

Res. 04-07

RESOLUTION ON WORKFORCE CERTIFICATION AND CREDENTIALING

WHEREAS, governmental public health is a shared enterprise, conducted by a collection of individuals from a wide variety of academic backgrounds and with a wide variety of professional training and credentials; and

WHEREAS, there is broad national consensus that the national interest demands concerted attention to public health workforce development, and

WHEREAS, several state-specific programs certifying local public health officials are currently in place, yet no systematic evaluation has taken place to demonstrate the utility of these programs; and

WHEREAS, other states are exploring certification and credentialing options for local public health workers; and

WHEREAS, the National Association of County and City Health Officials (NACCHO) is leading a nationwide effort to define the capacities communities can reasonably expect of their local governmental public health agencies and it is necessary to ensure that the public health workforce is competent to provide those capacities; and

WHEREAS, additional resources may be necessary for workforce certification/credentialing;

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that, recognizing the complexity of the issues involved, and in the absence of an evaluation of current certification and credentialing programs, NACCHO recommends prudence in the establishment of new programs to certify or credential public health workers; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that, should any program be developed in a state or for national application, NACCHO recommends that the program possess the following attributes:

- The terms certification, credentialing, public health worker and public health workforce are clearly defined;
- The element or subset of the workforce which requires certification or credentialing is clearly specified;
- The program is based on evaluations of the value that certification and/or credentialing programs have in those states where such programs are already adopted;
- Certification and/or credentialing processes are developed following agreement on core competencies for those working in governmental public health agencies at the local, state and federal levels through role delineation studies or other similar methodologies;
- Resources are made available to support participation, it is accessible to all members of the workforce, and positive incentives are in place to encourage both workforce and local public health agency participation and support;

- The outcomes of participation in the program demonstrate value to local practice and to the public good, and the credentialing and certification of public health workers is based upon the identification and subsequent development of knowledge, skills, and abilities that result in competencies needed in actual local public health practice;
- State and national systems are compatible, non-duplicative, and coordinated with degree programs offered through schools of public health, other academic venues where the public health workforce is prepared, and with other credentialing processes and programs where the workforce is also prepared;
- Credentials and/or certificates are recognized nationally;
- Credentialing and/or certification of members of the public health workforce is grounded in contemporary public health practice and advised by an expert committee that includes substantial representation from leaders and practitioners of local public health;
- Credentialing and/or certification systems value and recognize competent performance and experience of those currently in the public health workforce and give such information and evidence at least as much weight as evidence from completing education or training programs or passing a written test;
- Certification and/or credentialing systems attest to an individual's basic familiarity with the multidisciplinary nature of a public health approach;
- Continuing education is required to maintain the certification and/or credentials; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that NACCHO must play a significant role in the development of any national certification and/or credentialing program; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that all participants in the credentialing and/or certification process should work to minimize unintended consequences of such a program, including negative impacts on funding of local agencies and conflicts with local hiring processes, pay scales, and budget integrity; and maximize use of existing resources, processes and budgets; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that NACCHO will work with its partners to continue to study and collect information on existing public health workforce certification and/or credentialing programs so that such information can be used in the development of further programs; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that any credentialing and/or certification program or process should directly engage organizations working to certify and/or credential members of the local public health agency workforce to ensure that the efforts of other organizations are consistent with the attributes described above.

*Adopted by NACCHO Board of Directors
July 14, 2004*