



ALLEGHENY COUNTY

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September 22, 2017

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Fitzgerald Announces that Health Department Achieves National Accreditation *Accreditation Awarded to Fewer than 200 Health Departments Nationwide*

PITTSBURGH – County Executive Rich Fitzgerald announced today that the Allegheny County Health Department (ACHD) has achieved national accreditation through the Public Health Accreditation Board (PHAB) which administers the national program. ACHD is one of fewer than 200 health departments to have achieved accreditation since the PHAB program was launched in 2011.

“This is exciting news for Dr. Hacker, the Board of Health and all of its employees and is reflective of the continual and constant focus of this department to promote improvement and better health for our community,” said Fitzgerald. “Congratulations to all of you on this enormous accomplishment. Since becoming County Executive, the reform and improvement of the department has been a top priority and I’m delighted that the hard work by Dr. Hacker, the Board of Health and her team has been recognized.”

The national accreditation program, jointly supported by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, sets standards against which the nation’s nearly 3,000 governmental public health departments can continuously improve the quality of their services and performance. To receive accreditation, a health department must undergo a rigorous, multi-faceted, peer-reviewed assessment process to ensure it meets or exceeds a set of quality standards and measures.

“This announcement recognizes an enormous accomplishment. We are pleased and thankful to be recognized for achieving national standards that foster effectiveness and promote continuous quality improvement,” said Dr. Karen Hacker, Director of the Health Department. “The accreditation process helps to ensure that the programs and services we provide are as responsive as possible to the needs of our community. This announcement demonstrates increased accountability and credibility to the public, funders, elected officials and partner organizations with which we work. I want to thank all involved in this process for their tremendous effort and hard work.”

ACHD’s pursuit of accreditation were supported by the Heinz Endowments and the Public Health Improvement Fund of the Pittsburgh Foundation. An advisory committee was also put in place to assist in the department’s efforts to secure accreditation, and the full support of the Board of Health was instrumental in the process.

“Achieving national accreditation is an enormous distinction,” said Lee Harrison, M.D., Chair of the Allegheny County Board of Health. “Very few health departments are awarded this type of recognition, so this is a testament to the commitment that Dr. Hacker and the entire Allegheny County Health Department staff have to improving public health. All of the members of the Board of Health recognize how much dedication and effort went into this process, and we would like to congratulate Dr. Hacker and staff on this well-deserved honor.”

The national accreditation program works to improve and protect the health of the public by advancing and ultimately transforming the quality and performance of the nation's state, local, Tribal, and territorial public health departments. Created collaboratively over a 10-year period by hundreds of public health practitioners working at the national, tribal, state, and local levels, the accreditation program has reviewed hundreds of public health departments for accreditation using public health practitioners from across the nation as volunteer peer site visitors for the program.

"The Allegheny County Health Department joins the growing ranks of accredited health departments in a strong commitment to their public health mission," said PHAB President and CEO Kaye Bender, PhD, RN, FAAN. "The peer-review process provides valuable feedback to inform health departments of their strengths and areas for improvement, so that they can better protect and promote the health of the people they serve in their communities. Residents of a community served by a nationally accredited health department can be assured that their health department has demonstrated the capacity to protect and promote the health of that community."

About the Allegheny County Health Department

The mission of the Allegheny County Health Department is to protect, promote, and preserve the health and well-being of all Allegheny County residents, particularly the most vulnerable. Formed in 1957, ACHD strives daily to assure quality public health services by promoting individual and community wellness, preventing injury, illness and premature death or disability, and protecting the population from harmful effects of chemical, biological and physical hazards within the environment. Today, we serve more than 1.2 million county residents in southwestern Pennsylvania. Learn more about the ACHD by visiting: www.achd.net.

About the Public Health Accreditation Board

The Public Health Accreditation Board (PHAB), established in 2007, was created to serve as the national public health accrediting body, and is jointly funded by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation. The development of national public health accreditation has involved, and is supported by, public health leaders and practitioners from the national, Tribal, state, and local levels. Learn more about PHAB or sign up for the PHAB e-newsletter by visiting: www.phaboard.org.

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