



Governmental Public Health Workforce Development Expert Panel

Final Report March 18, 2015



The Governmental Public Health Workforce Development Expert Panel was formed to address the needs of the governmental public health agency workforce already in the field, defined as those in local, state, federal, tribal, and territorial jurisdictions. Its aim is to guide Council on Education for Public Health (CEPH)-accredited schools and programs of public health (schools and programs) to most effectively meet governmental public health agency training needs for improving employees' job performance in support of the population's health.

With the understanding that the health system workforce is much larger and that graduates of schools and programs are hired to work across the entire health system, the panel recognizes the unique responsibility schools and programs have for providing training and support for the governmental public health agency workforce. This responsibility applies to all such workers, including those without formal training in public health or a related field.

Because of the value and consistency assured by accreditation, schools and programs should play a prominent role in providing training for the workforce. The panel also believes that schools and programs should enhance research, teaching, and service activities that are practice-based and which promote overall governmental public health agency capacity to meet health improvement goals.

In recognition of the scarcity of resources to support workforce training, the panel encourages schools and programs to offer learning opportunities where they already have strengths and, to the extent possible, where they could extend their reach. The panel also encourages formal and sustained collaboration among the national organizations representing academe and practice to advance the recommendations in this report with their constituencies, potential funders, and other vested decision makers.

Key Considerations

- Effective governmental public health practice is a priority for securing the public's health, requiring well-prepared practitioners supported by evidence-based continuing education and training.
- The bulk of the governmental public health workforce is composed of employees from myriad disciplines, many of whom would benefit from comprehensive and/or targeted public health training.
- Council on Education for Public Health (CEPH)-accredited schools and programs have an important responsibility to address governmental public health agency workforce readiness and to provide perspectives and practical skills through both pre-employment and on-the-job training.

- School and program participation in governmental public health agencies is valued and encouraged as an effective means of fulfilling their institutions' service mission.
- Faculty development is needed to enable academics to fulfill their role in supporting the governmental public health agency workforce in new topics and methods that meet their needs.
- Emerging undergraduate programs in public health at the two- and four year-level could serve as an important resource for meeting a variety of training needs in governmental public health agencies.
- CEPH should consider a requirement that workforce experience be present among the public health faculty.
- Collaboration of school and program and governmental public health agency leaders to reduce barriers to practitioner participation in ongoing training is critical to workforce development.
- School and program faculty have a responsibility to stay current with contemporary public health practice as it evolves and to work with the practice community to assure the relevance of workforce education and training.
- Schools and programs should develop mechanisms to remain current about the actual operating conditions and systems of governmental public health agencies.
- Schools and programs should partner with governmental public health agency contributors as full partners in grant proposals, to include leadership roles for preparing grant applications and related budgets.
- Schools and programs could serve as credible gatekeepers for highlighting quality training produced by others for purposes of quality assurance and reducing duplication of existing offerings.
- Schools and programs and governmental public health agencies should work together to identify and study leading health challenges of relevance to the region.
- Schools and programs should reach out to governmental public health agency leaders for implementing science-based discoveries, jointly publishing findings, and disseminating lessons learned.
- Schools and programs should assist governmental public health agency employees in learning and skill acquisition that promotes accomplishing career goals and enhances movement along desired employment trajectories.
- Schools and programs should focus on strengthening governmental public health agency workers' abilities to deliver trusted leadership in promoting disease and injury prevention strategies.
- Schools and programs should work closely with employers to help identify, create, evaluate, and continuously improve governmental public health agency accreditation models that meet real practice needs and which determine the optimal standards for agencies to adopt.

- Schools and programs should consider opportunities for governmental public health agency employees to participate in educational and other events hosted by their institutions.
- Governmental public health agencies and schools and programs should collaborate on evaluation for building evidence-based recommendations, including those related to process, outcomes, behavior and organizational change, and return on investment of programs, services, and policies.
- Working professionals at all levels can and should contribute to the development and delivery of curricular content to existing students at schools and programs of public health.
- Targeted needs assessments should guide training development for both local and state agencies to assure that products meet learners' unique agency governance, composition, and responsibilities.
- Degree programs and certifications should be designed to help employers identify the most qualified candidates for employment.

Design Elements

- CEPH-accredited schools and programs should assure its graduates have the training and experience necessary to improve population health outcomes.
- Schools and programs should explore options for full-fledged academic degrees (e.g. online and hybrid core public health courses, certificates, short courses, just-in-time training, and webinars) that are appropriate for working professionals and link to a continuum of learning.
- Opportunities for both “academic” (leading to degrees, certificates, and course credit) and “non-academic” (continuing education and topic-specific learning) training should be available to working professionals.
- Methods to increase working professionals' access to learning and to help assure their ability to apply newly acquired skills include: self-paced distance learning modules, online learning collaboratives and peer networks, immersion learning, drills and exercises undertaken both during the training and followed up at the worksite, and on-the-job coaching and mentoring.
- Workforce education should incorporate adult learning principles in creating and adapting training to mature learners.

- Training should include recognition of governmental public health agency accountability to respond to real-time health challenges and emergency incidents, including preparing workers for repurposed duties and for difficult assignments.
- Interprofessional educational approaches should be used to assist staff in learning about the many fields and roles involved in delivering public health services.
- School and program and governmental public health agency representatives are encouraged to develop memoranda of understanding and other agreements that facilitate engagement among their institutions.

Content Considerations

The cross-cutting content listed below reflects contemporary examples of areas of study that are recommended in *addition* to discipline-specific content in specialty areas (such as infection control or health education) that students will acquire for employment in position-specific or professional job trajectories.

These content areas for governmental public health practice are consistent with the curriculum content articulated for various degree programs in public health as recommended by the Framing the Future Task Force. It is expected that schools and programs and governmental public health agency partners will revisit these areas on a regular basis.

- Critical Strategic Analysis
- Informatics and Data Analysis
- Biological and Environmental Applications in Public Health
- Leadership and Systems Thinking
- Management (including Change and Change Management), Finance, and Policy
- Program Planning and Evaluation
- Collaboration and Partnering
- Communication
- Advocacy
- Ethics
- Diversity and Cultural Proficiency
- Health Equity
- Public Health Law, Statutes, and Governance
- Emergency Preparedness