

Delaware Division of Public Health
Public Health Accreditation Board Site Visit Report from e-PHAB
Accredited on March 8, 2016

Overall Comments:

The site visit team has identified the following as the greatest strengths of the Delaware Division of Public Health (DDPH):

1. The strategic plan reflects the ability of the leadership team and the Division to focus limited resources for optimal impact on population health. The strategy maps utilized in the plan provide a useful visual tool for implementation and monitoring achievements.
2. The administrative policies and procedures that have been developed provide excellent support for the division of public health to accomplish its work in an efficient manner. DDPH appears to have an effective working relationship with State Office of Management and Budget. Contracts management, grants management (both development of grants and grant reporting) and overall financial management policies provide a solid foundation for the work that is done in DDPH.
3. The support that the DDPH has created internally for developing, honing, and coordinating information and messages flowing out to the entire state appears to be a valuable and well utilized resource within the Division. A dedicated cadre of staff in the communications area is a valuable resource for pre-crafting messages that are anticipated to be needed for either projects or for emerging situations.
4. The culture of the Division appears to have changed over the past four to five years with a focus on evidence-based practices and the widespread involvement of senior managers in learning collaboratives, partnerships that include universities and community partners, and robust quality improvement projects. These efforts hold great promise for Delaware affecting the health outcomes for the citizens of the state.

The site visit team has identified the following as the greatest challenges or opportunities for improvement for the Delaware Division of Public Health (DDPH):

1. Although the DDPH does not have local health departments, the Northern and Southern Health Services offices provide an on-the-ground avenue for the Division to develop closer relationships to communities with health needs or health inequities. There appear to be great opportunities for increasing the involvement of the community at large to improve the health of their community through the work that the Division has begun in several local areas. Of especial note is the recent finalization of the health equity guidebook that is used as an initial training tool.
2. DDPH has an opportunity to move forward in a joint effort with community partners in the next iteration of the SHA/SHIP. The ground work appears to have been laid to hone the focus of the community partners so that they

commit and develop ownership for a few key areas and concentrate community-wide resources to those focus areas.

3. DDPH should consider including descriptions of how qualitative data is analyzed (for example, “focus group data was transcribed and analyzed using software x”) and document the process for priority selection so that as plans are made for implementing interventions, there is a clear path between priority and intervention selection and the data that supports it.

Overall impression of the department as a functioning health department:

Delaware Division of Public Health (DDPH) is a state health department that is functioning at a high level of achievement as measured by the national PHAB standards. DDPH is well-respected by community agencies and by other state departments and is a proven and trusted resource for the legislature. There is clear support and direction from the Department of Health and Social Services Secretary for the Division's needs and vision. Community partners praised the staff of the Division for being responsive even when requests are only peripherally related to DDPH's responsibilities.

The Health Director sets the tone and standards for DDPH and has developed a senior leadership team that functions smoothly together and is committed to improving the performance of the Division both internally and across the state. The staff has developed useful tools to monitor and evaluate progress toward meeting goals and objectives for the state and DDPH.

DDPH is committed to improving the health and well-being of all areas and populations within the State and has begun laying the groundwork for improving health by informing communities about health equity issues within their community and by redirecting the work of some staff to assist communities directly. There is continued opportunity to engage the community at large at the local and grassroots level. It was learned during the site visit that this work is now in the early stages of implementation and holds great promise for improving the health of Delawareans.