



COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO NEWS RELEASE

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COUNTY HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES AGENCY TO TEST NATIONAL ACCREDITATION PROGRAM

Test Will Help Shape the Future of Public Health

The County of San Diego Health and Human Services Agency (HHSA) announced today it was selected by the Public Health Accreditation Board (PHAB) to participate in a test of the new national voluntary public health accreditation program. As one of 30 public health agencies selected from more than 145 applicants, HHSA will work through the accreditation process and will provide feedback that will be used in the voluntary accreditation program's national launch in 2011. The local process will begin in the fall of 2009.

"While there are standards for hospitals, schools, law enforcement agencies and even daycare centers, there has not previously been a nationally-recognized set of standards for public health departments despite the critical role they play in preserving and promoting the health of communities and residents," said Chairwoman Dianne Jacob, County of San Diego Board of Supervisors. "The goal of public health accreditation is to improve and protect the health of the public by advancing the quality and performance of all health departments in the country."

"We are pleased to be part of this ground breaking program," said Dr. Wilma Wooten, M.D., M.P.H., Public Health Officer. "We recognize that this is a unique opportunity to evaluate the effectiveness and efficiency of our services and also showcase the high quality programs and services provided by HHSA's Public Health Services. We are proud to have a hand in shaping the national accreditation program and advancing the quality of public health."

"The launch of the test is a critical step that moves us closer to a national voluntary accreditation program that is practical and promotes continuous quality improvement in all health departments," said PHAB President and Chief Executive Officer Kaye Bender, RN, PhD, FAAN. "The overwhelming number of applications we received from health departments that wanted to be test sites signals that public health departments recognize the need for national standards and understand their value. With accreditation status, public health departments will be able to demonstrate increased accountability and credibility to the public, elected officials and other stakeholders."

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