



Centers for Disease Control
and Prevention (CDC)
Atlanta GA 30341-3724

February 2003

Dear Colleague:

Historically, public health professionals have worked largely behind-the-scenes to improve the health and safety of American communities. Today, public health and its leaders are in the spotlight. Strengthening public health systems and organizations is an enterprise of unprecedented interest. We in public health must capitalize on this interest by seeking new opportunities to assess and improve the ways we deliver public health services in our states and our communities.

On behalf of national partner organizations, we are pleased to present you with the National Public Health Performance Standards (NPHPS) assessment instruments. The instruments that comprise this program are based on the use of standards of practice developed out of an extensive peer review process that included field testing within eight states. Of these eight states, five reviewed and tested the state standards and the local standards were reviewed and tested in 382 local public health systems. These optimal performance standards are designed to strengthen state public health systems, local public health systems, and local public health governance. The NPHPS instruments serve as valuable tools in determining current performance and capacity, identifying areas for system improvement, strengthening state and local partnerships, and assuring that a strong public health system is in place to respond effectively to both day-to-day public health issues and to public health emergencies.

Where possible, we recommend that state and local public health systems and public health governing bodies conduct the performance assessments during closely sequenced time periods. This will provide opportunities to coordinate orientation activities, technical assistance, and improvement planning at the state and local levels. NPHPS partners are available to provide training and technical assistance as states move toward statewide implementation. Projects supporting NPHPS assessments and infrastructure development may be eligible to be funded under existing federal grants or cooperative agreements.

The state and local instruments in the enclosed binder are also available to download as PDF files at www.phppo.cdc.gov/nphpsp. In addition, an Internet-based data collection site is available to analyze submitted data and return assessment reports to users.

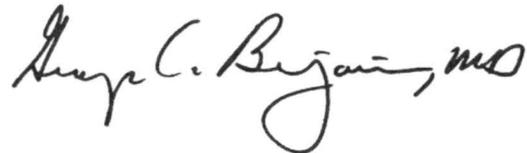
We hope you find these instruments valuable. For more information or inquiries about technical assistance, please call any of the partner organizations listed in the binder or contact CDC staff at 1-800-PHPP049 (1-800-747-7649) or phpsp@cdc.gov.

As public health leaders, we can leverage the current prominence public health has on the national agenda by thoughtfully acting to assess and strengthen the infrastructure that supports public health systems. Our nation's health depends on us, especially now. By building a public health infrastructure that sustains both traditional and emergency response services, we can meet the on-going and the new challenges of public health in the 21st century.

Sincerely,



Edward L. Baker, MD, MPH
Assistant Surgeon General
Director, Public Health Practice
Program Office, Centers for
Disease Control and Prevention



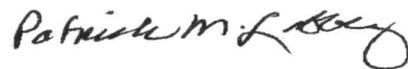
Georges C. Benjamin, MD,
FACP
Executive Director
American Public Health
Association



Paul K. Halverson, DrPH
Director, Division of Public
Health Systems Development and
Research
Public Health Practice Program
Office, Centers for Disease
Control and Prevention



George E. Hardy, Jr., MD,
MPH
Executive Director
Association of State and
Territorial Health
Officials



Patrick Libbey
Executive Director
National Association of County
and City Health Officials



Ron Bialek, MPP
President
Public Health Foundation



Marie Fallon, MHSA
Executive Director
National Association of Local
Boards of Health



Joseph Kimbrell, MA, LCSW
President and CEO
National Network of Public
Health Institutes