

Community Health Assessment

In *The Future of Public Health* assessment was identified as one of the three core functions of public health.⁴⁴ Conducting regular, on-going community health assessments (CHAs) can help LPHAs and their communities address how

their community health system can effectively support the activities needed to assure the presence of the essential public health services. CHA is a basic activity in improving the health status of any community.

COMMUNITY HEALTH ASSESSMENT

In this study, a community health assessment was defined as a “process whereby a local health department and its community engage in assessing the health needs of their community and investigate adverse health effects and health hazards to create a ‘snapshot’ of a community’s health.” Many communities have developed such snapshots based on local health data and community public health priorities.

According to the survey data, 55% of LPHAs have conducted a community health assessment (CHA) in the past three years. Of those that did not conduct a CHA, almost half plan to complete a CHA within the next three years. Overall, about 75% of LPHAs nationwide either have conducted or are planning to conduct a CHA in the next three years. Those not planning to conduct a CHA are primarily LPHAs with few FTEs and small population jurisdictions. There was variation by both population of the jurisdiction served and LPHA type. Among LPHAs that serve less than 25,000 people, 44% conducted CHAs compared with 72% of LPHAs that serve 500,000 or more people; of township LPHAs 19% reported conducting a CHA, compared with 71% of multi-county/district LPHAs.

HEALTH IMPROVEMENT PLANS

Health improvement plans act as blueprints for improving a community’s health, including setting out strategic action steps that direct the distribution of health services and resources to improve a community’s health. The importance of health improvement plans is recognized in *Healthy People 2010*.⁴⁵ A specific objective of *Healthy People 2010* is to “increase the proportion of local

jurisdictions that have a health improvement plan linked with their state plan.”⁴⁶ Data presented on health improvement plans in this *Chartbook* can be used to track progress toward this important objective.

Over half of the nation’s LPHAs have developed or participated in the development of a community health improvement plan. The majority indicated that the plan was developed using the results of a community health assessment, and over half indicated the plan was linked to their state’s health improvement plan. Almost all respondents reported collaborating with the community and/or other organizations in the development of the plan. The most frequently cited partners in the development of the plan were community-based organizations, hospitals, and voluntary or non-profit organizations.

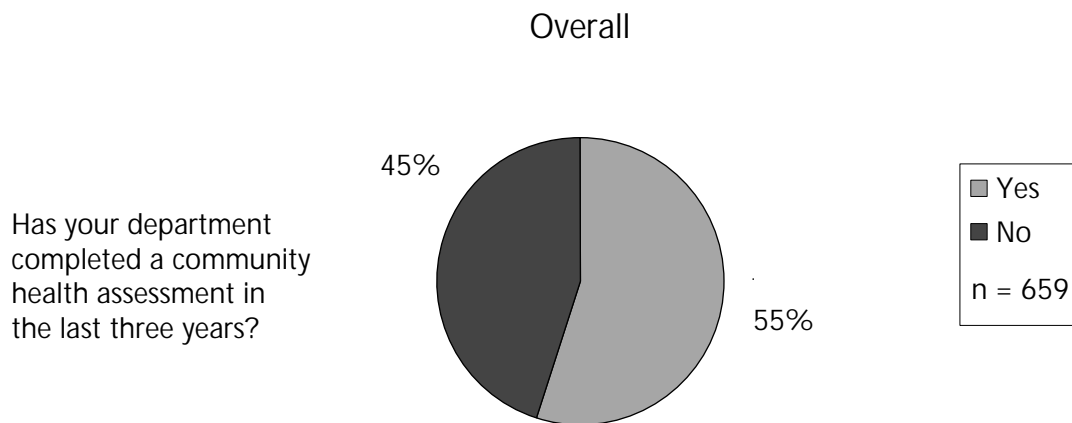
There were considerable differences among LPHAs by the population size of the jurisdiction served. Forty-one percent (41%) of LPHAs that serve small population jurisdictions (0 to 24,999) reported participating in health improvement planning, compared with 76% of LPHAs that serve the largest jurisdictions.

COMMUNITY HEALTH ASSESSMENT TOOLS

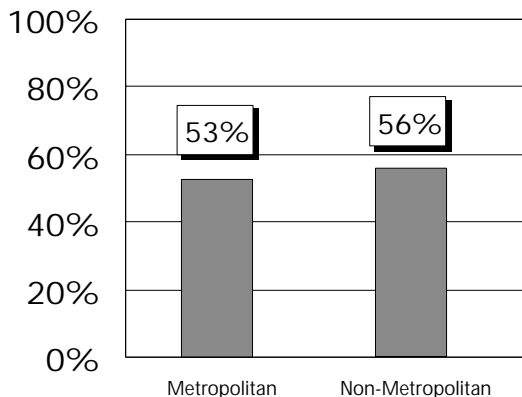
Fifty-one percent (51%) of LPHAs that conducted CHAs used an established tool or model. The *APEXPH* process was a popular tool, regardless of metropolitan versus non-metropolitan, size of jurisdiction, and type of LPHA. Among those that used an established tool, *APEXPH* was used by 47% of LPHAs. State-developed tools were more commonly used among LPHAs serving non-metropolitan areas (29%) compared with their metropolitan counterparts (18%).

A large percent of LPHAs and their community partners are involved in community health assessments and the development of health improvement plans. National and state tools have been vital in supporting these efforts, as seen by the use of a variety of assessment tools.

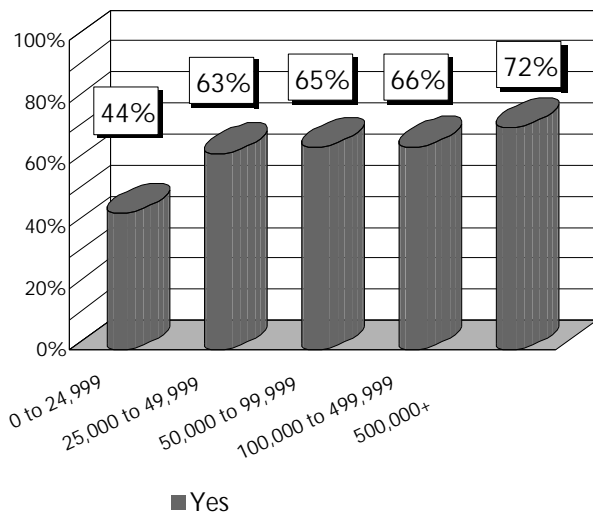
Figure 35. LPHA COMMUNITY HEALTH ASSESSMENT



Metropolitan and Non-Metropolitan LPHAs



Community Health Assessment by Population Size



Community Health Assessment by LPHA Type

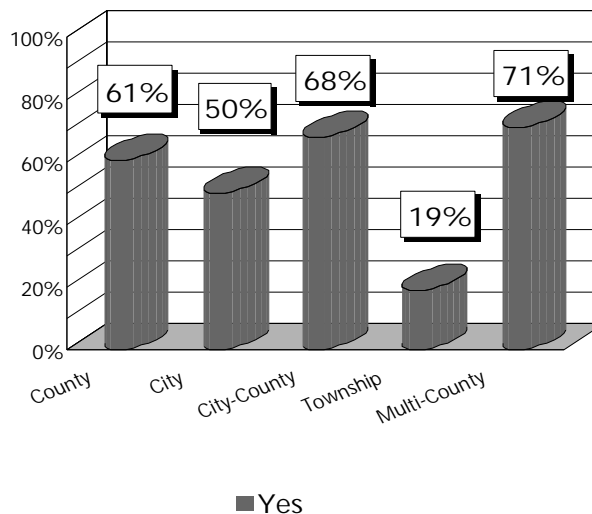
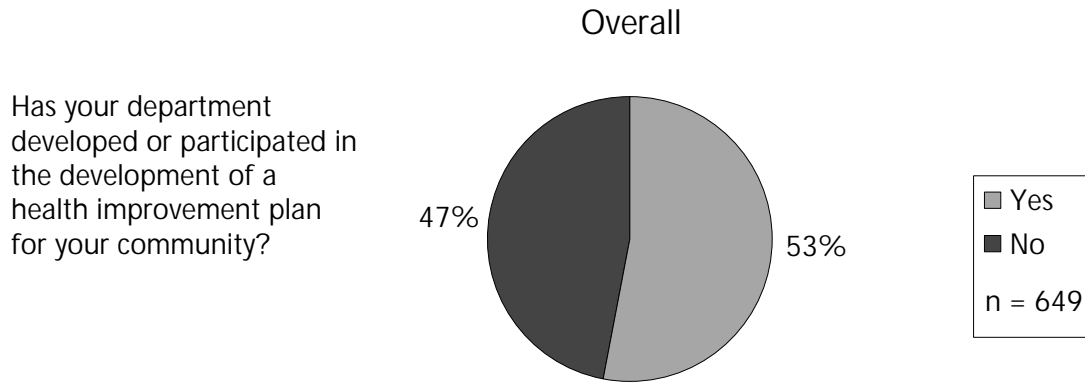
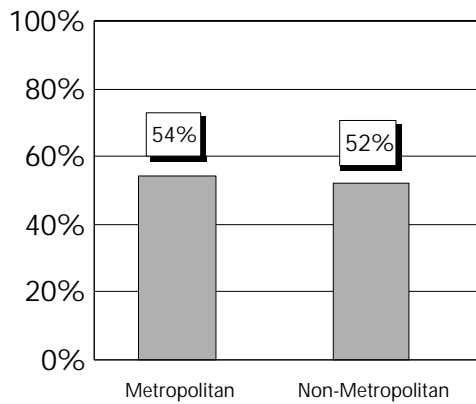


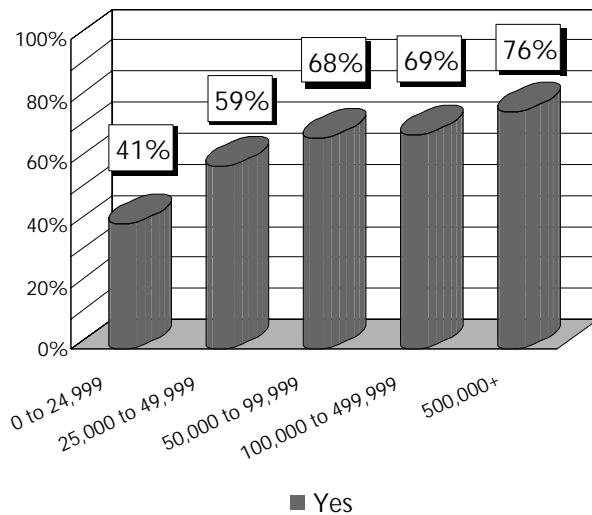
Figure 36. LPHA COMMUNITY HEALTH ASSESSMENT: Health Improvement Plans



Metropolitan and Non-Metropolitan LPHAs



Community Health Assessment by Population Size



Community Health Assessment by LPHA Type

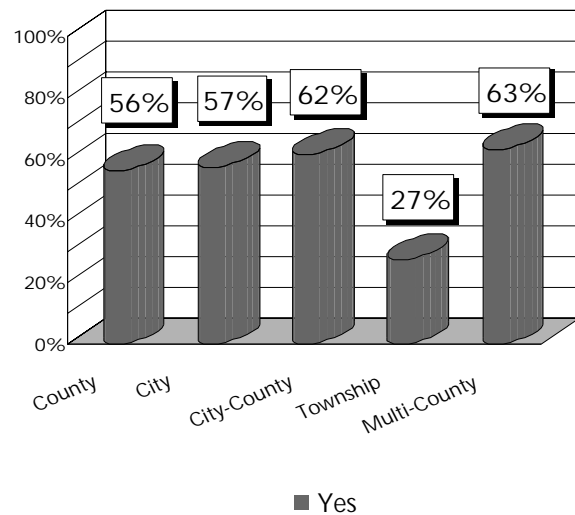
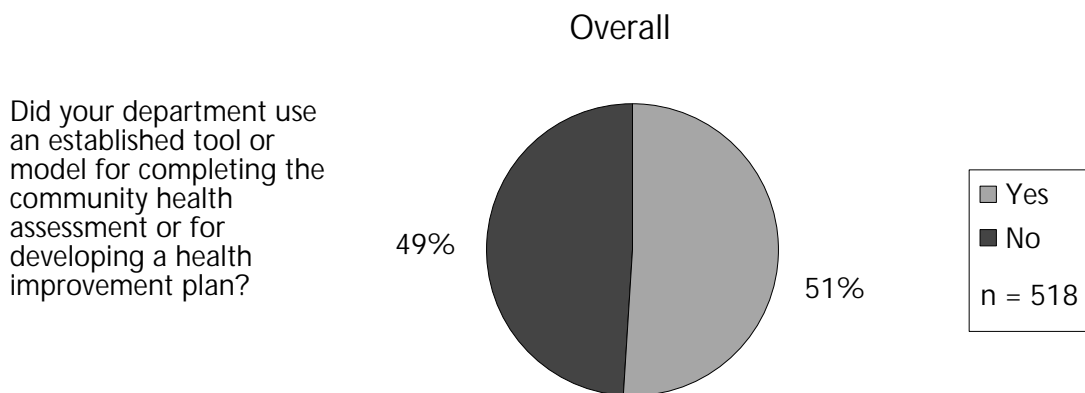
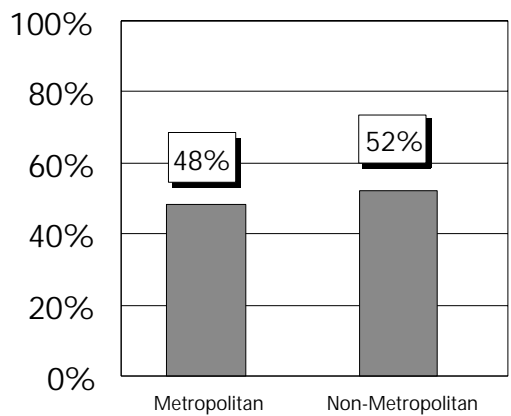


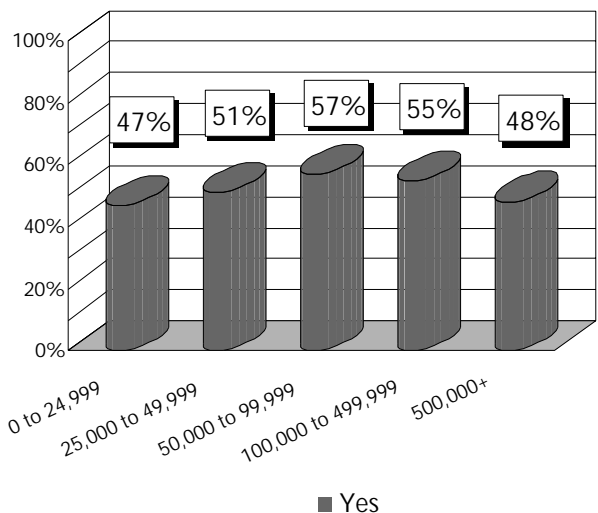
Figure 37. LPHA COMMUNITY HEALTH ASSESSMENT:
Use of Established Tools



Metropolitan and Non-Metropolitan LPHAs



Community Health Assessment by Population Size



Community Health Assessment by LPHA Type

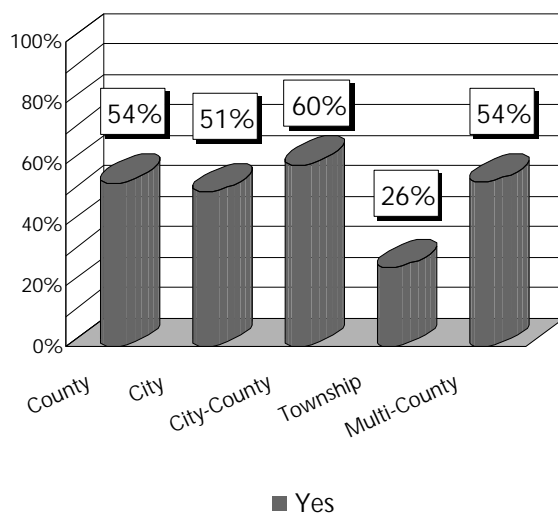
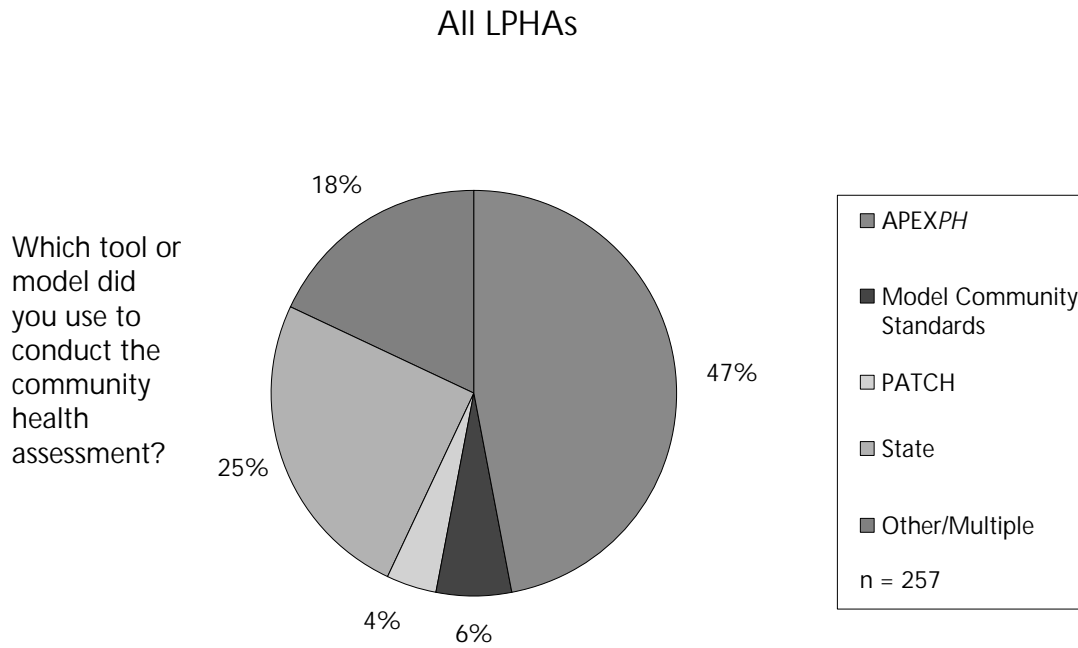


Figure 38. LPHA COMMUNITY HEALTH ASSESSMENT:
Type of Tool Used



Metropolitan vs. Non-Metropolitan LPHAs

