



National Indian Health Board



Working together for healthy Native communities

The Public Health Accreditation Board (PHAB) and The National Indian Health Board (NIHB) have partnered in a national effort to improve public health practice in Indian Country. PHAB is developing a national voluntary public health accreditation program for state, territorial, tribal, and local health departments that will launch in 2011. Public health accreditation is a process that will measure the degree to which public health departments meet nationally recognized standards. As the national public health accrediting body, PHAB recognizes the unique and critical role that Tribal governments have in developing the accreditation program. Therefore, PHAB is working with NIHB to ensure that accreditation standards address the specific needs and challenges of the Tribal public health programs. As PHAB tests the accreditation standards, measures and procedures through the upcoming beta test, Tribal health programs will have an opportunity to provide important feedback on the accreditation program prior to the national launch.

What public health accreditation means for Indian Country

The goal of the accreditation program is to improve and protect the health of the Tribes by advancing the quality of public health services. Through its work with NIHB, PHAB understands that enhancing public health in Indian Country means addressing a complex set of services that are often provided by a diverse group of partners and stakeholders. Tribal leaders and health officials are giving valuable input into the creation of the accreditation standards and the process of becoming accredited, and therefore are taking an active role in ensuring that Native communities are safe, healthy places to live.

Why accreditation matters to tribal public health

The expectation is that accreditation will strengthen all public health departments and the services they provide, which will contribute to improved community health. Accreditation can benefit Native communities in various ways, including:

- **Responsibility and visibility.** Implementing accreditation standards can support Tribal governments in their efforts to improve their community's health.
- **Performance feedback and quality improvement.** The accreditation assessment process provides valuable, measurable feedback to public health programs on their strengths and areas for improvement.
- **Valuable partnerships.** The accreditation process encourages strong, active partnerships between public health practitioners, stakeholders and community members in Indian Country.
- **Reducing health disparities.** The accreditation process promotes building and enhancing public health services so that the same level of high quality public health services is available to everyone.

“NIHB and PHAB share a commitment to building strong, thriving Tribal communities.

Accreditation is an opportunity to strengthen public health in Indian Country, address the unique needs of the Tribes, and create healthier environments for Our People.”

- H. Sally Smith, PHAB Board Member and NIHB Board Member

Learn more

Efforts are already underway to help tribal health providers prepare for accreditation. Tribal health officials, health department staff, local partners, non-profits and other stakeholders who are interested in an accountable and effective public health system are encouraged to learn more.

For more information about how PHAB and NIHB are working to help the Tribes prepare for accreditation and how you can get involved, please contact NIHB (www.nihb.org, 202-507-4070) or PHAB (www.phaboard.org, 703-778-4549).