

NACCHO's Ethics Project



Project Description

NACCHO, with support from the Public Health Ethics Unit (PHU) within the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), works to increase local health department (LHD) awareness of and access to relevant tools, information, and other resources related to public health ethics. During the 2013-2014 project year, NACCHO finalized an eLearning training module on the application of the ethical analysis framework on decision making for local health officials and convened an ad hoc subcommittee meet of subject matter experts. This meeting resulted in a report that identified recommendations for how NACCHO, LHDs, and other key stakeholders may work together to develop the infrastructure needed to respond effectively to public health ethics issues.

Key accomplishments of this project include the following:

- CDC Ethics Subcommittee of the CDC Advisory Committee to the Director released the *Ethical Points to Consider for Allocation of Ventilators* for public comment, with NACCHO promoting local health official input and distributing results.
- A position statement that was adopted by the NACCHO board on the importance of the LHD adoption of the *Principles of the Ethical Practice of Public Health*.
- A NACCHO representative and two local health directors provided input into public health ethics training developed by CDC - *Good Decision Making in Real Time: Public Health Ethics Training for Local Health Departments* training course.
- Multiple organizations have sponsored this training, with approximately 170 participants in total. NACCHO hosted a pre-conference workshop to deliver the training at the 2012 and 2013 NACCHO Annual conferences.
- NACCHO served on the Public Health Accreditation Board (PHAB) Ethics Think Tank planning committee.
- NACCHO contacted a selection of past training participants to gather feedback on what stood out about the training, what new insights participants implemented at their LHDs after the training, and what knowledge gaps still exist.
- The training delivered at the 2013 NACCHO Annual pre-conference workshop was recorded to transform the content into an on demand eLearning course available through NACCHO's learning management system.
- Representatives from NACCHO and CDC, and Alan Melnick will host a learning session at the 2014 NACCHO Annual meeting to provide information about the eLearning course and other public health ethics training resources.

Ethics eLearning Course

- Anyone with a myNACCHO account may access the eLearning course, *Good Decision Making in Real Time: Public Health Ethics Training for Local Health Departments* on NACCHO University by visiting the following site:

<http://bit.ly/1PkTlaN>

- Over 100 people have viewed the course on NACCHO University since it opened to the public in late March.
- NACCHO collaborated with the CDC Public Health Ethics Unit to offer continuing education credits for 6 categories of professionals through the CDC Continuing Education Office.

Infrastructure Recommendations

Meeting Participants

- Dr. Drue Barrett, Public Health Ethics Lead, CDC
- Dr. Leonard Ortmann, Ethicist, CDC
- Dr. Alan Melnick, Director/Health Officer, Clark County Public Health
- Denise Chrysler, Director, Mid-States Region, Network for Public Health Law (NPHL)
- Matthew Stefanak, Former Health Commissioner, Mahoning County Health Department
- Tina Johnson, Director, Nursing Services, Oklahoma State Department of Health
- Umair Shah, Executive Director, Harris County Public Health & Environmental Services

Recommendations identified by committee for building and maintaining a structure to support ethical decision making:

- 1) Develop public health ethics training for local health department staff and associated stakeholders that includes an on-going training component.
- 2) Develop a formal process for examining the impact of ethical deliberations and for sharing the results of ethical deliberations with stakeholders and staff.
- 3) Ensure adequate resources to support a formal ethics deliberation process and training for staff and stakeholders.
- 4) Raise awareness of the importance of addressing ethical issues in the health department as a first step to creating an ethical culture.
- 5) Establish and support an inclusive process for ethical deliberation that includes a framework for conducting an ethical analysis and a process for engaging stakeholders.
- 6) Support of senior leadership of the examination of ethical issues, making it a formal part of health department practice. This could include forming an ethics committee charter.

FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE CONTACT:

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NACCHO

National Association of County & City Health Officials

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