of professionals.
- Adoption of continuous quality improvement and life-long learning programs that include determinants of health.
- Active partnerships with professional training programs to assure community-relevant learning experiences for all students.
- Continuing education in management and leadership development programs for those charged with administrative/executive roles.

**Indicator G8: Oversight of Public Health Workforce Issues**

**Governance Model Standard:**

The board of health or other governing body is responsible for assuring initial competence of the community public health workforce; the availability of workforce training programs for both the workforce personnel and members of the board of health or other governing body; and the availability of leadership development programs for those charged with administrative and executive roles.

To accomplish this, the board of health or other governing body assures:

- Licensing and credentialing of public health personnel, including both paid and volunteer workers;
- Development, implementation, and review of policies designed to assure improvements in workforce, management, and leadership quality;
- Identification of national, state and local resources available for workforce instruction, leadership development and continuing education;
- The development, implementation, and review of policies for the orientation of new members of each board or governing body; and
- Periodic evaluation of current workforce competence – including compliance with licensure and credentialing requirements – and workforce training and education programs.

**Essential Service #9: Evaluate Effectiveness, Accessibility, and Quality of Personal and Population-based Health Services**

**This service includes:**

- Assurance of ongoing evaluation and critical review of health programs effectiveness, based on analysis of health status and service utilization data.
- Assurance of the provision of information necessary for allocating resources and reshaping programs.

**Indicator G9: Oversight of Public Health Service Evaluation**

**Governance Model Standard:**

The board of health or other governing body is responsible for the overall quality of essential public health services provided to the community, including the scope, timeliness, frequency, and cost-effectiveness of those services, and for assuring that the results of evaluations are used to improve system performance.

To accomplish this, the board of health or other governing body assures:

- Development, implementation, and review of policies supporting periodic evaluations of population-based and personal health services, including processes and outcomes of health improvement activities;
- Evaluations in line with community health priorities, and considers relevant aspects of service delivery, including scope, timeliness, frequency, cost-effectiveness, and overall quality of essential public health services provided;
- That necessary resources are available to conduct periodic evaluations, including evaluations of the board of health or other governing body itself;
- Development, implementation, and review of written policies endorsing the importance of nationally recognized performance standards applicable to local public health systems and facilitating their application;
- That all public health constituents and partners within the LPHS (including governmental, not-for-profit, and private entities responsible for the provision of the essential public health services) are encouraged to provide input into evaluation processes; and
- That the results of evaluations are used to improve system performance.

**Essential Service #10: Research for New Insights and Innovative Solutions to Health Problems**

**This service includes:**

- Local public health research activities:
  - initiating research,
  - participating in research by others,
  - reporting results, and
  - implementing policy based on these results.

**Indicator G10: Oversight to Assure Public Health Innovation and Research**

**Governance Model Standard:**

The board of health or other governing body is responsible for nurturing an environment within the community that will support and encourage innovation ranging from practical field-based efforts to foster change in public health practice to academic efforts to encourage the development of new topics to guide public health research. The board of health or other governing body is responsible for assuring the maintenance of continuous linkages with appropriate research partners and the development of internal capacity to mount timely epidemiologic investigations and economic analyses, and to conduct needed health services research.

To accomplish this, the board of health or other governing body:

- Assures the development, implementation, and/or review of policies reflecting its commitment to public health research and innovation activities;
- Assists the community in the establishment of linkages between academic (or other health-research) institutions and local public health entities to carry out community-based research activities; and
- Assures that research results are incorporated into new policies and programs to reflect the highest current standard of public health practice consistent with community resources.