

REQUEST FOR BOARD ACTION

HENDERSON COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

MEETING DATE: March 9, 2005

SUBJECT: Resolution Supporting Accreditation of Local Public Health Departments

ATTACHMENTS: Yes

1. Memorandum from Keith Dale, Chair, Board of Health
2. Resolution

SUMMARY OF REQUEST:

On January 4, 2005, the Henderson County Board of Health passed the attached resolution in support of accreditation of local public health departments. Boards of Health and Boards of County Commissioners are being asked by the NC Association of Local Health Directors to support this resolution to seek legislative support and funding for establishing a benchmark for measuring the capacity of local public health departments to perform core public health functions and deliver essential services in their communities.

We believe that our health department should have no problem meeting the public health accreditation standards, and that it too should go through the process to provide this documented assurance. We ask for your support of this resolution and urge our State Legislature to pass legislation on public health accreditation.

COUNTY MANAGER'S RECOMMENDATION/BOARD ACTION REQUESTED:

I recommend that the Board approve this resolution.

Henderson County Department of Public Health

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Thomas D. Bridges, MPH, Director

Diana Curran, MD, Medical Director

MEMORANDUM

To: Henderson County Board of County Commissioners

From: Keith Dale, Chair
Henderson County Board of Health

Subject: Accreditation of Local Public Health Departments

Date: January 6, 2005

On January 4, 2005, the Henderson County Board of Health passed the attached resolution in support of accreditation of local public health departments. Boards of health and boards of county commissioners are being asked by the NC Association of Local Health Directors have asked local boards of health and local boards of county commissioners across the state to support this resolution as they seek legislative support and funding for establishing a benchmark for measuring the capacity of local public health departments to perform core public health functions and deliver essential services in their communities. Many other local boards of health and boards of county commissioners across North Carolina have already endorsed this resolution.

Our board viewed at the meeting a short video presentation of 6 local health directors who last year piloted the accreditation system developed for North Carolina by the NC Association of Local Health Directors, the NC Division of Public Health and the NC Institute for Public Health. They offered their experiences with the process and what they and their staff gained from the activity. They were especially pleased to be able to have documented evidence to further assure their communities that their local health departments were competent and capable of performing core public health functions and delivering essential services.

We believe that our health department should have no problem meeting the public health accreditation standards, and that it too should go through the process to provide this documented assurance. We ask for your support of this resolution and urge that our State Legislature to pass legislation on public health accreditation. I have asked Tom Bridges to be available as you consider this resolution to share the video presentation and to answer any questions you may have regarding this resolution.

RESOLUTION IN SUPPORT OF ACCREDITATION

Whereas, in 2002 the North Carolina Association of Local Health Directors (NCALHD) established a Task Force on Standards and Efficiencies which over the next year and a half studied models of accreditation/certification from other states and developed a framework for an accreditation system for North Carolina based on the essential public health services; and

Whereas, in 2003 the Public Health Task Force 2004 was created by the Secretary of DHHS to strengthen the North Carolina public health system, improve health status for North Carolinians and eliminate health disparities; and

Whereas, that Task Force established a Committee on Accreditation which further developed the work of the NCALHD Task Force on Standards and Efficiencies and prepared a draft of the standards for accreditation including the activities and documentation for each standard (i.e., each essential service) and a draft process for self-assessment of the agency, a site visit by a team of peers and a final decision by an accrediting body, which was used in a pilot accreditation process with six volunteer local health departments; and

Whereas, the pilot process resulted in six local health departments being accredited and a series of “lessons learned” from staff in the six local agencies, the DPH staff who provided technical assistance to the six agencies, the local staff and staff from the NC Institute for Public Health who served as site visitors and others involved in the process; these “lessons learned” are being used to revise the standards, activities and documentation, the site visit process, and the training for all participants in order to improve all components of the accreditation process for further piloting and future implementation; and

Whereas, benefits of participating in an accreditation process to the specific agency include: the opportunity to “step back” and look at the overall agency, its services and performance, including strengths and weaknesses; enhanced pride among staff as they review the enormous scope of agency activities which impact the health of the community in which they live; enhanced teamwork among staff as they work together to demonstrate that the agency meets the standards and; and the establishment and/or strengthening of a continuous quality improvement approach within the agency; and

Whereas, the benefits of accreditation to the public health system include: the ability to ensure the availability and quality of essential public health services to every citizen of North Carolina and enhanced credibility for the public health system and each agency with partnering entities (most of which are themselves accredited), third party payers, elected officials and policy-makers, and the public.

Now, therefore, be it resolved that the Henderson County Board of Health supports the legislatively enacted pilot accreditation process for local health departments and the continuing effort to revise accreditation standards, the self-assessment process and the site-review process.

Be it further resolved that the Henderson County Board of Health supports the statewide effort to accredit all local health departments provided that \$50,000 per year of ongoing state funding is provided to each health department to support accreditation and continuous quality improvement.