

National Public Health Performance Standards Program (NPHPSP)

Local Public Health System Assessment

Facilitator's Guide

Get Started

1. To begin your group session, introduce yourself, your recorder, and any technical advisors and describe your roles. Ask all workgroup participants to introduce themselves and sign the workgroup sign-in sheet. State that the purpose of the group's work is to assess the extent to which the local public health system meets or does not meet optimal performance standards on their assigned Essential Services.
2. Review the *ground rules*, which you will find on a list on the wall of your assigned room. Ask the group if they want additional ground rules. If yes, add them to the list.
3. Review materials provided to participants: color voting cards, pencils and paper. Also point out that you have a *glossary of terms* in case questions about terminology arise.
4. Review charts on the wall:
 - 1) **Essential Services**: chart of all 10 Essential Services that provide the framework for the NPHPS by describing those things that should be undertaken by the public health system.
 - 2) **The Public Health System** picture emphasizing all the different sectors comprising the system as a WHOLE. This is a good time to remind participants to keep in mind that the assessment is of the entire system and not just the organization they are representing.
 - 3) **Voting scale**: to be used as a reminder when it is time to vote. Point out that you will come back to this
 - 4) **Ground Rules**: Review and ask if they would like to add others.

Orient the Group to the Essential Services

5. You have been assigned two or three Essential Services to address in your group. Read aloud the Essential Services you will be covering.
6. Review the Assessment Tool.

There are four categories which represent major activities or practice areas for each Essential Service:

 - Planning and Implementation
 - Technical Assistance and Support
 - Evaluation and Quality Improvement
 - Resources
7. Each category includes:
 - The LPHS Model Standard that describes optimal performance for a public health system
 - Questions related to the category (the number of questions may be few to many) that serve as measures of performance in how that standard is being met.

Review the Process

LPHS participants will arrive at consensus responses by discussing the model standards and then voting. Participants will discuss each model standard for a set period of time (e.g., seven minutes). After discussion, participants vote (using color-coded cards) on responses to each stem question.

8. Briefly review the process that will be used to complete the assessment:

1 Discussion

Describe the process. For example, you may state: "I will read each model standard. We will then open up the floor to a discussion on what your division/organization does to contribute to meeting this standard and what we do collectively as a public health system in meeting this standard. We will then rate/vote on the stem questions related to the model standard."

#2 Voting

Make sure each participant has an orange, pink, yellow and green card. Review what each card represents according to the voting scale (also depicted on the wall chart).

- **Yes:** greater than 75 percent of the activity described within the question is met within the local public health system (*in other words, we may not have a 100% optimal system related to the question, but we do have a very high level of system-wide functioning related to the question*)
- **High Partially:** greater than 50 percent, but no more than 75 percent of the activity described within the question is met within the local public health system (*in other words, we have a good system-wide effort going on related to the question, but we still have a way to go to meet the standard*)
- **Low Partially:** greater than 25 percent, but no more than 50 percent of the activity described within the question is met within the local public health system (*in other words, we have some activities going on related to the question, but not enough to put us into the higher ratings*)
- **No:** no more than 25 percent of the activity described within the question is met within the state public health system (*in other words, we may have a few activities going on related to the question, but they are minimal at best*)

How much systems activity is enough in deciding how to vote? (This relates to the last two questions for each model standard.) It may be helpful to reiterate some basic parameters in thinking about how well the local public health system is functioning. Think about the focus of the question in terms of:

- a. **Dispersion:** is the activity in the question disseminated/dispersed across the state **geographically** or does it exist in only one area? Is the activity done in only one area of public health concern (e.g. maternal and child health) and **not in other areas of interest** (e.g. chronic disease, infectious disease, injury prevention, etc.)?
- b. **Participation among many system partners:** is the activity done only in one sector and not others (e.g. done in hospitals, but not governmental public health agencies)?
- c. **Frequency:** is the activity in the question done routinely or on an ad hoc basis?
- d. **Quality:** is the activity in the question done in a high quality manner, or is it a new activity just getting started and not of sufficient quality yet?

#3 Further Discussion

In the event there are diametrically opposed answers, you may open it up for further discussion and ask if the group would like to vote again.

9. Point out that there are a total of _____ hours, and a 15 minute afternoon break to complete the assessment for your assigned Essential Services. It will be important to think through approximately how much time you have to spend on each Essential Service, keeping in mind the number of indicators and assessment questions. Some indicators may go faster than others, and you can readjust. Keep in mind that it goes more quickly the more familiar participants become with the process. **STAY FLEXIBLE!**

Complete the Assessment

Step #1 Discussion:

- a. Read the Essential Service and the activities included.
- b. Read the first Indicator and then the first Model Standard.
- c. On the first time through, ask participants to skim the assessment questions under the Model Standard pointing out that the assessment questions mirror each of the items in the Model Standard.
- d. Ask the group to take a few minutes and think about **what their division/organization does to contribute to meeting the standard?**
- e. Ask the question, **what is the collective picture of how we are doing in Florida related to this standard?**
- e. Allow time for discussion.
- f) The discussion is over when 1) the facilitator determines enough time has been spent on the discussion; or 2) there seems to be no further discussion needed.

Keeping In Mind:

- Encourage all participants to contribute
- Draw out different points of view
- Keep discussion relevant to the Model Standard
- Keep people focused on system as a whole
- Remind participants that the purpose is to get an honest and accurate perception of the strengths and weaknesses of the system to help with quality improvement initiatives. Participants and/or organizations are not being judged by their answers.
- Try to encourage concrete examples of activities, but discourage anecdotes!

Step #2 Voting:

- a. Read the first stem question under the Model Standard pointing out that the question relates back to the Model Standard. The facilitator may suggest that participants take a moment to read the sub-questions. Then ask if anyone wishes to have further discussion on this specific question. Are we ready to vote? Begin moving through the questions and ask participants to hold up their votes.
- b. The facilitator may want to briefly review the color coded cards.
- c. After participants hold up their cards, read aloud the vote e.g. 5 yes, 7 high partially, 3 low partially.

Step #3 Further Discussions, if appropriate

In the event there are diametrically opposed answers, (we think this will happen rarely) the facilitator asks if the group would like more discussion. If so, open up the discussion again for an allotted amount of time. Ask if the group would like to have a re-vote.

A useful question to draw the answers closer together is: "For those of you who scored the activity low, could you talk about why you scored it low? I will ask the same questions for those who scored it high". As an alternative you can also ask the low scores why they didn't score higher and the high scores why they didn't score lower.

Keeping In Mind:

- Encourage voting without discussion on the assessment questions.
- Emphasize similarities and points of agreement
- Point out relevant information in the discussion and how it pertains to the Model Standard
- Ask participants if they learned anything new about activities the system is performing
- Keep track of time!

After further discussion, take another vote.

Work through all the questions in the indicator. Move on to the next indicators in a timely manner, repeating the discussion and voting steps. When all four indicators are complete, begin your next Essential Service.

Ground Rules for Facilitators

- Clearly define roles
- Make sure participants are physically comfortable
- Share meeting ground rules and enforce them when necessary
- Act in a neutral manner (refrain from giving personal opinions)
- Maintain a positive group atmosphere

Suggested Meeting Ground Rules

- One person speaks at a time
- Be respectful of others
- Stay on task, limit anecdotes
- No sidebar conversations
- Honor time limits
- Cell phones/blackberries on mute/vibrate