



**ARKANSAS DEPARTMENT OF
HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES**

Media Release

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Public Health Under the Microscope

Communities to use Performance Standards to Improve Public Health Practice

(Little Rock--) Public health system leaders from all over the state will be gathering at the C.A. Vines 4-H Center in Ferndale November 16 and 17 to begin a project designed to assess the state of Arkansas' public health system. Representatives from every facet of the state's public health system, including hospitals, non-profit agencies and other public, private and voluntary agencies will be participating in a project that will allow Arkansas to measure its delivery of public health services against a set of national standards.

Guest speakers for the meeting include Laura B. Landrum, Special Projects Director for the Illinois Public Health Institute. She is also the coordinator of Turning Point's Performance Management National Excellence Collaborative (an initiative of the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation). Ms. Landrum also works as a consultant to the Association of State and Territorial Health Officials on state public health performance standards.

Also speaking is Ed Thompson, M.D., M.P.H., Chief of Public Health Practice of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Dr. Thompson is responsible for assuring the U.S. public health system is strengthened and that CDC provides leadership in building and supporting public health infrastructure.

An additional speaker is James A. Rice, Ph.D., FACHE, and a Principal of LarsonAllen consulting and advisory services. Dr. Rice focuses his consulting work on strategic governance, business planning and visioning charrettes for health sector and not-for-profit organizations; strategic capital financial planning; mergers and acquisitions; and enterprise risk management analyses for physician-hospital joint ventures.

According to Paul K. Halverson, Dr PH, Director of Health and State Health Officer, the project begins with a two-day assessment of the statewide system. Following that will be an assessment at the local level with a focus on the local public health system. Results from the assessment will be made public in early spring of 2006.

“This is an important endeavor that will provide us with a benchmark that will allow us to see how well we are doing against national standards,” Halverson said. Halverson says that the project will improve coordination and collaboration among the state’s health system entities.

Under the leadership of The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), The National Public Health Performance Standards Program (NPHPSP) has been developed by seven partnering organizations to help states identify the optimum level of performance for state and local public health systems and to ensure that strong effective public health services are being offered to the public.

Along with numerous other states, Arkansas will be assessing how well it delivers the CDC’s Ten Essential Public Health Services. Each of the seven partnering organizations have played a role in developing methods that will be used to accomplish the assessment of the state’s delivery of public health services. The seven partners are the American Public Health Association, the Association of State and Territorial Health Officials, The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the National Association of County and City Health Officials, the National Association of Local Boards of Health, the National Network of Public Health Institutes, and the Public Health Foundation.

The Essential Public Health Services provide the fundamental framework for the NPHPSP instruments, by describing the public health activities that should be undertaken in all communities. The Core Public Health Functions Steering Committee developed the framework for the Essential Services in 1994. This steering committee included representatives from US Public Health Service agencies and other major public health organizations. The Essential Services provide a working definition of public health and a guiding framework for the responsibilities of public health systems.

The Ten Essential Public Health Services are:

1. Monitor health status to identify and solve community health problems.
2. Diagnose and investigate health problems and health hazards in the community.
3. Inform, educate and empower people about health issues.
4. Mobilize community partnerships and action to identify and solve health problems.
5. Develop policies and plans that support individual and community health efforts.
6. Enforce laws and regulations that protect health and ensure safety.
7. Link people to needed personal health services and assure the provision of health care when otherwise unavailable.
8. Assure competent public and personal health care workforce.
9. Evaluate effectiveness, accessibility, and quality of personal and population-based health services.
10. Research for new insights and innovative solutions to health problems.

For more information you can visit the CDC's website
<http://www.cdc.gov/od/ocphp/nphpsp/index.htm> .

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