



## ISSUE BRIEF

# Planning and Quality Improvement at State Health Agencies

State health agencies are engaged in a multitude of planning and quality improvement initiatives. In pursuing continuous improvement, many state health agencies are also taking steps toward accreditation through the Public Health Accreditation Board's (PHAB) voluntary national accreditation program. *The ASTHO Profile of State Public Health, Volume Three*, provides the most current data on state health agency planning and quality improvement efforts.

## Advancements Toward Accreditation

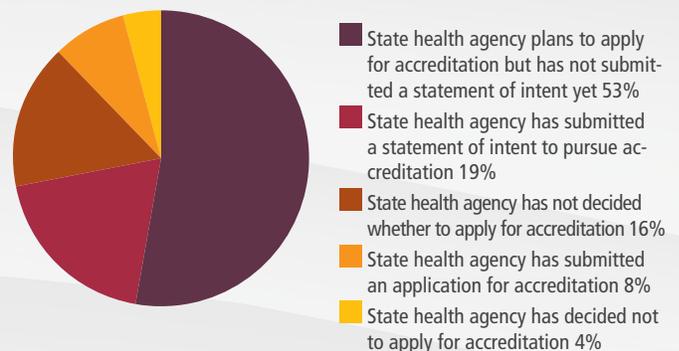
### Accreditation Prerequisites

There are three primary prerequisites for accreditation under PHAB's state health agency accreditation program, all of which must be completed within the three years prior to applying for accreditation: a state health assessment, a state health improvement plan, and an agency-wide strategic plan.

In 2012, 69 percent of state health agencies reported having completed a state health assessment; of those, 85 percent had reported having done so within the last three years. From 2010 to 2012, the percentage of state health agencies that developed a state health assessment within the last three years increased from 49 to 57 percent.

As of 2012, 57 percent of state health agencies reported developing or participating in developing a state health improvement plan. Seventy-five percent of those had done so within the past three years. Additionally, from 2007 to 2012 the percentage of state health agencies that reported having developed or participated in developing a state health improvement plan within the past three years increased from 23 percent in 2007 to 38 percent in 2010 to 43 percent in 2012.

### State Health Agency Participation in PHAB Accreditation Program, 2012 (n=49)



Seventy-five percent of state health agencies reported having developed a strategic plan as of 2012, and 95 percent of those had done so within the last three years. This is an increase from 2010, when 59 percent of states indicated that they had developed an agency-wide strategic plan.

## Intent to Pursue Accreditation

State health agencies are at different stages in the process of achieving voluntary accreditation. As of December 2012, the majority of states planned to apply for accreditation but had not yet submitted a letter of intent. Of the 26 states that planned to pursue accreditation but had not yet submitted a letter of intent, 85 percent intended to do so within the next two years.

## Quality Improvement and Performance Management at State Health Agencies

### Performance Management Programs

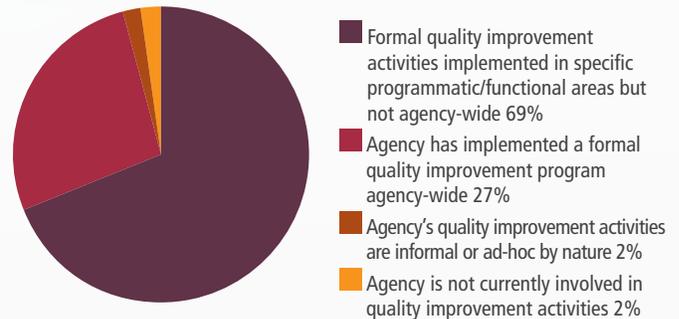
For state health agencies reporting data in 2010 and 2012, the percentage of state health agencies with a formal performance management program increased from 68 percent in 2010 to 74 percent in 2012. State health agencies were slightly more likely to have implemented a performance management program department-wide in 2012 than they were in 2010.

### Quality Improvement Efforts

State health agencies use a variety of frameworks in their quality improvement efforts, the most common being Plan-Do-Check-Act/Plan-Do-Study-Act (88%), Lean (43%), and Six Sigma (20%).

The nature of state health agencies' quality improvement activities varies by state. More than two-thirds of state health agencies report that formal quality improvement activities are implemented in specific programmatic or functional areas but not agency-wide. The most common elements of a formal, agency-wide quality improvement program in place at state health agencies are a staff member with dedicated time as part of his or her job description to monitor quality improvement work throughout the agency, leadership that dedicates resources to quality improvement, and quality improvement resources and training opportunities that are offered to staff on an ongoing basis.

## Nature of State Health Agency's Current Quality Improvement Activities, 2012 (n=49)



## Additional Information

For additional information on state health agency planning and quality improvement, including elements of the quality improvement process and staff involvement in quality improvement, as well as other data, please refer to the *ASTHO Profile of State Public Health, Volume Three*, available at [www.astho.org/profile](http://www.astho.org/profile). The Profile is the only comprehensive source of information about state public health agency activities, structure, and resources. Launched in 2007 and fielded every two to three years, the Profile Survey aims to define the scope of state public health services, identify variations in practice among state health agencies, and contribute to the development of best practices in governmental public health.

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