

# Public Health Practice Stories from the Field



## National Public Health Improvement Initiative in Ohio

Managing and Improving Performance  
through Online Reporting

### Built

an online reporting system to measure agency performance using Public Health Accreditation Board standards

### Engaged

partners from across the public health system, academia, and the community

### Enhanced

capacity to measure performance, track trends, and assess statewide performance strengths and needs of local health departments

The Ohio Department of Health (ODH) serves a population of 11.5 million with a decentralized system of 125 locally governed public health departments. Ohio has a strong history of support for public health improvement initiatives. As part of a broad push to increase performance management capacity in the state and ensure that public health goals are met, ODH used the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC) National Public Health Improvement Initiative (NPHII) funding to support the development of an online reporting system to assess performance using the Public Health Accreditation Board's (PHAB) draft standards.

The reporting system, which is now being converted over to [PHAB's version 1.0 standards](#), was created to not only allow for comprehensive self-assessment, but also produce quantitative scores for each standard, offer points of comparison with similarly sized health departments, and identify strengths and areas needing improvement. In the future, with data from multiple years of reporting, the system will allow for tracking change across time, as well as self- and peer-comparisons, sharing of best practices, tracking quality improvement efforts, and other key functions. Local health departments participated in the development of the information technology requirements and tested the system as ODH staff honed its technical components. It will soon become the tool for all required annual reporting of state and local public health performance.

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## What We Did

CDC's NPHII funding was central to this ODH performance improvement effort. Funds were used to

- Analyze existing Ohio administrative code standards and PHAB standards
- Obtain federal and state approval to use PHAB v1.0 standards as Ohio's standards for public health performance measurement
- Work with information technology staff to develop the online reporting tool
- Award mini-grants to local health departments doing quality improvement work, who were also recruited to test the reporting tool

In the long term, the system will pull three separate systems—local health department directory, annual financial reporting, and performance standards—into one environment.

## What We Accomplished

Accomplishments included the following:

- Completion of the overall design, administrative dashboard, business logic for comments regarding measures, the reporting tool, a user authorization module, and an administrative controller module
- Roll out of the first phase of the system with local health departments
- Development of annual reports by all Ohio health departments using the new online PHAB standards-based tool
- System expansion to allow for custom reporting capability, data extraction, and the ability for mini-grant continuous quality improvement projects to be entered for sharing among health departments

## What We Learned

The ultimate goal of the project is to improve the performance of the Ohio public health system through setting optimal standards and monitoring our performance against those standards to ensure public health goals are effectively met. So far, lessons learned include

- Collaboration with partners, including the Ohio Volunteer Accreditation Team (a grassroots effort to support public health improvement), academic consultants, local health departments, and federal agencies, was critical to making this project work
- Technical expertise in information technology is key to creating a user-friendly, comprehensive, and linked system
- Complete implementation of this project will require training for public health department staff members using the system

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