The Public Health Accreditation Board (PHAB) has released its standards and measures for local health department accreditation. While many of these activities are handled at the departmental level, there are quite a few tasks necessary for the department’s governing entity: the local board of health. The board of county commissioners also serves as the local board of health, except for a handful of consolidated departments (city-county/multi-county).

This report is a summary of those board of health tasks that are relevant to accreditation. As the PHAB standards are organized within 12 domains, this report shall highlight the relevant tasks within each domain category. While this summary cannot replace the scope and detail of the standards document, it should serve as a layperson’s guide to what is in the standards and, broadly speaking, provide an understanding of the various elements that must be considered for local health department accreditation to move forward.
Welcome to the Kansas Association of Counties/Kansas Association of Local Health Departments (KAC/KALHD) Research Report on Public Health Accreditation Efforts. This document is to serve as a layman’s guide on what the expectations are for local boards of health (which in most Kansas counties consists of the board of county commissioners) to comply with public health accreditation efforts. The final standards were released in July 2011, so the full slate of expectations is now known.

Accreditation is seen as a major area of concern for two reasons:

(1) Though it is officially voluntary, all indications suggest that the ability to obtain grant funding in the future (federal monies and other) may be dependent on being accredited; and

(2) Accreditation speaks to a broader concept: that every county should provide and maintain a certain standard of public health coverage for its citizens. Working towards accreditation serves as a testament to all residents that Kansas counties take public health seriously and a minimum quality of protection is guaranteed, regardless of population density or geographic size.

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**GLOSSARY**

**PHAB:** Public Health Accreditation Board, the accrediting body for national public health accreditation. The non-profit organization was created to promote and manage the national accreditation program. PHAB convenes public health leaders and practitioners from around the country to develop national standards and processes, tests them in the field, assesses their strengths and areas for improvement and revises them as necessary.

**Domains:** Groups of standards that pertain to a broad group of public health services. There are 12 domains; the first 10 domains address the 10 Essential Public Health Services. Domain 11 addresses management and administration, and Domain 12 addresses governance.

**Standards:** The required level of achievement that a health department is expected to meet. Measures provide a way of evaluating if the standard is met. Required documentation is the documentation that is necessary to demonstrate that a health department conforms to a measure.
This report will address the domains in sequence, listing all the relevant standards for the governing body. A measure number will be provided (e.g., 1.3.1 A) so that those who want more information can look up the details in the source document (see endnotes on page 6 for the reference and a link to obtain the latest standards).

Rather than define each standard and explain all the relevant measures and guidance, only the board of health references will be addressed. These may be tasks that require action by the local board of health, or may be possible examples from a plethora of options a local health department may choose from to demonstrate mastery of a given standard.

**DOMAIN 1** Conduct and Disseminate Assessments Focused on Population Health Status and Public Health Issues Facing the Community

**1.3.1 A** The health department is expected to document the review of data analysis reports. This may mean documenting that a meeting with the board of health occurred with such analysis as a topic.

**1.4.2 T/L** The health department must document that it gave public health profiles to public health system partners. The local board of health is one acceptable partner entity that counts for this.

**DOMAIN 2** Investigate Health Problems and Environmental Public Health Hazards to Protect the Community

*No local board of health involvement is listed for the second domain.*

**KAC RESEARCH REPORT**

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**PHAB’s 12 Domains for Accreditation**

- **Domain 1:** Conduct and disseminate assessments focused on population health status and public health issues facing the community
- **Domain 2:** Investigate health problems and environmental public health hazards to protect the community
- **Domain 3:** Inform and educate about public health issues and functions
- **Domain 4:** Engage with the community to identify and address health problems
- **Domain 5:** Develop public health policies and plans
- **Domain 6:** Enforce public health laws
- **Domain 7:** Promote strategies to improve access to health care services
- **Domain 8:** Maintain a competent public health workforce
- **Domain 9:** Evaluate and continuously improve health department processes, programs, and interventions
- **Domain 10:** Contribute to and apply the evidence base of public health
- **Domain 11:** Maintain administrative and management capacity
- **Domain 12:** Maintain capacity to engage the public health governing entity

*continued on page 4*
DOMAIN 3  Inform and Educate About Public Health Issues and Functions

3.2.2 A  The local health department needs written procedures for communications. This includes responsibilities/expectations for those on the local board of health, if such individuals interact with the media or the public in regards to public health issues.

DOMAIN 4  Engage with the Community to Identify and Address Health Problems

4.2.2 A  The local health department must engage with the local board of health about policies/strategies to promote the public’s health. Accreditation requires that two examples of such engagement exist. (Examples can be educating the board of health or working with the board of health on such a promotion activity.)

DOMIAN 5  Develop Public Health Policies and Plans

5.1.1 A  The local health department needs to monitor/track public health issues relevant to the department. The local board of health, and policies it may be considering, counts towards this. There are various permissible ways to document this (e.g., minutes).

5.1.2 A  The local health department must demonstrate it has contributed to deliberations on public health policy. This can be via an advisory/work group appointed by the local board of health. Stakeholders in such a process are defined by the local health department and can include local elected/appointed officials.

5.1.3 A  The local health department is to inform governing entities, elected officials, and/or the public of potential public health impact of policies (current or proposed). Documentation that policy makers (such as the local board of health) have been kept informed of such impacts can serve to meet this measure’s requirement.

5.3.1 A  The local health department needs to describe the planning process used to develop its strategic plan. This includes a list of individuals involved, and members of the local board of health (or appointed representatives) should be on that list.

DOMAIN 6  Enforce Public Health Laws

6.1  All of standard 6.1 deals with review of public health laws and working with local boards of health and elected/appointed officials to update those laws as necessary. However, only a few measures specifically cite involvement of the local board of health.

6.1.2 A  The local health department needs to inform the local board of health and/or relevant elected/appointed officials of any necessary updates to current law or proposed law.
DOMAIN 7  Promote Strategies to Improve Access to Health Care Services

No local board of health involvement is listed for the seventh domain.

DOMAIN 8  Maintain a Competent Public Health Workforce

8.2.1 A  The local health department is to maintain, implement, and assess the health department workforce development plan (one that addresses staff training needs and development of core competencies). The plan must be provided, and while it can follow nationally adopted core competencies, the health department may instead use another set of competencies authorized by the local board of health.

DOMAIN 9  Evaluate and Continuously Improve Health Department Processes, Programs, and Interventions

9.1.1 A  The local health department is to engage staff to develop/update a performance management system. In the process of documenting leadership engagement to meet accreditation requirements, the health department may present draft policies or presentations to the local board of health regarding the establishment of a performance management system.

DOMAIN 10  Contribute to and Apply the Evidence Base of Public Health

10.2.3 A  The local health department is to communicate research findings and include the public health implications in such communications. Proof of meeting this measure may be in the form of communications to either the local board of health or other elected/appointed officials.

DOMAIN 11  Maintain Administrative and Management Capacity

11.2.3 A  Local health departments are to maintain financial management systems, since they are accountable to local boards of health, elected officials, and the public. One required piece of proof is a budget approved by the governing body. Local health departments are also required to submit quarterly financial reports to the governing body.

DOMAIN 12  Maintain Capacity to Engage the Public Health Governing Entity

As per the domain description, all of domain 12 deals with the ability for a local health department to engage its local board of health. Here are the measures that exist to demonstrate that capacity exists:

12.1.1 A  The local health department must provide mandated public health services, operations, and programs. They must provide proof of their authority, including any local requirements cre-
ated by the board of health. To prove how mandated responsibilities are implemented, reports to the local board of health are acceptable evidence.

### 12.1.2 A

The local health department must maintain current operational definitions and/or statements of the local board of health’s roles and responsibilities. This includes the authority of the local board of health and a description of the board (such as the statute explaining how boards of health have authority in Kansas over local health departments).

### 12.2.1 A

The local health department must communicate with the local board of health regarding the department’s responsibilities.

### 12.2.2 A

The local health department must communicate with the local board of health regarding the board’s responsibilities.

### 12.3.1 A

The local health department must provide the local board of health with information about important public health issues facing the department and/or recent actions by the department.

### 12.3.2 A

The local health department needs to track actions taken by the local board of health.

### 12.3.3 A

The local health department is to communicate with the local board of health about assessing and improving the department’s performance.

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### CONCLUSION

While this report focused on highlighting the measures that involve a local board of health (and doesn’t delve into explaining the standards behind those measures, other than to preserve the basic domain structure PHAB adheres to), it should provide a sufficient outline for any interested board member in understanding their possible roles and responsibilities when it comes to local public health accreditation. The accreditation process requires a lot of documentation, and the better prepared the local boards are, the better prepared local health departments can be.

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1. Public Health Accreditation Board. (2011, May). Standards and Measures: Version 1.0. This document is the source of all information related to domains and governing responsibilities found in this report. More information and access to these standards can be found at: http://www.phaboard.org/

2. K.S.A. 65-205
The Kansas Association of Local Health Departments (KALHD) is dedicated to strengthening local health departments for the purpose of improving and protecting the health of all Kansans. For more information about KALHD, please visit our website at http://www.kalhd.org/

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The KAC would like to extend its thanks to Edie Snethen, former executive director of KALHD, for her work in identifying those measures relevant to local boards of health in PHAB’s standards and measures document. In addition, the KAC thanks all those local health department officials who have been involved in the PHAB accreditation process, from beta site testing to reviewing/commenting back to PHAB on its standards and measures.

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