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Contact:
Teddi Nicolaus, Communications Manager
Phone: (703) 778-4549 ext. 118
E-mail: tnicolaus@phaboard.org

Public Health Accreditation Board awards national accreditation to five high-performing health departments

Number of PHAB-accredited health departments now totals 19

Alexandria, VA — The Public Health Accreditation Board (PHAB) this week awarded five-year national accreditation status to five public health departments. The decisions bring the number of public health agencies now recognized by PHAB as high-performing health departments to 19.

PHAB is the independent organization that administers the national public health accreditation program, which aims to improve and protect the health of the public by advancing the quality and performance of the nation's Tribal, state, local, and territorial health departments.

Accreditation status was awarded Aug. 20 to:

- Central Michigan District Health Department, Mount Pleasant, Mich.;
- Chicago Department of Public Health, Chicago, Ill.;
- El Paso County Public Health, Colorado Springs, Colo.;
- Kansas City Missouri Health Department, Kansas City, Mo.; and
- Tulsa Health Department, Tulsa, Okla.

Eleven states now boast at least one PHAB-accredited public health department. PHAB-accredited agencies range in size from small health departments serving communities of 45,000 to those serving large metropolitan areas of millions, such as the Chicago Department of Public Health, which was awarded accreditation this week.

"This is an important achievement and recognition that highlights the city of Chicago's ongoing commitment to health and wellness on the part of all of our residents," said Chicago Mayor Rahm Emanuel. "We are focused on policies that will help all Chicagoans and their families enjoy the highest quality of life. We will continue to strive to make Chicago one of the healthiest cities in the world."

Hundreds of health departments are currently preparing to seek national accreditation through the program, which launched in September 2011 after more than a decade in development.

"The country should be proud of health departments that continue to demonstrate their capacity to meet the national public health accreditation standards," said PHAB President and CEO Kaye Bender, PhD, RN, FAAN. "In an era when government isn't always viewed in a positive light, health departments continue to exhibit a commitment to 'good government' practices. These five health departments join the ranks of those who demonstrate to their communities that they intend to serve them well. Congratulations to this group of high performers."

To receive accreditation, a health department must undergo a rigorous, multi-faceted, peer-reviewed assessment process to ensure it meets or exceeds a set of public health quality standards and measures.

“We are extremely appreciative of the dedication and commitment these five health departments have made to their communities and states, demonstrating both accountability and transparency in their operations,” said PHAB Board of Directors Vice Chair Leslie M. Beitsch, MD, JD, director of the Center for Medicine and Public Health at Florida State University College of Medicine. “Overall, the willingness to have others assess your health department’s ability to meet national public health standards, while protecting and promoting the health of the population you serve, is an inspiration to all of us working in public health.”

Public health departments play a critical role in protecting and improving the health of people and communities. Across the nation, health departments provide a range of services aimed at promoting healthy behaviors; preventing diseases and injuries; ensuring access to safe food, water, clean air, and life-saving immunizations; and preparing for and responding to health emergencies.

For more information, contact Teddi Nicolaus at (703) 778-4549 ext. 118, or e-mail tnicolaus@phaboard.org. Learn more about PHAB and accreditation at www.phaboard.org.

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About the Public Health Accreditation Board

The Public Health Accreditation Board (PHAB) was created to serve as the national public health accrediting body and is jointly funded by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation. The development of national public health accreditation has involved, and is supported by, public health leaders and practitioners from the national, tribal, state, local, and territorial levels. Learn more about PHAB or sign up for the PHAB e-newsletter by visiting www.phaboard.org.