

Houston Uses QI to Improve PHAB Documentation

Background and Baseline

Even before the [Houston Department of Health and Human Services](#) (HDHHS) became a grantee in the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) [National Public Health Improvement Initiative](#) (NPHII), the organization aimed to be a leader in the quickly-evolving practice of preparing for voluntary accreditation by the [Public Health Accreditation Board](#) (PHAB). In 2012 and 2013, HDHHS provided quality improvement (QI) training to employees in the department using the Public Health Foundation (PHF) Train-the-Trainer Series. Their QI skills were truly tested as Houston began preparing documentation for PHAB.

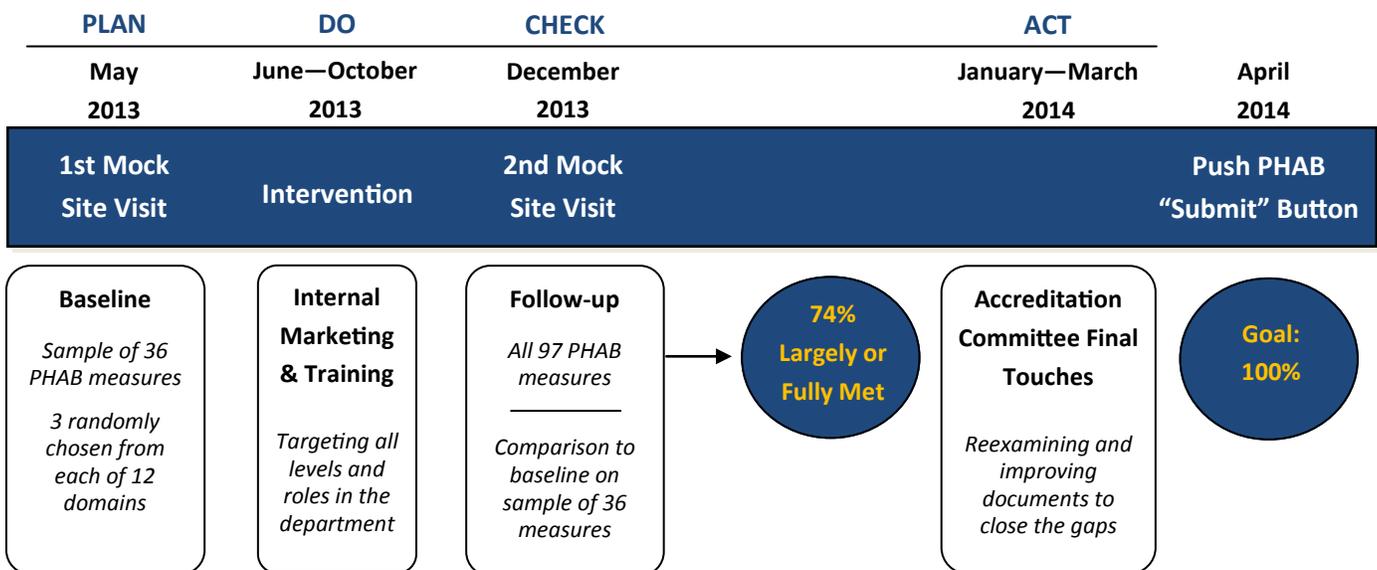


Houston Department of Health and Human Services

The accreditation workgroup meetings started out on the wrong foot, with complaints that people did not understand what was required to meet PHAB documentation requirements. After assembling documentation for a few dozen PHAB measures, HDHHS then conducted a mock site visit. Four staff members reviewed sample documents as though they were PHAB site visitors; each reviewed documents from three accreditation domains. Out of 36 sample documents reviewed (three from each of the 12 domains), just 16% “fully or largely met” PHAB requirements, while 59% “slightly met” and 24% “did not meet” PHAB requirements.

An Agency-wide Intervention

The Accreditation Committee knew it had to improve the quality of its PHAB documentation. Having mastered the basic tools of QI, the HDHHS team approached the challenge like any other QI initiative, addressing the root causes of poor documentation with carefully designed tactics. The multi-pronged intervention included internal education and marketing, simplifying and simulating, and making the documentation fun and intrinsically reinforcing. The tactics engaged HDHHS staff at all levels and roles. HDHHS developed a 90-minute “Documentation 101” workshop based largely on PHAB’s documentation training; it was designed for HDHHS leadership, mock site reviewers, and the accreditation work group. Following the intervention, a second mock site visit, including both internal and external mock site reviewers on all 97 PHAB measures, revealed a dramatic improvement: PHAB requirements were “fully or largely met” for 74% of measures — 81% of measures in the original sample of 36.



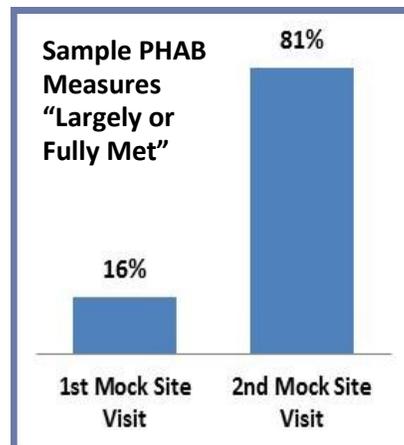
Tactics the Accreditation Committee Deployed

Top-Down Messaging. Identified an executive sponsor for each PHAB domain and arranged for domain teams to lead presentations to leadership, connecting each domain to the work of each part of the agency.

Marketing. Branded accreditation as new, innovative, professional, and internally-owned, using the slogan “Think Accreditation.”

Educating. Through brown bag lunches, helped staff connect accreditation to their individual roles. Then provided training to 150 staff on how to document effectively, comparing (sometimes humorous) samples of documents that met PHAB requirements with those that did not.

Simplifying. Distributed handouts on how to create documents, used wallet-sized laminated cards to help staff remember the “7 questions to ask the document,” and provided templates for ease of documentation gathering and consistent formatting.



“Now even for parties we have sign-in sheets, because it has become standard practice!”

Robert Hines
Performance Improvement Manager
Houston DHHS

Simulating. Trained mock site reviewers internally and externally, and held mock site visits to check the impact of the intervention on documentation quality.

Making it Fun. Created games and tools that facilitated learning and set-up healthy competition during training; eased discussions about why a sample document was “a good doc” or “a bad doc” to stimulate and solidify learning.

Related Links and Resources

- PHF provides customized technical assistance and training to public health agencies and other groups that protect the public’s health. To inquire about these services, please visit www.phf.org/TechnicalAssistance or call 202-218-4415.
- Implementing QI and performance management are parts of Domain 9 of the PHAB Standards and Measures. To learn more, please read about PHAB’s [Domain 9](#) or explore PHF’s [accreditation preparation resources](#).
- [The Houston Department of Health and Human Services](#) (HDHHS) provides traditional public health services and seeks to use innovative methods to meet the community’s present and future needs. PHF will publish Houston’s “Good Doc, Bad Doc Game” and related training resources later in 2014.

About PHF and NPHII

PHF is dedicated to achieving healthy communities through research, training, and technical assistance. PHF improves the public’s health by strengthening the quality and performance of public health practice. CDC’s NPHII supports state, tribal, local, and territorial health departments through the Prevention and Public Health Fund of the Affordable Care Act to make fundamental changes and enhancements in their organizations and implement practices that improve the delivery and impact of public health services.

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