

Celebrating 10 Years of PHAB Accreditation

Oklahoma City–County Health Department

Staff size: 265

Population served: 865,000

Accreditation is an important part of ensuring optimal functionality as a public health provider and quality services for residents. The community can rest assured knowing that an accredited health department meets a certain standard of excellence.

Accreditation helped develop a culture of quality improvement.

The skills honed during the initial accreditation process and through reaccreditation have created a culture of continuous quality improvement for Oklahoma City–County Health Department (OCCHD). Each reaccreditation cycle provides an opportunity for OCCHD to compare their practices to national standards and ensure gaps are addressed. Additionally, OCCHD staff utilize QI tools and principals to make operations more efficient and effective when serving clients.

Success: Quality Improvement during COVID-19.

Quality Improvement was particularly valuable during the COVID-19 pandemic when changes were rapid, and a continuous quality improvement mindset was necessary to effectively address the needs of the community, according to OCCHD. This helped OCCHD implement several services to cater to the needs of their community, including deploying mass drive-through testing and vaccination sites, a call center and vaccine helpline, and mobile testing and vaccination options for individuals unable to leave their home.

Many skills and principles used to stand up these services were necessary for maintaining accreditation, including the utilization of SMART objectives during Action Planning, keeping equity, diversity, and inclusion principles in mind during operations and events, ensuring ethical public health practices, and partnership, collaboration, and communication skills.

Advice: Commit to the process.

OCCHD advises that any health department seeking accreditation be prepared to commit to the process. Accreditation and reaccreditation require attention to development and follow-up. It is important to focus on building competencies and get comfortable with documentation of efforts.

Promising Practice: Staff Quality Improvement training.

OCCHD incorporates QI trainings and designated QI champions to help drive the culture of QI within the agency.