**The Council on Linkages
Between Academia and
Public Health Practice**

**Use of the Core Competencies for Public Health Professionals in Academia:
Results of Healthy People 2020 Data Collection**

August 15, 2016

Overview
Within *Healthy People 2020*, the Core Competencies for Public Health Professionals (Core Competencies) are incorporated into three objectives in the Public Health Infrastructure (PHI) topic area. The Council on Linkages Between Academia and Public Health Practice (Council on Linkages) serves as the data source for the third of these objectives, PHI-3: *Increase the proportion of Council on Education for Public Health (CEPH) accredited schools of public health, CEPH accredited academic programs, and schools of nursing (with a public health or community health component) that integrate Core Competencies for Public Health Professionals into curricula.* In early 2016, mid-point review data related to this objective were collected. With the assistance of three Council on Linkages member organizations, the Association of Schools and Programs of Public Health (ASPPH), the Association for Prevention Teaching and Research, and the American Association of Colleges of Nursing, 213 institutions that met the criteria of the objective were asked to provide data on their use of the Core Competencies through an online form. Responses were received from 103 institutions, resulting in a 48% response rate, with 92% of these institutions stating that they have used the Core Competencies.

Summary of Responses to Questions About How Academic Institutions are Using the Core Competencies

Question 1: Has your academic institution used the Core Competencies for any of its public health or community health degree programs in any of the following ways? (Percentage of respondents who answered "Yes")

	Assessed gaps in curricula	Developed curricula	Assessed gaps in specific courses	Developed courses	Evaluated/assessed student skills and competencies for student or program planning purposes	Developed objectives for field practica or capstone projects	Based public health degree program competencies on the Core Competencies	Trained faculty	Other
CEPH-Accredited Schools of Public Health	82%	74%	67%	59%	79%	87%	83%	23%	40%
CEPH-Accredited Academic Programs	82%	80%	76%	72%	77%	65%	79%	30%	30%
Schools of Nursing	80%	88%	75%	79%	76%	88%	80%	38%	0%
Total	**82%**	**81%**	**73%**	**71%**	**77%**	**67%**	**80%**	**30%**	**26%**

Other ways in which institutions used the Core Competencies:
CEPH-Accredited Schools of Public Health
- In preparation for re-accreditation in 2012, as advised by CEPH, we reviewed the Core Competencies from the Council on Linkages, the ASPPH competencies, and competencies from other institutions to develop 10 core Master of Public Health (MPH) competencies and 5-7 concentration-specific competencies for each of the five public health disciplines in our college. Our PhD competencies were revised as well. Following CEPH's advice to select and adapt (and not use all) the Council on Linkages' Core Competencies, our public health competencies reflect, but do not include the entire list of Core Competencies by the Council on Linkages. The responses to this survey pertain to our college competencies, which were based on the Core Competencies from the Council on Linkages.
- As part of our self-study for CEPH.
- We use the professional competencies for our continuing education programs, e.g., our public health training center programs for health department employees and other public health workers. We also indirectly integrate and assess some of the same skills contained in the professional competency sets in courses and practicum projects, although we primarily use the academic public health competencies for this purpose.

- The correct answer to this question would be sometimes depending upon the department and/or the faculty.
- The school used ASPPH's Core Competencies Model related directly with the Core Competencies referenced in this survey.

CEPH-Accredited Academic Programs
- We initially chose competencies for our MPH program from among the Council on Linkages' Core Competencies, but were told there were too many, and so we needed to develop fewer, broader ones.
- Vetting sites for experiential learning.
- Reviewed these competencies as we were developing our own set of program competencies.
- Trained public health professionals in the community.

Schools of Nursing
- We have been using the Bachelor of Science in Nursing essentials for all of our competency assessments.

Question 2: Has your academic institution integrated competencies into its curriculum using the Core Competencies for any of its public health or community health degree programs in any of the following ways? (Percentage of respondents who answered "Yes")

	Added specific content intended to build skills and/or competencies	Designed field placements/internships to build skills and/or competencies	Designed exercises or assignments to build skills and/or competencies	Brought in external speakers/faculty to help teach or address the Core Competencies	Tested students for attainment of skills and competencies during or after completion of a course	Other
CEPH-Accredited Schools of Public Health	78%	82%	74%	68%	70%	50%
CEPH-Accredited Academic Programs	82%	65%	75%	38%	68%	20%
Schools of Nursing	92%	84%	84%	38%	50%	25%
Total	**84%**	**73%**	**77%**	**45%**	**64%**	**29%**

Other ways in which institutions integrated the Core Competencies:
CEPH-Accredited Schools of Public Health
- The faculty have developed competencies in their departments. They use these competencies for their curricula and courses. These competencies are not always linked to the Core Competencies.
- Surveyed students and employers asking if they felt competencies were addressed and met via the degree curricula.
- Brought speakers to meetings of an organization of public health students in the college to speak on different topics related to college public health competencies. Organized workshops for continuing education which addressed, developed, or reinforced public health competencies. Sponsored a 2016 regional public health association conference, which brought together public health professionals, students, and faculty, with presentations by invited speakers and public health trainees, recipients of a Health Resources and Services Administration grant.

CEPH-Accredited Academic Programs
- We survey students prior to taking their first class and after completing Capstone to measure their self-perceived level of competence in selected areas. Then, through our course work, each course links assignments to learning objectives and core competencies identified for our program.

Schools of Nursing
- Our comprehensive examination, in lieu of thesis, done outside of coursework/classroom setting, is our examination of students' understanding and application of basic principles, including these competencies.
- Our new Master of Science in Nursing Association of Public Health Nurses curriculum based on the Quad Council Competencies for Public Health Nursing has not been offered yet. The curriculum has been approved and we are currently registering students.

Question 3: Before your academic institution grants a degree in any of its public health or community health degree programs, is there an assessment or evaluation of Core Competencies attained by a student? (Percentage of respondents who answered "Yes")
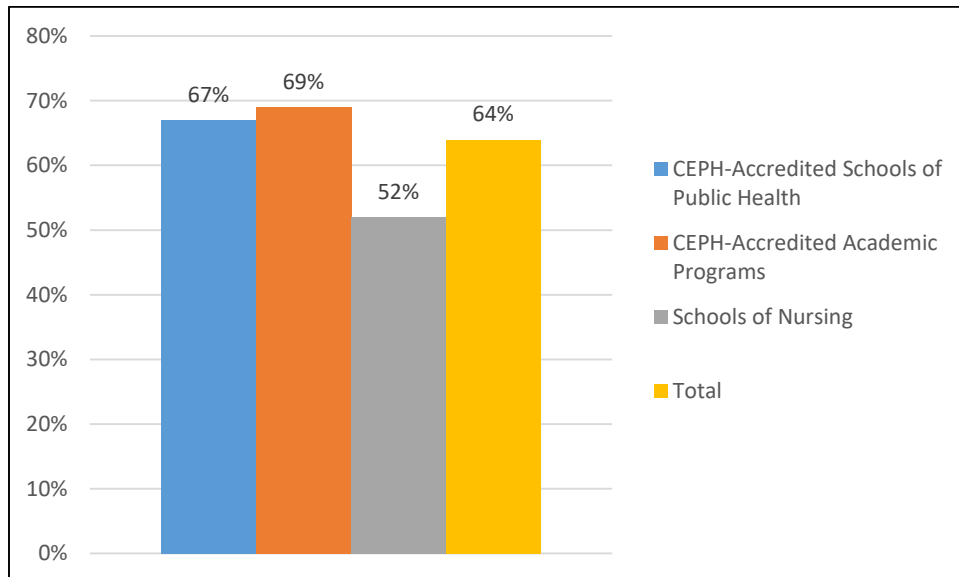
Question 4: Does your academic institution provide training for the current public health workforce using the Core Competencies? (Percentage of respondents who answered "Yes")