NEW YORK STATE ASSOCIATION OF COUNTY HEALTH OFFICIALS
*Leading the Way to Healthier Communities*

# ACCREDITATION WORKGROUP

**July 15, 2026, 2:00-3:00**

**Meeting Notes**

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| Agenda Item | Discussion |
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| **PHAB Standards & Measures Update** | Brittan Williams provided a detailed overview of PHAB's refreshed **Version 2026 Standards & Measures**, which became effective July 1, 2026. She emphasized that Version 2026 is intended to be a **refresh rather than a complete overhaul** of Version 2022 and was developed through extensive feedback from accredited health departments and accreditation partners. The primary goals were to reduce documentation burden, increase flexibility, improve clarity, and ensure accreditation remains relevant to modern public health practice.<br><br>PHAB incorporated several emerging public health priorities into the refreshed standards and guidance, including workforce recruitment and retention, workforce sustainability, healthy aging, environmental and planetary health, artificial intelligence applications, and cross-jurisdictional collaboration. Additional examples and implementation guidance were added throughout the standards to help health departments better connect accreditation requirements to real-world public health practice.<br><br>PHAB reported that the refreshed standards require approximately **11% fewer documents for reaccreditation** and include increased flexibility across many requirements. Timeframes for certain measures have been expanded, duplication has been reduced, and health departments have more options for demonstrating conformity with standards. PHAB emphasized that accreditation requirements have not fundamentally changed, but departments will have greater flexibility in how they demonstrate their work.<br><br>Several significant process improvements were also announced. PHAB will now assign a dedicated **Accreditation Specialist** to serve as an ongoing point of contact throughout the accreditation cycle. Strategic touchpoint sessions will occur following accreditation decisions and annually thereafter to review timelines, discuss annual reporting |

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| | requirements, identify improvement opportunities, and connect health departments to available resources.<br><br>PHAB also reviewed enhancements to the site visit process. A new **Community Context Session** will be required prior to site visits and is intended to help reviewers better understand a health department's structure, partnerships, and operating environment. PHAB stressed that this session is designed as a conversation rather than an evaluation and that discussion questions will be provided in advance. A second new opportunity, the **Insight to Action Session**, will allow departments to receive coaching and peer feedback from site visitors regarding selected areas for improvement. This component will be optional.<br><br>Additional flexibility has been added through an alternative assessment approach that allows selected requirements to be demonstrated during a site visit through conversations, demonstrations, or visual observations rather than documentation alone. Health departments may choose to use this option for up to five eligible requirements.<br><br>PHAB also discussed changes to the annual reporting process intended to distribute accreditation work more evenly across the five-year cycle. New annual reporting options include **Focused Narratives** and **Measure Reviews**, which allow departments to submit selected accreditation materials during annual reporting years rather than waiting until reaccreditation. Documentation accepted through these processes may later be reused during the reaccreditation process, reducing workload and encouraging continuous quality improvement.<br><br>PHAB highlighted several implementation resources now available through its newly launched Learning Center, including crosswalks between Version 2022 and Version 2026 standards, updated documentation forms, FAQs, tracking spreadsheets, webinars, and additional guidance materials. |
| **Questions & Discussion** | Members asked several questions regarding implementation of the refreshed standards and updated accreditation processes. |

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| | **Jefferson County** asked how the new process changes would apply to departments already scheduled for upcoming initial accreditation site visits. PHAB explained that some new elements may be incorporated depending on the stage of review and encouraged departments to work closely with their assigned Accreditation Specialist to determine which changes apply to their individual site visit process.<br><br>**Albany County** asked whether departments would receive Community Context Session questions before the session occurs. PHAB confirmed that discussion questions will be provided in advance and reiterated that the Community Context Session is designed to be conversational and preparation should be minimal. PHAB emphasized that departments do not need to prepare formal presentations or extensive materials.<br><br>**Albany County** also asked about potential outcomes if a department is unable to achieve reaccreditation during its initial review. PHAB reviewed the Accreditation Committee Action Requirements (ACAR) process and explained that departments may be asked to address specific measures before a final accreditation decision is made. Departments remain accredited during this period and may be given up to one year to address identified gaps before the Accreditation Committee conducts a final review. |
| **Open Discussion: PHAB Community Context Session** | Following the PHAB presentation, members discussed the newly introduced Community Context Session requirement. No participants reported having completed one under the new accreditation process, though **Albany County** indicated that they have an upcoming session scheduled. PHAB shared additional details regarding the purpose of the sessions and reiterated that they are intended to help reviewers better understand local context rather than evaluate documentation or determine accreditation outcomes.<br><br>Members agreed that additional peer sharing on Community Context Sessions would be helpful as departments begin participating in them. NYSACHO encouraged members to share lessons learned, preparation tips, and recommendations during future Accreditation Workgroup meetings. |

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| **Administrative Updates** | Members were reminded that future Accreditation Workgroup meetings will transition from **Robert Viets'** calendar invitation to **Abby Han's** recurring meeting invitation beginning in August 2026. Participants were encouraged to contact Abby Han at ahan@nysacho.org if they did not receive the updated meeting series invitation. |
| **Next Meeting** | Wednesday, August 19th, 2026 from 2:00-3:00PM |

| **Participants** | |
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