



Update on Council Activities

August 15, 2016

Overview

The Council on Linkages Between Academia and Public Health Practice (Council) engages in a variety of activities that support workforce development for the public health workforce. To date in 2016, progress has been made in a number of areas, including the [Academic Health Department \(AHD\) Learning Community](#), [Core Competencies for Public Health Professionals](#) (Core Competencies), and [recruitment and retention](#).

Academic Health Department Learning Community

The AHD Learning Community supports development of AHD partnerships between public health practice organizations and academic institutions. As a national community of practitioners, educators, and researchers, the AHD Learning Community stimulates discussion and sharing of knowledge; the development of resources; and collaborative learning around establishing, sustaining, and expanding AHDs. The Learning Community currently has approximately 600 members.

Recent Activities

AHD Learning Community meetings continue to be held on an ongoing basis, with three meetings in 2016 focusing on sharing examples of AHD partnerships in [Kansas, Kentucky](#), and [Alabama](#), as well as on [developing a research agenda to explore questions related to the structure, functions, and impacts of AHDs](#). Additional Learning Community meetings are being planned for later this year. The list of [AHD partnerships](#) compiled by the Learning Community continues to grow, as does the collection of [partnership agreements](#) used to formalize AHD relationships. Contributions for these resources are always welcome by email to Kathleen Amos at kamos@phf.org.

The [AHD Mentorship Program](#), which formally launched at the end of June 2015, also continues to develop. This program helps to foster AHDs by building relationships between individuals involved in AHD efforts. Led by [Bryn Manzella, MPH](#), of the Jefferson County Department of Health (AL), the mentorship program connects individuals seeking guidance in an area of AHD development or operation with those having experience in that area, with a focus on creating ongoing relationships that support mutual learning and professional development. Participation in the program is growing, with eight existing mentor/mentee matches, and additional matches continuing to be created. Expressions of interest in participating as either a mentor or mentee are welcome by email to Janelle Nichols at jnichols@phf.org.

Core Competencies for Public Health Professionals

The Core Competencies reflect foundational skills desirable for professionals engaged in the practice, education, and research of public health and are used in education, training, and other workforce development activities across the country. The Core Competencies and related resources and tools are widely used within health departments, academic institutions, and other public health organizations, and this usage is highlighted by the frequency with which these resources are accessed through the Council website. Since the June 2014 release of the current version of the Core Competencies, the Core Competencies have been accessed nearly 96,000 times, and tools and resources have been accessed more than 178,000 times.

Resources and Tools

Since the release of the 2014 version of the Core Competencies, work has continued to develop [resources and tools to support public health professionals and organizations in using the Core Competencies](#). Most recently, descriptions of the [eight Core Competencies domains](#) and a [summary showing how the Core Competencies are used to support health department accreditation and performance improvement](#) were created. Efforts have also focused on expanding collections of [workforce development plans](#) and [job descriptions](#) that incorporate the Core Competencies. These collections now include 24 workforce development plans and 25 job descriptions that are provided as examples for others who are developing their own. Additional examples that can be added to either of these collections, other resources and tools to support use of the Core Competencies, or expressions of interest in the [Core Competencies Workgroup](#) are welcome by email to Janelle Nichols at jnichols@phf.org.

Healthy People 2020 Data Collection

Within [Healthy People 2020](#), the Core Competencies are incorporated into three objectives in the [Public Health Infrastructure \(PHI\) topic area](#). The Council serves as the data source for the third of these objectives, PHI-3: *Increase the proportion of Council on Education for Public Health (CEPH) accredited schools of public health, CEPH accredited academic programs, and schools of nursing (with a public health or community health component) that integrate Core Competencies for Public Health Professionals into curricula*, and worked with three Council member organizations to collect data related to this objective in 2016. Of the academic institutions that provided information, 92% indicated that they have used the Core Competencies. A full summary of results of this data collection is included in the meeting materials.

Recruitment and Retention

In 2010, the Council conducted a [survey](#) to explore recruitment and retention within the US public health workforce. This survey considered factors that influenced individuals' decisions to take and remain in jobs in the public health field, as well as their satisfaction with elements of the environments in which they worked, including organizational leadership, management, and professional development. Nearly 12,000 individuals shared their experiences through this survey, and the results of this exploration are now summarized in the Council's report, [Recruitment and Retention: What's Influencing the Decisions of Public Health Workers?](#) A copy of this report is included in the meeting materials. In addition, the dataset containing responses from the individuals on which these results are based is available for further research. More information about accessing this data can be obtained [online](#) or by contacting Kathleen Amos at kamos@phf.org.