

Credentialing Public Health Graduates: The National Board of Public Health Examiners

“As weaknesses in the public health infrastructure have become more obvious,
the need to certify and credential the public workforce has grown.”

- Institute of Medicine, 2003, *Who Will Keep the Public Healthy?*

Leading U.S. public health organizations are collaborating to make a landmark change for the public health profession—a credential for public health graduates.

In Fall 2005, the National Board of Public Health Examiners (NBPHE) was incorporated as an independent organization to ensure the competence of public health graduates from public health schools and programs accredited by the Council on Education of Public Health (CEPH). NBPHE will accomplish this goal through developing, preparing, administering and evaluating a voluntary certification examination for these graduates.

Organizations collaborating on this effort include the Association of Schools of Public Health (ASPH), the American Public Health Association (APHA), the Association of State and Territorial Health Officials (ASTHO), the National Association of County and City Health Officials (NACCHO), and the Association of Teachers of Preventive Medicine (ATPM).

The Board’s inaugural meeting was held in December 2005, and second meeting was held March 31-April 2, 2006. By-laws have been approved and at-large Board members elected. The Board has formed many committees to drive the development of this credential, including a testing committee has been assigned the task of working with testing and subject matter professionals to design the exam. The goal of is to offer the first exam in Spring 2008.

The NBPHE will be a major step in assuring that public health education meets a high level of minimum standards across the board, and thus that public health graduates are better prepared to serve the nation.

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