

Quality Improvement Corner: March-April 2021



PHAB Accreditation Specialist April Harris, MPH, CHES, talks about completing annual reports during COVID-19.

PHAB is committed to being flexible and responsive as health departments work to navigate this public health crisis. One key requirement for accredited health departments is the completion and submission of the Annual Reports. Effective August 2020, the Section II templates for the Annual Reports were modified to make many questions optional and provide opportunities for health departments to describe their COVID-19 work. This change allows health departments to reflect on the past year's work, obtain feedback, and serve as a building block for continued growth and preparation for the next year and reaccreditation.

PHAB acknowledges the challenges that health departments are facing, particularly with prioritizing work and shifting resources. As a result, activities such as quality improvement and performance management over the past year may be less robust or look different compared with previous years. For example, a health department that typically provides ongoing, hands-on QI training opportunities may have paused those activities or offered optional virtual trainings to help onboard new staff.

We hope your culture of quality and improvement, which accreditation nurtures, has benefited your health department. It is possible that while efforts have shifted, health departments have used innovative improvement techniques in their response to COVID-19. It is clear that health departments are agile and adaptive, and we encourage health departments to describe that work in the Annual Report.

A few Annual Report reminders:

- The health department's Annual Report module will open on the first day of the quarter in which you are accredited/reaccredited. You do not have to wait for the module to open to begin compiling information for the Annual Report.
- Section I of the Annual Report contains three questions.
- Section II of the Annual Report is focused on performance and quality improvement efforts, with the intention of helping health departments consider reaccreditation requirements.
- There is a video posted to Bridge to assist health departments with Annual Report instructions. Templates for each section of the Annual Reports are also posted on Bridge.
- PHAB will be seeking feedback on the Annual Report process in the future. Stay tuned!
- You may contact April Harris, aharris@phaboard.org for specific questions regarding your health department's Annual Report process.