

# Partnering for Impact: Aligning Nonprofit Hospital and Public Health Department Community Health Needs Assessment and Planning Efforts

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## Introduction:

Non-profit hospitals and governmental health departments are both required to conduct regular community health (needs) assessments and create community or population-based health improvement or implementation plans. This document provides general guidance for aligning assessment and planning efforts.

## Benefits of Alignment:

- Increases cost effectiveness.
- Reduces duplication.
- Maximizes data quality and community input.
- Fosters shared ownership of community priorities.
- Contributes to improved community health outcomes.
- Offers opportunity for coordination across social needs and social determinants of health
- Can be designed to meet both Internal Revenue Service (IRS) and Public Health Accreditation Board (PHAB) requirements.

## Summary of Requirements\*:

	IRS (Nonprofit Hospitals)	PHAB (Health Departments)
<b>Assessment</b>	Community Health Needs Assessment (CHNA) must... <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• be conducted every 3 years;</li> <li>• include input from partners and the community; and</li> <li>• be made publicly available.</li> </ul>	Community Health Assessment (CHA) must... <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• be conducted at least every 5 years;</li> <li>• include a comprehensive look at population health, determinants, and inequities; and</li> <li>• include broad community engagement and primary and secondary data sources.</li> </ul>
<b>Planning</b>	Implementation Plan must... <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• address priorities from the CHNA; and</li> <li>• explain why certain priorities are not being addressed (if applicable).</li> </ul>	Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIP) must.. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• be completed at least every 5 years;</li> <li>• be based on CHA findings/priorities;</li> <li>• be developed in collaboration with community partners; and</li> <li>• establish shared priorities, goals, strategies, and accountability.</li> </ul>

\*For specific requirements see [Community health needs assessment for charitable hospital organizations - Section 501\(r\)\(3\) | Internal Revenue Service](#) and [Version 2022 - Public Health Accreditation Board](#).

### Aligning Cycles:

- Map current cycles. Plot each organization's assessment and planning deadlines on a shared timeline.
- Find overlap. Adjust future schedule to align on a 3-year cycle.
- Agree on updated cadence and adjust health department and/or hospital current cycles to align.
- Track progress together. Create shared dashboard and joint review schedule.

### Joint Assessment Tips:

- Start with shared governance. Create a joint steering committee or other governing body to guide the work.
- Agree on definition of "community" and clarify geographic boundaries across partners.
- Coordinate data collection. Pool resources for primary and secondary data collection, analysis, and reporting.
- Ensure all voices are heard. Include hospital, public health, partner organizations, and community member perspectives.
- Document for both Standards. Keep notes showing compliance.
- Identify shared priorities. Use actionable data to establish a set of shared priorities that drives improvement planning.
- Co-brand and co-promote. Consider joint media launch of assessment findings and next steps.

### Joint Planning Tips

- Consider an outside facilitator. A neutral facilitator that understands health department, hospital, and partner perspectives can bring neutrality and objectivity to the process.
- Include measurable objectives. Ensure the structure meets IRS/PHAB requirements.
- Assign shared responsibility. Clearly indicate who "owns" objectives and action items.
- Co brand and co-promote. This shows joint ownership and shared responsibility.
- Track progress together. Create a shared performance dashboard.
- Agree on review process between cycles.

### Examples from the Field:

Below are a few examples of joint health assessment and planning efforts at the local level. It is also worth noting that some states require joint planning in statute. This includes, but is not limited to: California, New Hampshire, New York, Maryland, Rhode Island, and Texas.

- [Franklin County Healthmap \(OH\)](#)
- [Health Improvement Partnership \(HIP\) – Cuyahoga \(OH\)](#)
- [Northland Health Alliance – Clay and Platte Counties \(MO\)](#)
- [Ozarks Health Commission - Springfield \(MO\)](#)
- [Orange County \(CA\)](#)

### PHAB's Consultation and Facilitation Services:

PHAB staff are available to support hospitals, health departments, and community partners with alignment and facilitation of assessment and planning processes. Email [phabta@phaboard.org](mailto:phabta@phaboard.org) to learn more.