

Celebrating 10 Years of PHAB Accreditation

Public Health Authority of Cabarrus County

Staff size: 276

Population served: 231, 278

The Public Health Authority of Cabarrus County (CHA) decided to pursue accreditation because they felt a sense of responsibility to their community in delivering the best public health services possible. The agency took accreditation as an opportunity to assess current policies and practices and compare them to national standards for public health practice. As an agency, CHA has always strived to achieve excellence; PHAB accreditation presented the opportunity to learn from other health departments, broaden partnerships and learning experiences, and implement large-scale quality improvement initiatives.

Accreditation addressed inefficiencies within the health department.

The PHAB Standards & Measures and the Annual Report process have helped CHA keep up with new, innovative changes in public health, as well as address inefficiencies within the department. The accreditation process inspired CHA to:

- Update the performance management system to be more accessible, meaningful, and organized.
- Stay informed on equity and inclusion work across the country to implement promising practices at the local level.
- Implement a *Racism is a Public Health Crisis* proclamation in 2020.

As a result of accreditation, CHA also developed and standardized many agency plans, such as the Workforce Development plan, Quality Improvement plan, and Performance Improvement plan. Prior to accreditation, the agency did not have or use standard templates for these plans. A site-visit provided useful feedback and guidance that helped CHA improve their documentation and procedures.



Success: Performance Management Software

In 2019, CHA purchased Clear Impact, a performance management software to further develop their performance improvement process in response to feedback from a reaccreditation site visit. The agency trained leadership, supervisors and eventually all staff on the concept of Results Based Accountability and how to select performance measures and population indicators. All programs and departments are responsible for developing their own measures and tracking progress. Scorecards have undergone several changes since initial implementation, but today CHA has stable, meaningful measures that are tracked and shared with the public.

CHA has been ahead of the curve- local health departments in North Carolina have only recently begun adopting the same system.

Advice: Begin evidence collection as early as possible.

CHA suggests that health departments considering PHAB accreditation should begin collecting documentation early and have a platform, such as Excel or Teams Planner, to stay organized. Accreditation requires an extensive amount of cross-departmental collaboration, evidence collection, review, and submission; CHA used Microsoft Excel in their initial accreditation process, and plan to incorporate Microsoft Planner for reaccreditation.

Resource: Performance Improvement Training Series

CHA developed a training series focused on performance improvement. All staff participated in the series to learn the new performance management system, understand the value of quality improvement projects, and why it is important to track measures. Based on a PHAB recommendation, CHA presented at the Public Health Improvement Training national conference to highlight their work and share additional resources with other health department staff across the country.