



Accreditation Support Initiative for Public Health Departments

Sioux County Case Study

I. Background

The Public Health Accreditation Board (PHAB) standards have pushed work on performance management in public health into the forefront. Performance management utilizes performance measures to compare data describing actual performance and data describing ideal performance. It emphasizes that data should be collected, analyzed and reported on regularly. Finally, when the data identifies a gap or situation that needs to be resolved quality improvement is used to address the gap or situation.

This project aims to assess the performance management capabilities of three county health departments in Iowa through interviews and submitted evidence. The participating departments received feedback on how to improve performance management capabilities to better meet the PHAB standards. Sioux County, with a population of 33,704 was the mid-size county selected to be a part of this project.

II. Analysis of Local Public Health's Use of Performance Management

In order to analyze Sioux County's performance management capability the department was asked to complete three activities.

1. Complete and submit a performance management readiness assessment.
2. Submit documentation demonstrating how their department meets Domain 9 of the PHAB standards.
3. Participate in two site visits with Iowa Department of Public Health staff to discuss the outcomes of activities one and two.

Performance Management Readiness Assessment

Overall the readiness assessment showed that Sioux County has implemented several components of a performance management system. Some of the strengths of what they have implemented include the following.

- The department's leadership is dedicated to performance management.
- Performance is managed in financial and program areas.

- The annual report analyzes the department's progress as a whole and provides direction for future activities.
- Performance measures are typically gathered on a quarterly basis and shared with staff.
- There is an individual in the agency assigned to integrate performance management efforts.
- The department is in the process of implementing a new formal mechanism to coordinate improvement efforts.

The department had the following challenges:

- There is no universal system in place for progress documentation.
- The evaluation process varies across the different programs.
- No training is available for staff to determine performance standards and targets.
- Some programs are stronger than others in using customer feedback and evaluation in order to make changes.

Use of data for making program management decisions

Sioux County uses the data they get in conjunction with their community health needs assessment and health improvement strategic plan and their annual report. They regularly evaluate themselves against those documents and make decisions about programs based on their adherence to the plans.

Use of quality improvement

Sioux County reports that currently improvement is the responsibility of program managers. Often improvements are made as a program progresses without going through any formal quality improvement process. In order to address this Sioux County is assembling a team of individuals called the QUIT team to look at quality improvement across the department and provide some formality to the improvement process.

Evidence for complying with PHAB standards related to performance management

The department submitted documentation for five of the six Domain 9 measures. From the documentation Sioux County submitted it was apparent that they have more in place than they are taking credit for.

Strengths:

- Engaging staff at all organizational levels in performance management.
- Written goals and objectives which include time frames for measurement in program areas.
- Quality improvement plan.

- Use of customer feedback.
- Staff training opportunities.

Gaps:

- Written goals and objectives which include time frames for measurement for administrative functions.
- Clear documentation of analysis of progress toward achieving goals and objectives, and identification of areas in need of focused improvement processes.
- Formal documentation of results.

Conclusions and Recommendations

Local public health's readiness for the use of performance management

Based on Sioux County's readiness assessment, interviews, and submitted evidence it is clear that there is an eagerness to begin using performance management and an understanding of the value of utilizing quality improvement and performance management. The department would like to implement a system-wide formal performance management system shortly, and has the planning and reporting system in place to do so.

Improvements for evidence collection to comply with PHAB standards

As previously mentioned, the department does not currently meet all of the PHAB Domain 9 standards. Sioux County was encouraged, as it implements the QUIT team to be sure to document the work of that team as it will improve their ability to show compliance with the standards. Sioux County will also need to develop administrative examples as required evidence for measure 9.1.3 A.

Identification of best practices for performance management

There are several best practices of performance management that Sioux County could incorporate. Sioux County has done some excellent work in engaging customers in order to make improvements, but needs to incorporate this feedback with internal feedback as part of improvement efforts. Sioux County should also work to clarify how progress is analyzed. The work of the QUIT team should help to address this issue.

Recommendations for development of training curriculum

First, Sioux County requested specific examples of performance management and quality improvement would be very valuable tools to assist with performance management initiation. They requested webinars on relevant topics, but cautioned that webinars often aren't at the right speed so follow up or additional resources would be

helpful. Finally they requested to hear from a department who has performance management in place and can tell the story about how they began, initial implementation, and what's been learned as the program is carried out.