

NACCHO Proposed Research Agenda for the Council on Linkages

The National Association of County and City Health Officials (NACCHO) passed two resolutions on June 30, 2004: “Resolution on Workforce Certification and Credentialing,” and “Resolution on Voluntary Accreditation of Local Public Health Agencies.” These resolutions were developed by NACCHO’s Workforce and Leadership Development Advisory Committee, whose mission is to provide leadership, advocate for, and advise NACCHO and its partners on comprehensive and innovative workforce and leadership development policies and practices. These resolutions recognize a need for both evaluative research and an evidence-based approach to certification, credentialing and accreditation. Recognizing these needs, NACCHO is supportive of the Council on Linkages Between Academia and Public Health Practice, as well as others, endorsing and developing a plan to involve its membership organizations, and other potential partners, to take the following actions:

1. Collect, compile, and analyze evaluative research and other available evidence using meta-analysis or other appropriate technique to determine the impacts which certification, credentialing and accreditation, respectively, have had on the health of populations and communities, the practice of professions, and the organization and delivery of services in the public sector.
2. Document and review the current practices of certification, credentialing, and accreditation in the United States for public sector professionals and organizations to provide a comprehensive look at the processes used, the costs entailed, and the intended and unintended consequences, such as “unfunded mandates”, of these practices.
3. Differentiate among the current structure, processes, and costs used for certification and credentialing of public sector professionals and accreditation of public sector organizations in order to discern the advantages/disadvantages and strengths/weaknesses of the different types of processes currently in use.
4. Documentation of areas where there are gaps in knowledge for which additional research may be necessary to help with decision making about certification, credentialing and accreditation. This should be based on the results of the studies proposed above and on two studies that have been commissioned by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation to assess the impact of accreditation at the state and local levels.
5. Document and report on the process and timeframes which have already been used to introduce and perfect certification and credentialing of public sector professionals and accreditation of public sector organizations.

NACCHO recognizes that these actions and examination of questions may require additional resources.