

Quality Improvement Corner: October-November 2018

Welcome to the first installment of the Quality Improvement Corner. This new section of the PHAB newsletter debuts today with a look at what PHAB has learned from accredited health departments about their performance on the Domain 9 measures.

Quality improvement (QI) is a core component of public health accreditation. The promotion of QI practice and performance management are among the most common benefits of accreditation reported by evaluation respondents. One study found that health departments engaged in accreditation showed significantly larger gains in their quality improvement activities over time compared to those that have not begun the application process. (Read more about research and evaluation findings related to QI here: <http://www.phaboard.org/wp-content/uploads/2.0QIPMEvidence.pdf>.) For this reason and because of PHQIX's transition to PHAB, this newsletter will begin a regular feature on quality improvement and performance management.

Today, we focus on what we have learned from accredited health departments about their performance on the Domain 9 measures. As performance management and quality improvement are relatively new to the field of public health, it is perhaps not surprising that health departments still have opportunities for improvement in this area. Three measures, in particular, more frequently pose challenges to health departments pursuing accreditation:

Measure 9.1.3: Implemented performance management system – Health departments that do not demonstrate this measure are often unable to provide two appropriate examples of all the required components, especially monitoring and analyzing progress towards goals and identifying next steps.

Measure 9.1.4: Implemented systematic process for assessing customer satisfaction with health department services – Several health departments are unable to demonstrate analysis of data related to customer satisfaction.

Measure 9.2.2: Implemented quality improvement activities – Challenges relate to using QI models and tools for projects tied to the QI plan.

In the spirit of continuous improvement, many health departments continue to strengthen these areas and document their progress on their QI journey through action plans and annual reports. For more information on health department performance on Domain 9, see: <http://www.phaboard.org/wp-content/uploads/2.0QIPMLearned.pdf>.