Today, profound changes are occurring in public health. Many of those changes are driven by the demand for greater efficiency and effectiveness. In response, opportunities are arising to help meet this demand. For example, the Affordable Care Act of 2010 includes among many other provisions the Prevention and Public Health Fund. That fund supports the National Public Health Improvement Initiative (NPHII) with the objective to ensure public health goals are met efficiently and effectively. During its first year, the NPHII helped build health department capacity in performance management by providing $42.5 million to 76 state, tribal, local, and territorial health departments (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention [CDC], 2010). In addition, surveys by the Association of State and Territorial Health Officials (ASTHO, 2011) and the National Association of County and City Health Officials (NACCHO, 2010) indicate that performance management and quality improvement are priorities for a large number of state and local health agencies. Environmental public health programs are an important part of those performance and quality improvement goals. Environmental public health programs can contribute to and benefit from collaborations within agency-wide public health improvement efforts.

One important way environmental public health departments can assess and improve their own programs or systems is by using the Environmental Public Health Performance Standards (EnvPHPS). The EnvPHPS provides a set of standards that describes optimal performance and capacity with which environmental public health programs and systems can fulfill the 10 Essential Environmental Public Health Services (see sidebar). The EnvPHPS allow for in-depth analysis of services and reveal areas for quality improvement (CDC, 2011). In this way, the EnvPHPS can be utilized to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of environmental public health services. A real-world example can best show how the EnvPHPS can help initiate performance management and quality improvement activities in local-level environmental public health.

**Performance Management and Quality Improvement in Indian River County**

In July 2011, the Indian River County Health Department, Environmental Health Department (IRCHD EHD) in Vero Beach,
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ments. IRCHD EHD will now use quality service gaps and necessary improvement activities opened an action plan that identified specific environmental public health problems. The assessment results revealed that among the 10 Essential Environmental Public Health Services, the most significant gaps were in: evaluate effectiveness, accessibility, and quality of personal and population-based environmental public health services and research for new insights and innovative solutions to environmental public health problems.

IRCHD EHD chose to conduct an EnvPHPS assessment because it allowed a systems-based approach that considered the public and private entities, individuals, and associations that contribute to the delivery of environmental public health services. The assessment results revealed that among the 10 Essential Environmental Public Health Services, the most significant gaps were in #9: evaluate effectiveness, accessibility, and quality of personal and population-based environmental public health services and #10: research for new insights and innovative solutions to environmental public health problems.

As performance management in public health continues to gain momentum, more opportunities for environmental public health improvement will arise. These opportunities provide openings to improve public health systems, environmental public health services, and ultimately community health status. Visit www.cdc.gov/nceh/ehs/envphps/ for more information about the EnvPHPS and quality improvement, including a new tool kit to help programs prepare for, conduct, and follow up on an EnvPHPS assessment.

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