

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Erie County Health Department Awarded National Accreditation



Sandusky, OH— November 17, 2015 — The Erie County Health Department announced today that it has achieved national accreditation through the Public Health Accreditation Board (PHAB). The national accreditation program works to improve and protect the health of the public by advancing the quality and performance of the nation’s Tribal, state, local and territorial public health departments. The Erie County Health Department (ECHD) is an elite agency that is one of the first 100 health departments to achieve accreditation. With over 3,000 health departments across the country that are preparing to seek accreditation through PHAB, the non-profit organization that administers the national public health accreditation program, ECHD is truly a leader in public health. The Erie County Health Department and Erie County Community Health Center is the only agency in the nation that has the distinction of being both: a PHAB accredited health department and a full Federally Qualified Health Center (FQHC).

“Public Health Accreditation Standards have been achieved in exceeding ways by the Erie County Health Department and Erie County Community Health Center staff” according to Peter Schade, Health Commissioner of the Erie County Health Department. “Accreditation signifies a level of assurance to our communities that we are now and will continue to provide the essential public health services at this high standard that accreditation requires. It is this level and diversity of service delivery that has set us apart as a local health department and a federally qualified health center, the only combination that is accredited in the entire nation. Thank you to our Board, our staff and mostly to our community stakeholders for making this possible. We will continue to strategically plan for the best health outcomes for Erie County, Ohio. In order to maintain this national accreditation we will forever need to be the best at service delivery and performance”, said Schade.

The national accreditation program, jointly supported by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, sets standards against which the nation’s more than 3,000 governmental public health departments can continuously improve the quality of their services and performance. To receive accreditation, a health department must undergo a rigorous, multi-faceted, peer reviewed assessment process to ensure it meets or exceeds a set of quality standards and measures.

When you see the seal of accreditation, you will know that the Erie County Health Department has been rigorously examined and meets or exceeds national standards that promote continuous quality improvement for public health. Public health departments play a critical role in protecting and improving the health of people and communities. In cities, towns, and states across the nation, health departments provide a range of services aimed at promoting healthy behaviors; preventing diseases and injuries; ensuring access to safe food, water, clean air, and life-saving immunizations; and preparing for and responding to public health emergencies. In addition to providing traditional public health services, the Erie County Health Department and the Erie County Community Health Center takes pride in offering additional comprehensive primary medical, dental and behavioral health services to Erie County and the region.

“The Erie County Health Department joins the growing ranks of accredited health departments in a strong commitment to their public health mission,” said PHAB President and CEO Kaye Bender, PhD, RN, FAAN. “The peer-review process provides valuable feedback to inform health departments of their strengths and areas for improvement, so that they can better protect and promote the health of the people they serve in their communities. Residents of a community served by a nationally accredited health department can be assured that their health department has demonstrated the capacity to protect and promote the health of that community.”

The national accreditation program was created collaboratively over a 10-year period by hundreds of public health practitioners working at the national, Tribal, state, and local levels. Since the program’s launch in September 2011, hundreds of public health departments have applied to PHAB for accreditation, and hundreds of public health practitioners from across the nation have been trained to serve as volunteer peer site visitors for the program.

“Achieving accreditation indicates that the Erie County Health Department is dedicated to improving and protecting the health of the community by striving to continuously improve the quality of the services it delivers,” said Leslie M. Beitsch, MD, JD, chair of PHAB’s Board of Directors and chair of the Department of Behavioral Sciences and Social Medicine at Florida State University College of Medicine. “Accreditation also promotes consistency in meeting standards. With an ever-increasing number of health now applying for and becoming accredited, you will be able to expect to receive the same quality of public health services wherever you go in the United States.”

The Erie County Health Department is located at 420 Superior Street, Sandusky, Ohio, 419-626-5623. You can also find information on the web at www.eriecohealthohio.org.

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