

Gaining Ground

Domain 8: Workforce Webinar Transcript

Webinar Series Overview:

PHAB accreditation uses an established framework of standards based on twelve domains. The first ten address the Ten Essential Services of Public Health. The last two focus on your health department's infrastructure and governance. This 12-part video series provides information, tips, and resources on how you can use the specific performance measures in each domain to advance the quality and performance of your department. Applying the standards now will help your department reach its strategic goals, even as you consider taking the next steps toward accreditation.

Domain 8 Introduction:

The goal of this presentation is to provide you with an overview of the standards and measures in PHAB Domain 8. This domain provides the PHAB accreditation requirements for Maintaining a Competent Public Health Workforce.

I'm Laurie Walkner, Director of Training and Education for the Institute for Public Health Practice in the College of Public Health at the University of Iowa. I've been involved in public health workforce development activities at the local, state and national level since 2001. The Midwestern Public Health Training Center that's housed in the Institute for Public Health Practice is one of Ten HRSA funded Public Health Training Centers responsible for assessing and training frontline public health workers and middle managers. Building individual capabilities leads to increasing organizational capacity and this is right in alignment with what Domain 8 is all about.

As presented in the introduction, there are 12 Domains, which contain standards and measures. This presentation will cover Domain 8: Maintain a Competent Public Health Workforce. This domain contains two standards and six measures. We'll go over each standard and measure to provide you with a better understanding of what they cover.

Standard 8.1:

We'll begin with Standard 8.1, which is: Encourage the development of a sufficient number of qualified public health workers. This standard addresses the need to maintain a competent public health workforce required to meet changing Public Health needs. As we know, Public Health is faced with a changing workforce due to those retiring or those making career changes. At the same time, there's a newly trained public health workforce that's emerging. To ensure that this emerging workforce is well-trained, public health departments will need to collaborate with other entities to make this happen.

Measure 8.1.1:

There is only one measure for this standard. Measure 8.1.1 is partnerships or collaborations that promote the development of the future workforce. It should be noted that there is a different PHAB measure for state collaboration and local/Tribal collaboration. This can be done in a variety of ways. For instance, collaborating or partnering with schools or colleges of public health, working with AmeriCorps, making presentations to high schools students about public health careers, providing school experiences to high school students, or guest lecturing at community colleges promote development of this workforce. An example of a collaboration would be providing a practice-based experience for a Master of Public Health student. These practice-based experiences may include projects such as developing educational material, assisting with a community health needs assessment, or implementing a community-based program. Documentation of this experience may be a practicum proposal that describes the project, its objectives, the dates of the project, the name of the health department, student, their degree program, the name of the school, and the preceptor.

Standard 8.2:

The second standard, 8.2, is to ensure a competent workforce through the assessment of staff competencies, the provision of individual training and professional development, and the provision of a supportive work environment. This focuses on the development of a Workforce Development Plan that provides the training and support for staff to perform their duties and fulfill the department's mission.

Measure 8.2.1:

There are five measures for Standard 8.2. The first measure, 8.2.1, is workforce development strategies. This includes a Workforce Development Plan and implemented workforce development strategies. The Workforce Development Plan itself will serve as documentation. The plan must have been prepared within the last two years. The plan must address the capacity and capability of the department's workforce. It should be responsive to changes in areas such as technology or information management. It should take into account advances in areas such as emergency preparedness, health equity, cultural competence, and public health law.

A competency-based assessment that is completed by staff is required in order to assess and address training gaps. You can use a national set of competencies such as the Core Competencies for Public Health Professionals or they can be state-developed competencies. This assessment will help identify training gaps that will be addressed in the plan. Here is an example of an assessment that's been used. It asks for demographic information, including how long they have been in public health, organizational roles, and their service area. It contains questions based on Core Competencies for Public Health Professionals and includes questions regarding the need for training on specific topic areas. It also touches on barriers to attending trainings and organizational culture of learning. There are existing workforce development assessments that you can use to help tailor one for your department.

You may want to set up the assessment up so that each staff member can download a pdf of their assessment results so they can be used during their annual performance reviews as this will aid in the development of a professional development plan for them.

The plan must include a training schedule that contains your course title, description, or topics that will be covered, and what units or service areas will be taking the training and when the training will take place. There are examples of training plans or training templates and users guides that can be used to help develop a training plan. The Strategic Plan, Quality Improvement Plan, Health Improvement Plan have elements of workforce development and should align with a Workforce Development Plan.

Once the plan has been developed, the second requirement of this measure is then to provide evidence that the workforce development strategies have been implemented. They may include documentation such as evaluation results from trainings offered by the department, or certificates of training completion.

As we move through the standards and measures within Domain 8, it should be noted that there are other domains that require workforce training. For instance, in Domain 2 Standard 3 there is a measure that addresses training/exercise schedules for surge personnel. Domain 6 focuses on reviewing existing laws. It requires training in laws to support public health interventions and practice. And Domain 9 is on Performance Management Systems. It requires staff development in performance management and training in Quality Improvement. In Domain 11, it requires that health equity and cultural competence training is provided to staffs.

Measure 8.2.2:

The second measure. 8.2.2, is a competent public health workforce. This measure focuses on recruitment, retention, and verification of staff qualifications. Competency-based job descriptions along with requirements for certifications and/or licensures, and specific education, training, or experience needed to perform the job may be used as evidence to show that the department recruits qualified individuals for specific jobs. It's also required that departments provide evidence for how they recruit individuals who reflect the population that they serve. So this can be done in hiring procedures and policies and job postings that can reflect this evidence. The department is asked to provide examples of activities that support and lead to retention. This could include evidence such as employee satisfaction survey results or recognition programs. The department is asked to provide examples of how staff have access to competency-based position descriptions and this could occur through accessing them through the HR department or through the internet or intranet. Lastly, the health department must show the process used to verify staff qualifications and evidence of this process for all staff hired in the past two years. The process used may be described in a policy within the HR system. This policy may include how they acquire transcripts from academic institutions, or a license with an issuing entity.

Measure 8.2.3:

The third measure for Standard 8.2 is professional and career development for all staff. This requires two examples of documentation showing that staff have participated in professional development activities such as trainings, job shadowing, tuition reimbursement, or mentoring. Documentation may include program agendas from trainings. These are important to retain as they contain topics the programs covered. PHAB asks that department have professional development activities for leaders and managers that occur both within an organization as well as outside of the organization. This would include participating in leadership trainings on a variety of topics such as ethics, public health law, or crisis leadership. This may be offered at the county or local level or even the state or regional or national level. There are regional and national leadership training programs that are available.

Measure 8.2.4:

The next measure is 8.2.4, which is: Work environment that is supportive to the workforce. It focuses on how the department creates an environment or culture that supports individuals in their job. Documentation is reflected in policies, plans, or program descriptions regarding such things as how the department provides the tools and resources needed to perform job responsibilities or how the department supports work/life balance by allowing flexible work hours or telecommuting, or conducting regular assessments of organizational climate, or activities that support collaborative thinking. Another piece of documentation needed for this measure is providing policies, plans, or program descriptions that demonstrate employee recognition. Evidence can be in the form of a recognition letter or a luncheon or an article posted in a newsletter about an employee. The last required documentation is to provide evidence of employee wellness activities. Policies, plans, and programs that describe health screenings, the offering of flu shots, exercise programs are all examples that support this requirement.

Measure 8.2.5:

The last measure for Standard 8.2 is only for state health departments. Measure 8.2.5 is consultation or technical assistance provided to Tribal and local health departments regarding evidence-based and/or promising practice in the development of workforce capacity, training, and continuing education. This could be done via webinars, posting materials on the website, phone calls, or conducting educational offerings such as conferences or summits.

Conclusion:

That concludes our presentation on Domain 8: Maintain a Competent Public Health Workforce. We hope that this overview is helpful to you and here are a few prominent resources that you may find helpful as you go through this domain and plan:

- Ohio State University
 - Templates to Support Accreditation
 - Workforce Development Plan

- ASTHO
 - Workforce Development Plan Toolkit
- NACCHO
 - Accreditation Resources for Workforce Development
- The Council on Linkages Between Academia and Public Health Practice
 - Core Competencies for Public Health Professionals

On behalf of the Gaining Ground Coalition, thank you for joining us today.