After undergoing an extensive four year assessment, Dallas County Health and Human Services (DCHHS) was awarded national accreditation through the Public Health Accreditation Board (PHAB) on Nov. 15, 2016.

The PHAB organization was jointly funded by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) to serve as a national public health accrediting body. The board serves as a nonprofit organization that works to improve and protect the health of the public by advancing and ultimately transforming the quality and performance of the nation’s health departments.

The accreditation program promotes high performance, continuous quality improvement, illustrates health department accountability to the public and policy makers, clarifies the public’s expectations of health departments and increases the visibility and public awareness of governmental public health.

“DCHHS employees have worked diligently for the community and it is an honor for DCHHS to receive national accreditation through PHAB,” said Dallas County Commissioner John Wiley Price, chair of the Dallas County Public Health Advisory Board. “With this accreditation, residents can be confident that the DCHHS public health system will continue to grow in quality, remain competitive and be transparent in day to day practices.”

Although PHAB is a nationally recognized organization, accreditation through PHAB remains a voluntary process that health departments across the nation choose to undergo.

“The choice for DCHHS to voluntarily undergo the accreditation process was considered obligatory,” said Director Zachary Thompson. “Standing as the second largest county in Texas and the ninth largest county in the US, DCHHS is committed to ensure Dallas County residents can be confident about DCHHS processes.”
Quality Improvement and Performance Management Lands This Team National Recognition:

A Glimpse Into the Rigorous PHAB National Accreditation Process

As DCHHS Director Zachary Thompson met with his staff during an early Monday meeting, his phone vibrated rapidly across the conference table where several employees surrounded. After anxiously awaiting four years for this announcement, he cleared his throat and wiped his finger across his iPhone touch screen cell phone to check his email. Beginning with a few head nods, Director Thompson continued to scroll through his messages, and then placed his phone back on the table. Looking around the room with a smile of excitement, Director Thompson advises the DCHHS Assistant Directors “Whatever problem we have, put it off until later today….We got it!”

In the year of 2012 DCHHS pledged to challenge the DCHHS organizational structure by pursuing national accreditation through PHAB. Understanding the in depth process, DCHHS Director Zachary Thompson followed PHAB recommendations to appoint an accreditation team to focus efforts on the accreditation process.

The front line accreditation team consisted of Assistant Director Dianne Rucker, Asst. Director Public Health Communicable Disease Health Tammara Scroggins, Public Health Educators La Shonda Worthey, Britni Williams and Janiecia Holley, Asst. Director Budget, Finance, Contracts Ganesh Shivaramaiyer and DCHHS Medical Director/Health Authority Dr. Christopher Perkins.

Each team member demonstrated great ability to conduct intensive and prolonged evaluation. Through this groups diligence, DCHHS was able to demonstrate it’s conformity with PHAB standards and measures.

In support, the entire DCHHS Health Services Division played a key role in obtaining national accreditation.

“The application was a rigorous process that challenged us to take existing processes and expand upon those operations and services. The entire accreditation procedure from beginning to the end, cultivated best practices and promising practices.”

--- Asst. Director Public Health Communicable Disease Health Tammara Scroggins

“Document submission was a very detailed and rigorous process. There were a number of different measures spread over required standards that had to be addressed. Through this process, DCHHS was able to present transparency and show our commitment to deliver the ten essential functions of public health services”

---Asst. Director Finance, Budget, Contracts Ganesh Shivaramaiyer

“During the site visit, DCHHS leadership was tested on a wide variety of topics to ensure that requirements of each measure was addressed. After an intense three day site visit, I was confident we were headed in the right direction.”

---DCHHS Medical Director/Health Authority Dr. Christopher Perkins

“Whenever you see our seal of accreditation, you will know that DCHHS has been rigorously examined and meets or exceeds national standards that promote continuous quality improvement for public health.”

---DCHHS Director Zachary Thompson
DCHHS Supports Initiatives in the Annual Feast of Sharing

On Thursday, Nov. 10, the Public Health Preparedness Division and Dallas County Medical Reserve Corps (MRC) participated in the Centennial Building at Fair Park. The annual event provides health services along with hot holiday meals to serve the general public including homeless and displaced populations within North Texas. “The Feast of Sharing was a wonderful opportunity to serve the members of our community,” said MRC Volunteer Lesley Lanig. “It showcased programs to empower and enrich families in addition to providing a nutritious meal in a fun filled environment.” At the event, public health preparedness (PHP) staff and MRC volunteers distributed specialized emergency document bags that included a list of all Dallas County shelters with brief descriptions of requirements and services provided.

2017 Zika and West Nile Planning Webinar

Beginning Thursday, Jan. 12, 2017, DCHHS will be kicking off a two part series discussing 2017 Zika and West Nile planning objectives, which will be open to Dallas County cities, community leaders, businesses, organizations and the general public. The first part of the series will take place in webinar format, explaining the current challenges of Zika and West Nile, along with planning for a confirmed local transmission Zika case in Dallas County.

Through the webinar, DCHHS plans to give an overview of the mosquito surveillance, Zika clinical update and hypothetical scenario. The presentation will provide an outline of vector control needs and be used as a tool to communicate and understand the scope of the Dallas County geographic response.

Following the webinar, the second part series will be an in-person table top meeting on Thursday, Feb. 2, 2017 set to discuss the needs and capabilities in detail.

For more information on this event, or for invites email renae.crutchfield@dallascounty.org

MRC Volunteers Receive Radiological Incident Training

On Saturday, Dec. 3, DCHHS Medical Reserve Corps (MRC) volunteers, both medical and non-medical, were trained on best practices during a radiological incident. Volunteers learned how to use handheld radiological detection equipment to conduct radiological monitoring and decontamination operations for potentially contaminated populations.

DCHHS Continues to Provide Flu Education

DCHHS continues the conversation on flu prevention. Public Health Educator Marisa Gonzalez lead flu prevention presentations at Brady Senior Center, Mexican Consulate of Dallas, UME Academy of Duncanville, West Dallas Family Care Connections and the Mexican Consulate Ventanilla de Salud.

Currently, Dallas County has not seen an uptick in flu cases as influenza activity remains low with 1.6 percent of tests returning positive. Through education, DCHHS will continue to advise residents to receive the influenza vaccine. To date, Dallas County has seen a total of 29 hospitalizations related to the flu, a close number to last years CDC week 49 in 2015.
STD, HIV and Public Health Team Promote World AIDS Day

In recognition of World Aids Day, DCHHS teamed up with Aids Interfaith Network to raise awareness and improve HIV education by offering free testing for sexually-transmitted diseases and HIV at the General Consulate of Mexico Thursday, Dec. 1, 2016.

Launching the activities for World Aids Day, an inaugural ceremony was held to raise awareness, promote civil rights and to access the needs of the LGBT Hispanic community.
Through this initiative, DCHHS provided free testing to 87 Dallas County residents and provided education materials in addition to counseling guides.

For more information on DCHHS testing call 214 819 1819 or visit http://www.dallascounty.org/

DCHHS staff outside the mobile medical unit.

Director Zachary Thompson joined “Ventanilla de Salud” of AIDS Interfaith Network and the General Consulate of Mexico.