



2007 STATE PILOT ACCREDITATION OF THE NORTH CAROLINA DIVISION OF PUBLIC HEALTH AND DIVISION OF ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH

In late 2006, North Carolina's Division of Public Health, Department of Health and Human Services began a groundbreaking pilot accreditation process. The accreditation site visitors consisted of nationally recognized experts on public health performance improvement and accreditation. The process began with a voluntary self-assessment of capacity to perform essential public health functions, using the National Public Health Performance Standards (NPHPS) developed for public health system assessment purposes. The Division of Environmental Health in the Department of Environment and Natural Resources, which also performs some functions related to public health, also participated in the assessment of capacity. The self-assessment culminated in a site visit and review February 27- March 1, 2007.

North Carolina's evaluation of the Division of Public Health grew out of the state's mandatory accreditation of local health departments and reflected the commitment of State Health Director Dr. Leah Devlin and her leadership team to undertake a similar process at the state level. North Carolina's pilot evaluation of its state health department is expected to inform further development of the proposed model for a voluntary national accreditation program for state and local public health departments, recommended by the Exploring Accreditation Initiative.

The Division of Public Health and the Division of Environmental Health appointed a team composed of representatives from various programs to assess the Divisions' attainment of the standards. Each member of this team, termed the "A Team," was responsible for obtaining evidence to show that all standards were met in each of the 12 essential service categories. Led by Denise Pavletic, Head of the

Performance Improvement Unit in the Local Technical Assistance and Training Branch, the team began collecting evidence in the fall of 2006.

The Site Visit Team members are experts in both public health and accreditation, and most served on the Exploring Accreditation Initiative, which was also chaired by site review team member Kaye Bender. While only one team member was from North Carolina, all had some familiarity with the state. Staff and logistical support for the team was provided by the North Carolina Institute for Public Health (NCIPH), the School of Public Health, at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

Site Visit Team Members included Kaye Bender, RN, PhD, FAAN, Dean, School of Nursing, University of Mississippi Medical Center (chair); Les Beitsch, MD, JD, Director, Center for Medicine/Public Health, Florida State University College of Medicine; George Bond, MPH, Director, Buncombe County Health Department, North Carolina, retired; F. Douglas Scutchfield, MD, Peter P. Bosomworth Professor of Health Services Research and Policy, University of Kentucky Medical Center; and Lee Thielen, MPA, Public Health Consultant, Thielen Consulting, Colorado.

The Report of the 2007 Site Visit Team for a Pilot Assessment of the North Carolina Division of Public Health states, *“Overall, the result of the Division of Public Health’s and the Division of Environmental Health’s review was excellent, indeed outstanding. The site visit team was pleased by the health department’s capacity, its preparations for the review visit and the clarity of the evidence provided, and concluded that were this an official accreditation, the Division would far exceed the requirement of 80% of standards met. The team also praised the courage of the Division and its leaders in stepping forward to do this assessment and noted that this was a sentinel event; the first time a state health department invited a national site visit team to take them through an accreditation-type process. The team concluded that the assessment of the North Carolina Division of Public Health could in many ways serve as a prototype for a national voluntary accreditation process. The team also praised the staff of the NC Institute for Public Health for its support and logistical help in making the process a success. The Institute’s expertise in the accreditation process was particularly useful.”*

CENTERS FOR DISEASE CONTROL AND PREVENTION'S DR. JULIE GERBERDING AND DR. STEPHANIE BAILEY CONGRATULATE THE NC DIVISION OF PUBLIC HEALTH (DPH) AND THE NC DIVISION OF ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH (DEH)



Front row: Dr. Mary Davis, Director, Evaluation Services, NCIPH; Monecia Thomas, NC Senior State Accreditation Coordinator, NCIPH; Dr. Stephanie Bailey, Chief Public Health Practice, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC); Denise Pavletic, Head, Performance Improvement and Accountability Office, NC Division of Public Health; Janet Reaves, Manager, Chronic Disease Prevention and Control Office, NC Division of Public Health; Dr. John Pendill, Oral Health Section, Eastern Regional Supervisor, NC Division of Public Health

Back row: Craig Michalak, NC State Accreditation Administrator, NCIPH; Dr. Steve Cline, Deputy State Health Director, NC Division of Public Health; Dr. Leah Devlin, Director, NC Division of Public Health and State Health Director, [North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services](#); Terry Pierce, Director, NC Division of Environmental Health, [North Carolina Department of Environmental and Natural Resources](#); Mac McCraw, CDC Senior Management Official, NC Division of Public Health

Not pictured: Dr. Joy Reed, Head, Local Technical Assistance and Training Branch and Office of Public Health Nursing, NC Division of Public Health; Dr. Marcus Plescia, Chief, Chronic Disease and Injury Section, NC Division of Public Health; Heather K. Gates, Executive Director, NC Alliance of Public Health Agencies, NC Association of Local Health Directors, and NC Public Health Association; Dennis Harrington, Deputy Division Director and Chief of Administrative, Local & Community Support

CONGRATULATIONS

On May 17, 2007, in the Cardinal Room at DPH, Dr. Bailey read letters to DPH Director Leah Devlin, and DEH Director Terry Pierce acknowledging their pioneering efforts in state public health assessment/accreditation. A copy of the Devlin letter follows.



Centers for Disease Control
and Prevention (CDC)
Atlanta GA 30333

May 17, 2007

Leah Devlin, D.D.S., M.P.H.
State Health Director, Division of Public Health
North Carolina Department of Health & Human Services
2001 Mail Service Center
Raleigh, North Carolina 27699-2001

Dear Dr. Devlin:

On behalf of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), we wish to congratulate you on your recent efforts to pilot a state public health agency accreditation process in North Carolina. The Division of Public Health has displayed impressive vision and leadership in implementing this effort.

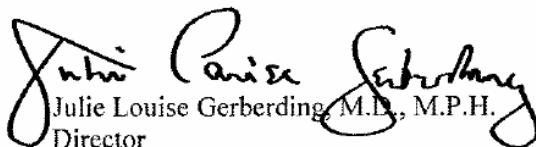
As you know, we are making significant strides toward the establishment of a national voluntary accreditation system for state and local public health departments. While there are considerable experiences in local health department accreditation, there is less experience in state public health accreditation. Your recent efforts in piloting this concept for state public health activities provide all of the national partners with valuable and much-needed input.

It is clear that North Carolina used great care in designing and implementing its pilot process for accreditation. We are impressed by your attention to the many critical details: devoting significant time for preparing and conducting the self-assessment; involving both staff and agency leadership; drawing on nationally-developed standards by adapting CDC's National Public Health Performance Standards for state public health systems; adding components on administration and governance so as to complement your local accreditation standards; inviting an external team of site visitors to validate the findings; and shaping the entire process around quality improvement, and the need to identify opportunities for strengthening performance.

To accomplish this noteworthy enterprise, North Carolina also drew on its many relationships. The collaboration between the Division of Public Health and the Division of Environmental Health is commendable. The contributions of the North Carolina Institute for Public Health as a neutral coordinating entity appear to be another critical factor in your success.

We congratulate you once again on your pioneering achievement. We look forward to continuing to work with you and other representatives from your State on these endeavors.

Sincerely,


Julie Louise Gerberding, M.D., M.P.H.
Director


Stephanie B.C. Bailey, M.D., M.S.
Chief of Public Health Practice

cc:

Carmen Hooker Odom, Secretary, NC Department of Health and Human Services
William G. Ross, Jr. Secretary, NC Department of Environment and Natural Resources
Paul Jarris, Executive Director, Association of State and Territorial Health Officials

Craig L. Michalak
State Accreditation Administrator
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