

# Local Health Department Perspectives on Public Health Accreditation in the State of Oregon

**Jenna Ciszewski**  
**Accreditation Specialist**  
**Coos Health & Wellness**



**April 2018**

# Survey Objectives

- (1) Identify perceived and realized benefits of public health accreditation**
- (2) Understand challenges faced by local health departments in achieving accreditation**
- (3) Compare urban vs. rural health department perspectives**
- (4) Collect best practices/strategies on establishing and maintaining performance management systems**

# Quick Facts

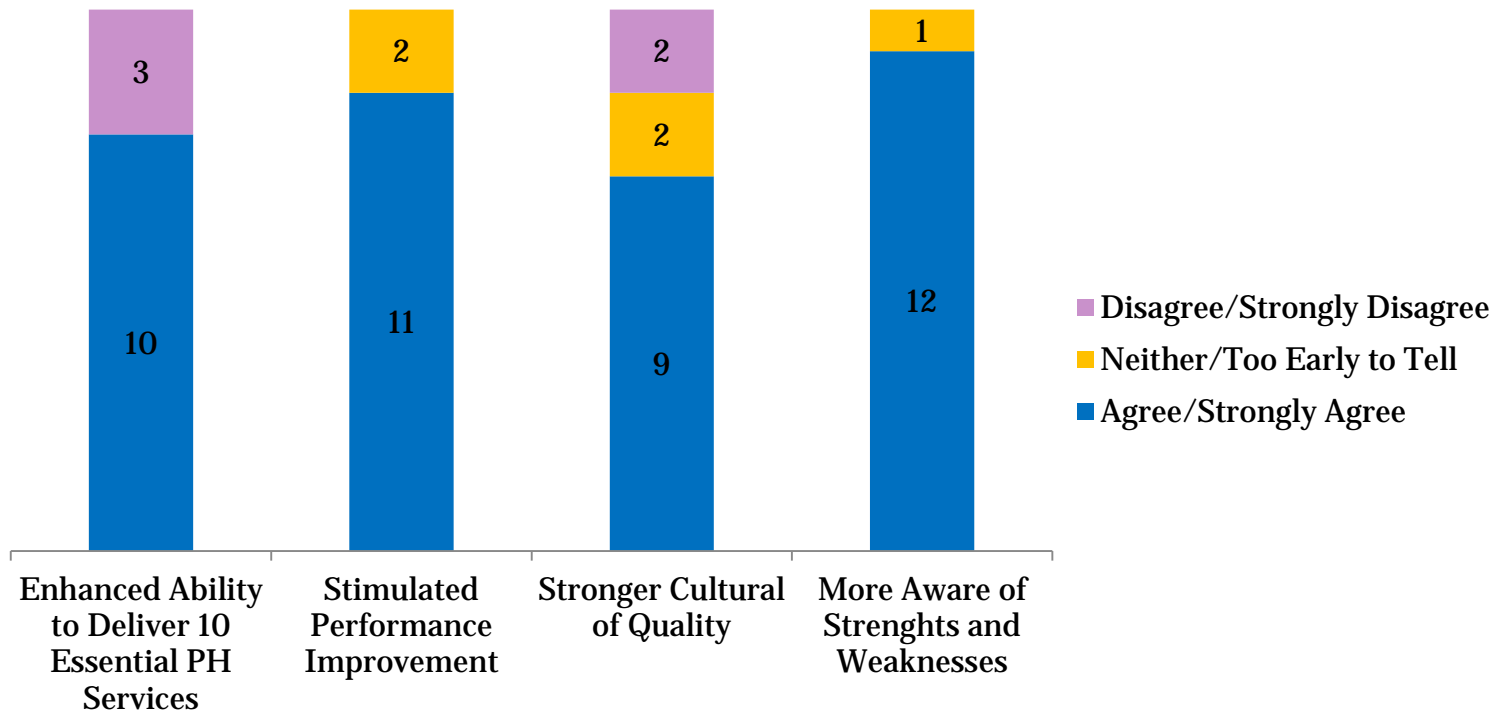
Number of Respondents = 22

Response Rate = 65%

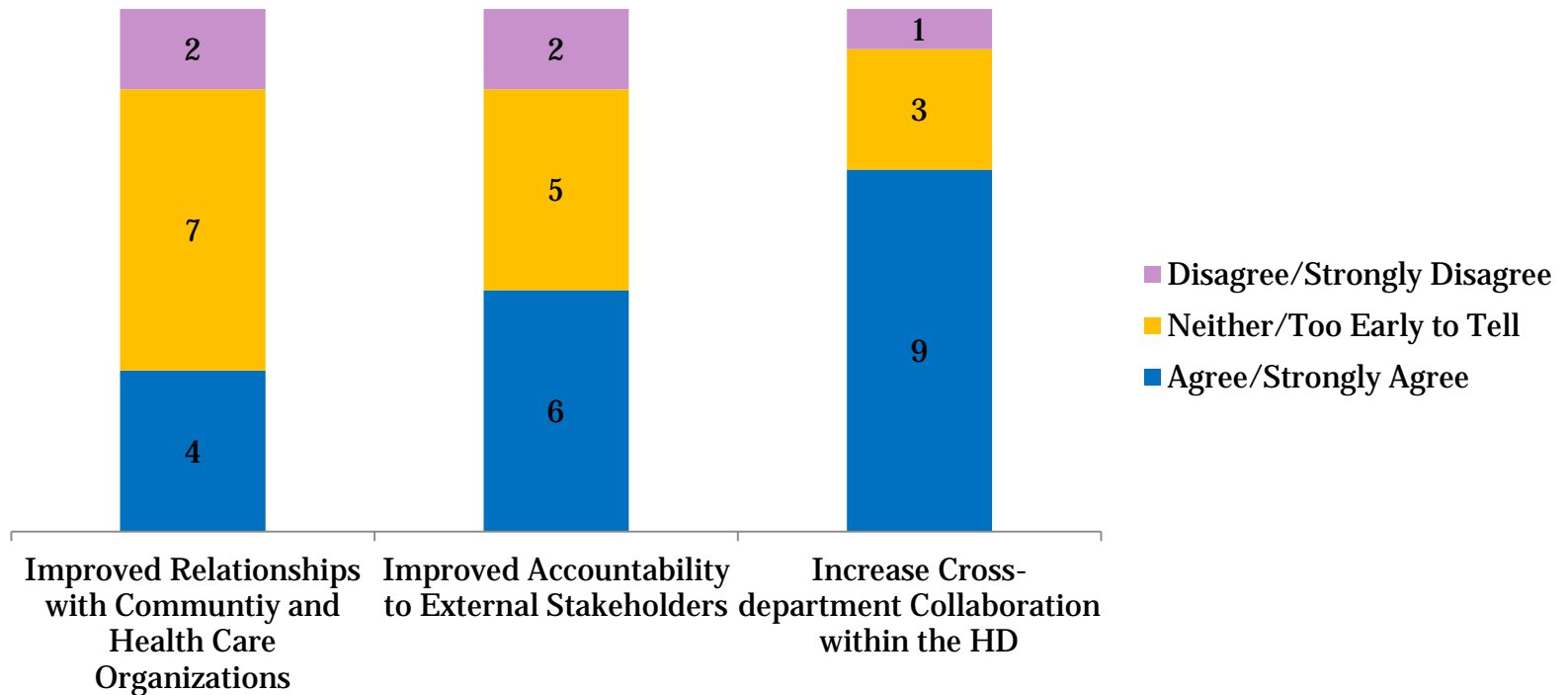
<b>Stage in Accreditation Process</b>	<b>Number of Respondents</b>	<b>Rural</b>	<b>Urban</b>
Accredited	5	2	3
Process Initiated	8	5	3
Considering Accreditation	9	9	0

# Benefits of Accreditation

Indicate the degree to which you agree or disagree with the following statements about the benefits of accreditation.



Please indicate the degree to which you agree or disagree with the following statements about engagement with stakeholders.



# Most Commonly Cited Benefits

- (1) Increased quality improvement activities**
- (2) Building stronger performance management systems**
- (3) Better internal collaboration and communication**
- (4) Improved relationships with stakeholders**

# Additional Findings

- While “competitiveness for funding” was listed as a motivating factor to apply for accreditation by many health departments, only 2/5 accredited health departments agreed that accreditation has made the health department more competitive for funding opportunities.
- Both rural and urban health departments reported similar benefits as a result of the accreditation process.

# Obstacles & Challenges

Top three challenges all relate to capacity

- **(1) Time**
- **(2) Staffing**
- **(3) Cost**

# Additional Challenges

- **Ambiguity of the PHAB Standards & Measures**
- **Need for technical assistance developing major systems and plans (i.e. performance management, community health improvement plan, strategic plan, etc.)**

# Rural vs. Urban Perspectives

# Rural vs. Urban Health Departments

Number of respondents serving  
**rural** counties = 16

Number of responses serving  
**urban** counties = 6

- Rural health departments reported *greater* constraints in capacity and costs
- Of the 11 accredited local HDs in Oregon, only 3 serve rural counties as defined by the OHSU Office of Rural Health
- Rural HDs appear to be more skeptical about the value of seeking public health accreditation
  - 5/8 health departments who are considering accreditation were unsure what the benefits (if any) to their health department would be

“For small health departments the cost to both get accredited and to free up staff time is almost impossible. We are trying to get creative about using scarce resources wisely. I love the direction that accreditation takes us but the support is not adequate.”

# Suggestions to Address urban/rural Disparities

- (1) Truncated requirements for rural health departments**
- (2) Hiring support staff for all of Oregon dedicated to accreditation**
- (3) Additional funding streams for accreditation related activities**
- (4) Greater rewards/increased incentives for achieving public health accreditation**

# Establishing a Performance Management System

# PM Establishment Strategies

- Defining a team and setting regular meetings
- Staff trainings in PM and QI
- Learning how to leverage the PM system to make improvements
- Accreditation drives the process
  - Accreditation can serve as a template for creating the PM system
  - Align PHAB measures with department and County goals
  - Tie Strategic Plan and QI plan to PM Plan

# Maintenance and Sustainability

- Regular check-ins and reporting on performance measures
- Making PM part of “business as usual”-instilling a QI culture
- Creation of permanent QI or PM policies
- Staff dedicated to maintaining the system
  - Make Performance management part of regular job duties
  - Use of PM/QI champions
  - AmeriCorps VISTAs

# Conclusions

- (1) All health departments experience at least some benefits from accreditation. Many of these benefits manifest throughout the process, not just after accredited status is achieved.**
- (2) Rural health departments face greater constraints in capacity to complete the accreditation process than their urban counterparts**
- (3) Finding better ways to measure the impact of accreditation will be important to gain governing entity support for the process and to motivate other health departments to undergo accreditation**
- (4) Additional training and technical support could help local health departments create and leverage sustainable Performance Management systems to drive changes and improvements**

What Questions Do You Have?