



March 16, 2018

MEMORANDUM

TO: Ohio Health Departments Planning to Apply for Accreditation 2018  
FROM: Kaye Bender, PHAB President/CEO  
RE: Tips for Success

The PHAB team is aware of the Ohio mandate that health departments must apply for accreditation by July 1, 2018. As of the writing of this memo, there are 70 Ohio health departments in e-PHAB (PHAB's information system). Twenty are accredited and 4 are developing or implementing Action Plans toward accreditation. We understand that another 40-45 health departments plan to apply for PHAB accreditation on or before July 1, 2018. The purpose of this memo is to provide those health departments who are preparing to apply by the July 1, 2018 deadline with some tips for success since we know that health departments that are rushed tend to make the most errors. These tips are based on the lessons that PHAB has learned over time.

1. The health department director will be required to sign a statement in e-PHAB that states that the CHA/CHIP and the Strategic Plan have been completed and that the Emergency Operations Plan, Workforce Development Plan, QI Plan, and the Communications Plan and Branding Strategy have either been completed or are near completion. These are the most common areas where health departments encounter difficulties if they apply before these are in place. Please start now to review where you are in the process of developing these documents so that the health department director can sign that statement with confidence.
2. As you prepare your documentation, please pay special attention to the "must" statements in the Guidance for each measure. Those elements have to be present and clearly laid out for the site visitors. Also, make sure that there is a date for every document.
3. Please ensure that your documentation holds together to tell your health department's story in the context of the accreditation standards and measures. Use the text box in e-PHAB and/or use cover sheets for the documents to describe how the documents demonstrate the requirements.

Rushed health departments may tend to just put some documentation in the system to get feedback. Your accreditation review will go much better if you take the time you need to prepare your documentation logically. It will significantly slow your review down if you have a lot of measures to be reopened on either the completeness review or the pre-site visit review. Some examples of why measures are reopened include the following:

- Uploaded documents are crooked, blurred, or otherwise difficult to read. This can happen when a document is scanned. Be sure to check your documents for readability before you upload them into e-PHAB.
- Documents requiring signatures are not signed; are out of date; or do not have evidence of authenticity.
- Documentation is for services or activities that are out of PHAB's scope that the standards and measures were created to address. Please don't upload those types of documentation in the hope that PHAB will change its mind. It's a question of legality for us as an accrediting body, so we can't change those rules. The attached tip sheet will help you in determining what is in or out of scope.
- Documentation isn't clearly aligned with what the measure is asking for. PHAB stands ready to assist you with any interpretation questions so that you can avoid uploading documentation that just isn't what the measure requires.

4. The most common reasons for an Action Plan are incomplete or missing work on the following measures:

CHA (Measures 1.1.1 and 1.1.2)

CHIP (Measures 5.2.1, 5.2.2)

SP (Measures 5.3.1, 5.3.2)

QI and PM (Measures 9.1.3, 9.1.4, 9.1.5, 9.2.1, 9.2.2)

Make sure that all the elements that are required in the measure's guidance are included in your documents and clearly marked for the site visitors. While an Action Plan is not a bad thing at all, having to work on one will delay your accreditation status. If you can prevent that from happening, then, the process will work better for you and for PHAB.

5. If your health department relies on the state health department or another local health department for epidemiology capacity (Measure 2.1.1, 2.1.2, 2.2.1, 2.2.2) or for enforcement activities (Measure 6.3.1, 6.3.2, 6.3.3, 6.3.4, and 6.3.5), the documentation required for the measure can come from the other entity. However, your health department still needs to document how the health department works with that entity on public health issues requiring enforcement activities. Please see the documentation guidance in Standard 6.3 that begins with the phrase "In some cases..." for how to document that relationship.

6. We are aware that many small health departments may not have had two events in their community that call for an After-Action Report (Measure 2.2.3). If you haven't had an outbreak

or other event that would require an AAR, the documentation of a table top exercise of a drill would suffice.

7. PHAB hopes that each of the OH local health departments have a strong Accreditation Coordinator who is working with an equally strong accreditation team. PHAB has found that health departments who try to complete the accreditation process with just one person working on it are not as successful. And, the whole premise about accreditation is that it is a tool for helping the health department as a whole to do its job better. So, the more staff that can be involved, the better.

8. And, finally, some health departments, especially those that are smaller, might wonder if they can combine some of their plans into one document. PHAB accepts individual plans or combined plans, as long as the requirements for each plan are met and the document is clearly labeled.

PHAB has heard that some of you have concerns about whether we can handle the Ohio workload. The answer is yes; we are planning for the influx of applications this year. Working with you on ensuring that your documentation is as well prepared and presented for site visitor review as it possibly can be will positively affect the workload on our side as well as yours.

We applaud the work that you are doing both individually and collectively to get accredited, and we look forward to spending our time with you over these next several months. Please do not hesitate to call on us if you have any questions or need additional assistance.

*Attachment: Guidance on Appropriate Examples from Programs and Activities for Use as Documentation for PHAB Accreditation*