

Florida PPHR State-Supported CHD Model

Every county in Florida is at risk for natural or man-made emergencies or disasters. In a crisis, when the public looks to the county health department (CHD) for leadership, one of your greatest challenges becomes balancing emergency responsibility with continuing routine delivery of public health services.

Project Public Health Ready (PPHR), a partnership program between the Florida Department of Health, the National Association of County and City Health Officials (NACCHO), and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), is an effective tool for increasing community preparedness. Its comprehensive framework can structure your efforts to enhance staff proficiency and confidence in responding to emergencies.

Florida was the *first* state to coordinate this national public health program at the statewide level, and encourages all of its CHDs to participate.

The Florida PPHR State-Supported CHD Model

Recognizing that Florida has unique preparedness needs, NACCHO and FDOH have partnered to adapt the state-supported model to further the state's culture of preparedness, and to help us realize our goal of all Florida counties meeting PPHR state and national criteria for public health preparedness by December 2012.

To ensure a fully prepared public health system, FDOH must require specific preparedness elements of its CHDs, and that a flexible state-supported model not only assists Florida in addressing its unique preparedness requirements but also 1) fosters greater state and local collaboration, 2) addresses the realities of limited / sustained state and federal funding, and 3) facilitates Florida's compliance with federal guidelines. The PPHR Florida model includes criteria based on CHD expectations, serving as a tool to assist CHDs in meeting expectations and ensuring sustained preparedness. Specific Florida criteria are reviewed within the national review process.

NACCHO continues to improve the PPHR application process based on lessons learned. National criteria have been streamlined, the national scoring process has been revised, and a paperless application submission process has been adopted. Florida also continues to improve its PPHR model and implementation process.

PPHR serves as a public health preparedness tool to develop and support:

- An organizational culture change that values preparedness
- The foundation and building blocks for preparedness
- A standard methodology (uniformity and consistency) between counties
- Evaluation tools that may be used to validate current programs
- Preparedness guidance, especially for counties with few resources

Florida PPHR Process and Timeline

A CHD is allowed twelve (12) months to complete the initial PPHR application. National recognition may be sustained by re-applying every five (5) years.

Currently, applicants may begin the PPHR application in January or July of each calendar year. After an electronic Intent Form is submitted online, the CHD lead receives information on criteria, the review process, and resource support, including an online Orientation and access to the PPHR SharePoint.

CHDs may host a site visit during the first month of the application period to clarify criteria. Site visits are conducted by the State Lead and applicant mentor.

Monthly conference calls, led by the State Lead, are held to share project information, discuss applicant concerns and address questions, and provide project updates.

The CHD will have 12 months to complete the initial application process, after which the application will pass through mentor and technical reviews

Florida conducts mentor and technical reviews to ensure all required information is submitted, and NACCHO conducts an in-depth content review.

PPHR Tools and Resources

FDOH and NACCHO have developed tools and resources to assist applicants in effectively implementing PPHR:

- ***State-Specific Criteria*** to ensure that PPHR incorporates FDOH guidance specific to Florida's unique public health needs and issues, based on CHD Expectations.
- ***A PPHR State-Supported Sharepoint Site*** to allow applicants to share resources and view documents and best practices of previous applications.
- ***A Mentor Program*** of leads from PPHR-recognized CHDs, one (1) assigned to each CHD making PPHR application for the first time.
- ***Technical Reviewers*** from Florida PPHR-recognized counties who have completed NACCHO reviewer training.
- ***A PPHR State Lead*** to provide state support to applicants and work closely with NACCHO throughout the application process.
- ***The NACCHO PPHR Toolkit*** with best practices and resources to assist CHDs in meeting national criteria.

Although Florida is widely known for its experience in and expertise with emergency response, events of the last decade have demonstrated the continued importance of planning, training and exercising preparedness at every level of participation. PPHR allows all local health departments, regardless of size, to meet consistent standards of readiness.

PPHR criteria are annually updated to ensure compliance with state and federal standards. Within the proposed Florida model, state and national criteria will address CHD Expectations and FPHMP Strategic Plan Objectives 1, 2 and 3, as well as Objectives 4 – 16, according to CHD-chosen trainings and exercises.

Gaining increased public health preparedness through meeting PPHR state and national criteria will go a long way toward ensuring that Florida's CHDs are better prepared to care for the public, and that Florida remains a leader in public health preparedness.