

# Illinois

## PERFORMANCE IMPROVEMENT IN ILLINOIS

In 1993, Illinois launched its local health department certification program. The program is governed and administered by the Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH) and is included in Illinois Administrative Code. In order to be certified, every five years a local health department (LHD) must develop a community health needs assessment and health plan (IPLAN) and assert that it aligns with the eight public health practice standards that are outlined in the code (see below). If the certification application provides self-affirmation of compliance with all practice standards, the IDPH director grants a five-year certification to the LHD.

Although no specific funding is awarded by IDPH to support certification activities, the certification program is a sustained effort by the state and local health departments that has had notable success in raising the performance level of LHDs.

### Illinois Public Health Practice Standards

1. Assess community health needs
2. Investigate hazards within the community
3. Advocate and build constituencies for public health
4. Develop policies and plans to respond to needs
5. Manage resources and organizational structures
6. Implement programs and services to respond to priority needs
7. Evaluate programs and services
8. Inform and educate the community

- Development of a panel of 50 draft performance measures, using certification measures and additional measures from the Operational Definition
- An accreditation process that included a LHD self-study, a tabletop review and a peer-review site visit to determine accreditation recommendations
- Administration of the accreditation process by a non-governmental entity

The new accreditation program was piloted in seven diverse LHDs between August and December 2007, applying and evaluating the following components:

- 50 performance measures addressing eight public health practice standards, with suggested evidence to demonstrate compliance
- LHD Self-Study that consisted of questions about initial priorities for quality improvement
- Tabletop review process, which was conducted by the staff and one member of the site review team
- Site visits by a three-person site review team, with a clear focus on opportunities for quality improvement
- Performance and Priorities Grid that showed the level of LHD performance rating by priority level for improvement - a tool for examining quality improvement needs and opportunities at the site visit
- Accreditation Reports on each pilot LHD, with ratings and scores
- Decision-making by the IATF, in lieu of an Illinois Accreditation Board

Extensive evaluation activities of the pilot project were conducted and remain ongoing. Preliminary results indicate the accreditation process was helpful to pilot LHDs in examining their agency's overall performance but was by itself inadequate as a stand-alone QI process. The pilots were motivated by their need to raise internal awareness of performance issues, obtain staff buy-in, and create a 'team' approach to performance assessment and quality improvement. A large majority (85%) found the process has helped them identify areas in need of development. Six of the seven pilots would go through the process again if it were more focused on quality improvement. Additional evaluations focused on LHD time and cost commitment in the accreditation pilot and on LHD performance have been conducted.

Through participation in *Lead States in Public Health Quality Improvement*, the third phase of the MLC (which will run from 2008-2011), Illinois will prepare for accreditation and advance QI in public health through the following work:

**Preparation for Accreditation:** Illinois will continue developing and testing the Illinois Accreditation Program as either a stand-alone, national accreditation-equivalent program or as a preparation process to obtain accreditation

## PARTICIPATION IN THE MULTI-STATE LEARNING COLLABORATIVE

**Developing an Accreditation Program in Illinois:** Illinois has been a participant in the MLC since its first phase began in 2005. With MLC funding, Illinois launched and supported the **Illinois Accreditation Development Project** and a task force was formed, the **Illinois Accreditation Task Force (IATF)**, to guide the work.

The goals of the project were to 1) transition Illinois to a more performance-based, quality-improvement (QI) focused system through the design of a voluntary accreditation program; and 2) create and test systems, tools, and protocols for the newly-designed program to ensure that it is focused on quality improvement.

Key design elements of the voluntary accreditation model in Illinois include:

- Adoption of the Illinois Public Health Practice Standards as the backbone for standards and measures

through the Public Health Accreditation Board (PHAB). As part of this process, the project aims to:

- Analyze performance issues and gaps uncovered in the pilot process as well as in a recently-conducted survey on LHD accreditation readiness
- Publish and disseminate the evaluation of the pilot accreditation process
- Revise Illinois performance measures, evidence, and its voluntary accreditation process
- Promote and disseminate best practices uncovered through the pilot process
- Conduct additional pilots (or an alternative type of testing, such as tabletop exercises) of the revised voluntary accreditation program and make program revisions
- Inform state and local health departments as well as other stakeholders about the Illinois Accreditation Development project and the national PHAB efforts
- Conduct communication activities to inform the Illinois public health community of state and national accreditation activities

A key component of Illinois' work will be the management of the decision-making process to determine whether to: (a) implement and support an Illinois voluntary accreditation program and seek equivalency status with PHAB, or (b) encourage state and local health departments to seek accreditation through PHAB.

**Quality Improvement Collaboratives:** All states participating in the third phase of the MLC are forming collaboratives to collectively implement quality improvement activities focused on specific target areas. States were asked to choose at least two targets from a menu of five capacity/process target areas and five health outcome target areas. Illinois will implement two quality improvement collaboratives simultaneously during project years 2009 and 2010. Five to seven LHDs will participate in each collaborative. The sites who piloted the accreditation process will be automatically eligible to participate and additional LHDs will be selected through a competitive application process. Substantial training in QI methods will be provided through the project, as well as technical assistance from QI and subject matter experts. Collaborative participants will use rapid improvement cycles informed by root cause analysis and logic models. Monitoring of progress will itself improve LHD capacity in evaluation.

**Target Areas:**

*Capacity/Process Target Area:*

**Health Improvement Planning**

Sub-target: To be determined

*Health Outcome Target Area:*

**Reducing preventable risk factors that predispose the population to chronic disease**

Sub-target: To be determined

**Project Lead and Partners:**

**The Illinois Public Health Institute (IPHI)** is the lead agency for the MLC grant and is responsible for providing staffing to convene, facilitate, and produce technical products for the project.

Formed to carry out MLC activities in Illinois, the **Illinois Accreditation Task Force (IATF)** is a solid partnership for future development of Illinois accreditation and quality improvement efforts. The organizations involved and their roles are:

- The **Illinois Department of Public Health** provides state agency policy perspective and programmatic and administrative expertise on the Illinois LHD Certification program
- The **Illinois Association of Public Health Administrators** provides the voice of the majority of LHDs in the state
- The **Northern Illinois Public Health Consortium** provides the voice of 11 LHDs in the populous northeast portion of the state
- The **Southern Illinois Public Health Consortium** provides the voice of 27 LHDs in the southern portion of the state
- The **Illinois Association of Local Boards of Health** provides the voice of local governing boards for 95 LHDs
- The **University of Illinois at Chicago School of Public Health** provides academic, evaluation and research expertise and historical perspective on LHD performance
- The **Illinois Public Health Association** provides a large annual forum for discussion of major public health issues and expertise in the functioning of the Illinois public health system
- The **Illinois Department of Human Services** provides programmatic expertise and understanding of the numerous services it delivers through LHDs

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**ADDITIONAL RESOURCES:**

For reports, tools and other resources developed through MLC support, please visit the IPHI web site's pages on the Illinois Accreditation Development Project:

<http://tinyurl.com/3afk63>

To see related work produced by Illinois, please visit [www.nnphi.org/ecatalog](http://www.nnphi.org/ecatalog). Under *Programs* select "The Multi-State Learning Collaborative." Under *States* select "Illinois." Then click the Search button.