Priority Competencies for Population Health Professionals

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These competencies are primarily designed for non-clinical hospital, health system, public health, and healthcare professionals engaged in assessment of population health needs and development, delivery, and improvement of population health programs, services, and practices. This may include activities related to community health needs assessments, community health improvement plans, and implementation of community-based interventions. Draft competencies are organized into five domains.

Community Health Assessment
- Assesses community health status and factors influencing health in a community (e.g., access to affordable housing; public and private sector policies; quality, availability, accessibility, and use of health services)
- Uses informatics and information technology in accessing, collecting, analyzing, using, maintaining, and disseminating data and information
- Develops community health assessments using information about health status, factors influencing health, and assets and resources
- Facilitates collaborations among stakeholders to improve health in a community (e.g., coalition building)
- Engages community members to improve health in a community (e.g., input in developing and implementing community health assessments, feedback about programs and services)

Community Health Improvement Planning and Action
- Implements population health policies, programs, and services that align with identified community health needs
- Influences policies, programs, and services external to the organization that affect the health of the community (e.g., zoning, safe housing, food access, transportation routes)
- Determines limitations of evidence (e.g., validity, reliability, sample size, bias, generalizability)
- Makes evidence-based decisions for policies, programs, and services (e.g., using recommendations from The Guide to Community Preventive Services in planning population health services)
- Evaluates the impact of policies, programs, and services (e.g., outputs, outcomes, processes, procedures, return on investment)
- Contributes to the population health evidence base (e.g., community-based participatory research; authoring articles; making data available to researchers)
- Develops partnerships that will increase use of evidence in developing, implementing, and improving population health programs and services (e.g., between healthcare and public health organizations)
- Advocates for the use of evidence in decision making that affects the health of a community (e.g., helping decision makers understand community health needs, demonstrating the impact of programs, eliminating disparities)
- Implements strategies for continuous quality improvement

Community Engagement and Cultural Awareness

- Recognizes the ways diversity influences policies, programs, services, and the health of a community
- Incorporates ethical standards of practice into all interactions with individuals, organizations, and communities
- Supports diverse perspectives in developing, implementing, and evaluating policies, programs, and services that affect the health of a community
- Ensures the diversity of individuals and populations is addressed in policies, programs, and services that affect the health of a community
- Creates opportunities for individuals and organizations to collaborate to improve health in a community
- Negotiates for use of assets and resources (e.g., Boys & Girls Clubs, public libraries, hospitals, faith-based organizations, academic institutions, federal grants, fellowship programs) to improve health in a community
- Communicates in writing and orally with linguistic and cultural proficiency (e.g., using age-appropriate materials, incorporating images)

Systems Thinking

- Collaborates with individuals and organizations in developing a vision for a healthy community (e.g., emphasis on health equity and prevention)
- Describes the interrelationships of factors affecting the health of a community (e.g., equity, income, education, environment)
- Describes healthcare and public health as part of a larger inter-related system of organizations that influence the health of populations at local, national, and global levels
- Explains healthcare and public health funding mechanisms and procedures (e.g., third-party reimbursement, value-based purchasing, categorical grants, fees, taxes, budget approval process)
- Explains the ways public health, healthcare, and other organizations can work together or individually to impact the health of a community

Organizational Planning and Management

- Describes laws, regulations, and guidelines related to the organization's community benefit activities
- Contributes to development of organizational strategic plan (e.g., incorporates community health improvement plan, contains measurable objectives and targets)
- Manages programs within current and projected budgets and staffing levels (e.g., sustaining a program when funding and staff are cut, recruiting and retaining staff)
- Justifies programs for inclusion in organizational budgets
- Develops program budgets
- Defends program budgets
- Uses financial analysis methods in making decisions about policies, programs, and services (e.g., cost-effectiveness, cost-benefit, cost-utility analysis, return on investment)

These competencies are based on the Core Competencies for Public Health Professionals, which are available at www.phf.org/corecompetencies.

Feedback on these draft competencies that can be used in refining this competency set may be shared through an online feedback form or sent to Kathleen Amos at kamos@phf.org.