



Future of Accreditation Retreat Summary

Overview

The NC Local Health Department Accreditation (NCLHDA) Program brought together 34 Board members, Standard Workgroup members, AAC Advisory Council representatives and Health Director Accreditation Working Group members to brainstorm about the future of accreditation as a part of the ongoing efforts to transform NCLHDA requirements. The purpose of the retreat was to:

1. Review the collective perspectives informing the NCLHDA program.
2. Collectively brainstorm around specific accreditation transformation components.
3. Arrive at a shared vision for the future of NCLHD Accreditation.

Key Takeaways



The Role of Accreditation

Accreditation should assure core services are provided, promote continuous quality improvement, and add value in local communities.



Aligned Goals

We have many opportunities to work together and pool resources with partners, such as NC Association of Local Health Directors.



Data Sharing

Bi-directional data sharing with partners will fuel advocacy and monitoring abilities while reducing burden.



Funding

Funding from diverse sources is essential to supporting accreditation.

Retreat Events

The retreat had 5 main agenda items:

Review of Work and Groups

Historical Perspectives Panel

Function of Accreditation

Gallery Walk

Breakout Discussions

In a retreat evaluation, all survey respondents either **strongly agreed (SA)** or **agreed (A)** that:

- the retreat purpose and objectives were clearly communicated in advance;
- the retreat content was presented clearly;
- the topics covered were relevant for me; and
- there were opportunities to engage and provide feedback.

Review of Work Groups

Standards Workgroup

Focus on the purpose behind the accreditation process and examining spaces for improvement in the current standards.

Health Directors Working Group

Review of proposed new standards and separating standards from performance measures and documentation requirements.

NCLHDA Board

Updated HDSAI interpretation guidance and is currently updating the benchmarks and activities outlined in rulemaking and existing statute.

AAC Advisory Council

Meet quarterly in-person to review activities together and compare how each county is meeting the measurements.

Historical Perspectives

Four leaders involved in developing the initial accreditation program shared insights on the original intentions and lessons learned of NCLHDA, which originally focused on establishing a common baseline and measuring capacity. Panelists discussed the balance between clarity and flexibility, which feels as important today as it was back in the early 2000s.

The Function of Accreditation

Accreditation's PURPOSE is...

- **Providing** accountability & consistency
- **Measuring** core services &
- **Building** funding, legislative support, & improvements

Which we do BY...

- **Recognizing critical work** like core public health services
- **Monitoring** best practices & meaningful measures
- **Maintaining** flexibility & adaptation

So that LHDs CAN...

- **Provide quality services** to protect people, serve communities, & the environment
- **Improve quality** to NC health services state-level support
- **Adapt** state-level support

Breakout Discussion Summaries

Integration of Program Areas

While not necessary to incorporate program areas on top of foundational capabilities, LHDs should pull evidence across foundational areas.

Defining Accreditation's Role

Accreditation needs to be a value add for LHDs and help assure that services are being provided to the public, including quality improvement. Additionally, there should be fairness in the grading process.

Activity Scoring & Requirements

Discussed a weighted framework for priorities and activity scoring. Some items are more important than others and should be scored with more points. Activity scoring should align with HDSAI and there should be discrete examples.

Addressing DPH Overlap

Discussed the need to eliminate overlap with DPH as much as possible, especially in: program letters, CHA/CHIP/SOTCH, emergency preparedness activities, environmental health and safety activities, & personnel records.

Managing the Transition

During the transition, which was encouraged to initiate in Fall 2026 at the soonest, health departments need to be prepared for success, including use of a dashboard, education of AACs, & health directors.