2015-2016
Alabama Department of Public Health
Strategic Plan

STATE OF ALABAMA DEPARTMENT OF
PUBLIC HEALTH
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State Health Officer

June 22, 2015

The Alabama Department of Public Health's (ADPH) Strategic Plan provides our agency's direction for the upcoming years. ADPH will increase its overall process and personnel efficiency while focusing on improving program quality and will identify, by region and by program, niches where it can demonstrate high value versus cost. ADPH seeks to clearly define its role as one of the many vital partners that form an effective public health system for Alabama.

Our vision – *Assure the health of Alabamians by promoting healthy, safe, prepared, and informed communities* – can be realized through a continued effort of process improvements and community involvement. Please join me in shaping our healthcare system within Alabama.

Sincerely,

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The vision, mission, and core values are the foundation for any strategic plan. Together, they identify why an organization exists, its direction, and its actions. The vision, mission, and core values of the Alabama Department of Public Health (ADPH) are as follows:

Vision

Assure the health of Alabamians by promoting healthy, safe, prepared, and informed communities.

Mission

To promote, protect, and improve the health of individuals and communities in Alabama.

Core Values

High quality services
Competent and professional workforce
Compassionate care

Key Focus Areas

- **Increase Use of Technology and Data**
  - Develop an Electronic Health Record, enhance data development and analysis capability focusing on outcomes to better position its regulatory and health care evaluation role by enhancing its assurance and assessment capabilities, and expand strategic performance management activities to increase overall process and personnel efficiency while focusing on improving program quality
- **Improve Access to Care**
  - Develop productivity standards (clinical and non-clinical), conduct a program-by-program, region-by-region strategic assessment to identify niches where ADPH can demonstrate high value versus cost, and improve access to health care
- **Develop a Marketing/Communications/Branding Strategy**
  - Develop marketing, communication, and branding strategies to increase the public's overall awareness of public health and inform them of the changes taking place in public health
- **Improve Nutrition and Increase Physical Activity**
  - Impact the prevalence of obesity in adults and youth through better nutrition and physical activity strategies
- **Strengthen Mental Health and Substance Abuse Infrastructure and Interventions**
  - Assist the mental health and substance abuse community to identify and distribute indicators and evidence-based interventions and policies, support training opportunities for primary care providers and community leaders, disseminate suicide prevention information, and increase second hand smoke protections for workers and families

Introduction

Public health is a multi-disciplinary field in which people work to protect and improve the health of communities and populations through education, policies, and programs that promote healthy lifestyles and reduce the risk of injuries, violence, and infectious disease; these same professionals also routinely monitor disease outbreaks and other public health issues that impact communities throughout our state. The work of public health is a partnership among state and local governments, public health and clinical medicine, statewide associations, community organizations, and individual citizens. ADPH seeks to clearly define its role as one of many vital partners that form an effective public health system for Alabama. The plan allows ADPH to focus its efforts and identify its priorities; it is not an exhaustive list of the work to be undertaken, rather it will reflect the priorities in focusing ADPH's work and determining needed resources. This plan and the priorities reflect input from multiple levels within ADPH and from a broad-based group of stakeholders. The priority areas identified require additional attention and resources in order to achieve the overall mission of ADPH.

Background

In October 2010, ADPH became a recipient of the National Public Health Improvement Initiative (NPHII) from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). This cooperative agreement provided support to health departments for accelerating public health accreditation readiness activities and implementing performance and improvement management practices and systems. ADPH used this funding to initiate readiness activities with a goal of achieving public health accreditation for the state health department. The completion of a state Community Health Assessment (CHA), Alabama Community Health Improvement Plan (ACHIP), and department strategic plan, the accreditation prerequisites, were included in those readiness activities.

Statewide Assessment and Improvement Planning

The statewide CHA process began in December 2013 and preliminary results were finalized in May 2014. ADPH used a Health Issue Focused Approach[1], a "hybrid model," to conduct the assessment. The model used a multiple data source, participative process that identified population demographics, health concerns, special population health needs and issues, contributing causes of health concerns, and health assets and resources. The CHA process identified the leading 13 health concerns for the state as follows, listed in priority order:

[1] This methodology was developed from the focused strategic thinking approach presented in the following book: Ginter, P.M., Duncan, W.J. and Swayne, L.E., *Strategic Management of Health Care Organizations*, 7th ed., San Francisco, California: John Wiley & Sons/Jossey-Bass Publishers, March 2013 (first published in 1992).

Budget Resources and Outlook

ADPH's annual operating budget is $481.3 million. Over $273.8 million of the operating budget is from federal funding, $146.7 million is from fees, $49.7 million is from state funds, and $11.1 million is from other sources. ADPH's state funding has decreased by $1 million; while fee-based funding has increased by $13.2 million.

One of the key approaches ADPH is taking, in the upcoming years is to focus on a set of strategic priorities with essential partners to deliver the most impact for the investment and effort. These priorities will move the public health system toward increased consistency in business practices and will fulfill public expectations for consistent services from government agencies across the state.

Federal Funding Trends

To successfully address the broad and complex issues of public health, ADPH must be prepared to meet organizational challenges within a very competitive environment. Funding for public health is very dependent on federal funds. Over the past years, ADPH has felt the impacts of sequestration and other reductions at the federal level.

State Funding Trends

ADPH is preparing for additional decreases in state funding.

Fee and Dedicated Funding Support

Many of ADPH's programs rely on fees to recover the cost of services. Fee support as a percentage of the total budget has increased. First, ADPH has made programs as self-supporting as possible through fees. Second, effectively managing program costs and being clear about how fees are calculated are strategies ADPH is implementing.

1. Access to Care
2. Mental Health and Substance Abuse
3. Poor Pregnancy Outcomes
4. Nutrition and Physical Activity
5. Cardiovascular Diseases
6. Sexually Transmitted Infections
7. Cancer
8. Child Abuse and Neglect
9. Diabetes
10. Geriatrics
11. Injury and Violence Prevention
12. Oral Health
13. Cigarette Smoking

Additional information about the CHA process and results is available on ADPH's accreditation website at www.adph.org/accreditation.

In August 2014, approximately 60 partners and stakeholders with broad-based interests and statewide representation participated in a meeting to prioritize the health concerns identified in the CHA and begin work to establish goals, objectives, and action plans for development of a statewide ACHIP. The ACHIP stakeholder meeting was facilitated by representatives of the University of Alabama at Birmingham, School of Public Health. The partners and stakeholders concluded that the ACHIP should focus on a consensus of the top three issues based on: 1) the extent of the need for improvement within the state, 2) the chance of making a significant difference in the health of the state by implementing the plan, and 3) the level of anticipated engagement and resources of the partners and stakeholders.

There was considerable consensus among the stakeholders in the selection of the top three issues upon which they would focus. Those health issues are as follows:

- Access to Care
- Nutrition and Physical Activity
- Mental Health and Substance Abuse

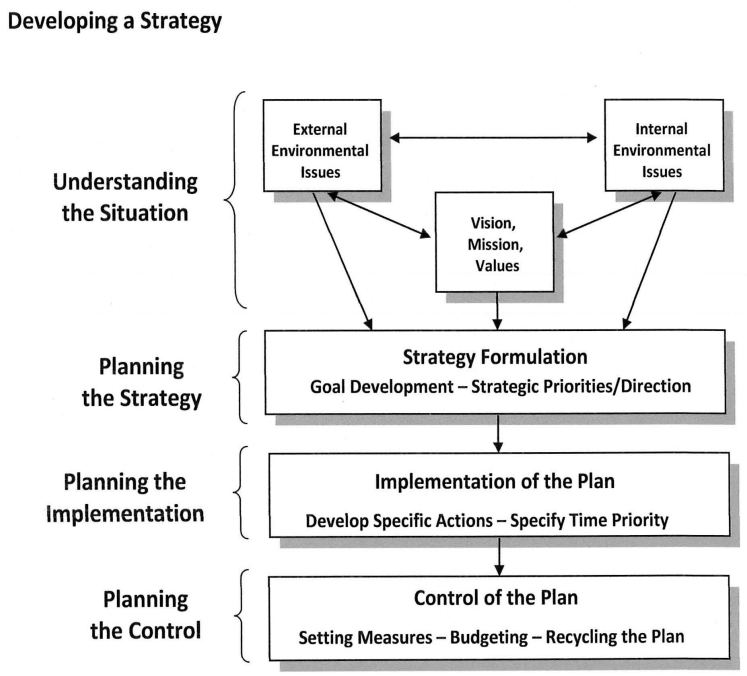
The goals, objectives, and action plans finalized by ACHIP are included in this strategic plan. Additional information about the ACHIP process and results is available on ADPH's accreditation website at www.adph.org/accreditation.

Strategic Planning

ADPH adopted a Focused Strategic Thinking[2] (FST) approach to develop this strategic plan. FST is a process for thinking about and planning for the future of an organization that is simple, structured, participative, efficient, and effective. The process involves developing and implementing a strategy and requires three activities – strategic thinking, strategic planning, and strategic management.

The FST approach involved ADPH leadership in a one and one-half day, off-site Strategic Thinking Retreat in February 2014 to produce a draft strategic plan. The FST process was facilitated by representatives of the University of Alabama at Birmingham, School of Public Health during the retreat. Participants included the State Health Officer, Deputy Directors, Bureau Directors, and Public Health Area Administrators.

An illustration of the major components of the FST model of strategic planning adopted by ADPH is presented below. In practice, the model calls for understanding the situation and then planning the strategy, its implementation, and control. The strategy linked leadership's understanding of the organization today with where it wants, can, and should be at some point in the future.



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Understanding the Situation

As illustrated, analyzing and understanding the situation was accomplished by three separate processes during the retreat: (1) understanding external environmental issues; (2) understanding internal environmental issues; and (3) the development of the organization's mission, vision, and values. Issues in the external environment (including health issues later identified in the CHA and ACHIP as well as non-health issues) were identified that directly and simultaneously affect the process of environmental analysis, provide the context for internal analysis, and influence the mission, vision, and values of the organization.

Planning the Strategy

The next phase of the FST process concerned goal setting and strategy development. Goals are the focal point for organizational action and define the future momentum for ADPH. Brainstorming this momentum was a key part of the process. The goals that were determined broadly specified the major priorities and direction of ADPH and linked the mission to departmental action. Unlike the mission statement, the goals focused direction to accomplish the vision. Whereas situational analysis involved reaching an understanding of relevant issues, goal setting and subsequent strategy formulation involved making decisions using that information. These decisions resulted in a strategy for ADPH. Once the goals were established, strategies were specified to accomplish the goals.

Planning the Implementation

The next step in the FST process was to plan for goal/strategy implementation. Timelines were established for each goal/strategy and responsibilities assigned. The strategies (departmental actions) supporting each goal represented the major activities.

Planning the Control

Finally, plans for controlling the strategy were established. These plans primarily concern measuring success and recycling the strategic planning process. Control is an inherent part of all the strategic management processes; strategic planning itself is an attempt to control the future of the organization. Leaders exercise the explicit process of control as they consider the reasons for strategic change. Therefore, the goals, strategies, and actions plans established earlier in the FST process are central to the control process. Actual implementation and control of the strategy are a part of strategic management and no longer strategic planning. Participants in the Strategic Thinking Retreat reached consensus on how to measure and monitor the accomplishment of the goals/strategies. Specific measures of success were decided upon and contingency plans established.

After the FST sessions, there was still work to be done. It was important to obtain wider participation in the strategic thinking underlying the strategic plan. In addition, general direction for the organization had been established, but there were many implementation details that would have to be formulated and detailed budgets developed.

The ADPH FST approach produced the following:

- Identification and prioritization of key external issues.
- Identification of key stakeholders and their relationship.
- Identification of the critical factors for success.
- Assessment of the organization's current strengths and weaknesses.
- Determination of the organization's resources and other strengths needed to achieve its mission and critical success factors.
- Organizational mission, vision, and value statements.
- Organization statement of strategy.
- Organizational goals.
- Identification of the strategies (activities) necessary to achieve the goals (an action plan).
- Development of timelines for strategies (activities) and goal achievement.
- Identification of a unit or person responsible for completing each activity.

Sources of Information for the Strategic Planning Process

- *Community Health Assessment*
- *Community Health Improvement Plan*
- *Healthy People 2020*
- *Stakeholder Feedback (survey)*
- *Staff Feedback (focus groups)*

Strategy Statement

ADPH is the lead agency in Alabama providing the three core public health functions and providing the ten essential services[3] directly and/or through strong and effective partnerships.

The three Core Public Health Functions are as follows:

1. Assessment
2. Assurance
3. Policy Development

[3] Adopted: Fall 1994, Source: Public Health Functions Steering Committee, Members (July 1995): American Public Health Association·Association of Schools of Public Health·Association of State and Territorial Health Officials·Environmental Council of the States·National Association of County and City Health Officials·National Association of State Alcohol and Drug Abuse Directors·National Association of State Mental Health Program Directors·Public Health Foundation·U.S. Public Health Service -- Agency for Health Care Policy and Research·Centers for Disease Control and Prevention·Food and Drug Administration·Health Resources and Services Administration·Indian Health Service·National Institutes of Health·Office of the Assistant Secretary for Health·Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration

The ten Essential Public Health Services are as follows:

1. Monitor health status to identify and solve community health problems.
2. Diagnose and investigate health problems and health hazards in the community.
3. Inform, educate, and empower people about health issues.
4. Mobilize community partnerships and action to identify and solve health problems.
5. Develop policies and plans that support individual and community health efforts.
6. Enforce laws and regulations that protect health and ensure safety.
7. Link people to needed personal health services and assure the provision of health care when otherwise unavailable.
8. Assure competent public and personal health care workforce.
9. Evaluate effectiveness, accessibility, and quality of personal and population-based health services.
10. Research for new insights and innovative solutions to health problems.

ADPH will provide the core functions and essential public health services. It will also support updates to the CHA, achievement of the ACHIP goals, and advancement of the Healthy People 2020 objectives. ADPH will focus time and resources to accomplish the following strategic priorities.

Key Focus Areas

1. INCREASE USE OF TECHNOLOGY AND DATA

1.1. Development of Electronic Health Record (EHR) (includes billing)

Strategic Goal: Implement an EHR which will include meaningful use/health information exchange (HIE), billing and management tools, and quality improvement (QI) tools.

Action Steps:

1.1.1. Develop and release a Request for Information (RFI) to potential vendors

1.1.2. Develop and release an Invitation to Bid (ITB) to potential vendors
1.1.3. Develop and release the Request for Proposals (RFP)
1.1.4. Receive bids and award contract
1.1.5. Set system functional specifications and submit to vendor
1.1.6. Define system configuration
1.1.7. Test the EHR
1.1.8. Pilot the EHR
1.1.9. Statewide training and system roll out

1.2. Enhanced data development and analysis capability focusing on outcomes

Strategic Goal: Develop the capacity/ability to perform statewide assessment/analysis of health outcomes.

Action Steps:
1.2.1. Explore data analytic enterprises in other states
1.2.2. Identify potential data analytic services and clients
1.2.3. Identify potential quality improvement needs
1.2.4. Access external statewide data and conduct analysis

1.3. Expand strategic performance management activities

Strategic Goal: Expand use of the Performance Dashboard to track performance measures and inform performance improvement initiatives.

Action Steps:
1.3.1. Develop guides, forms, and training modules for Performance Dashboard users
1.3.2. Increase use of the Performance Dashboard by bureaus/centers/divisions as a tool to record, monitor, and analyze performance measures toward strategic goals
1.3.3. Advance the culture of QI within ADPH
1.3.4. Use customer satisfaction data to inform opportunities for improvement

2. IMPROVE ACCESS TO CARE

2.1. Development of productivity standards (clinical and non-clinical)

Strategic Goal: Maximize the efficiency of employees by minimizing barriers to productivity to be competitive in the health care environment.

Action Steps:
2.1.1. Develop and distribute employee survey
2.1.2. Analyze survey results to determine any barriers to efficiency
2.1.3. Conduct statewide clinic efficiency study and identify best practices

2.1.4. Identify minimum standards of performance for individual programs
2.1.5. Determine corrective action plan

2.2. Program-by-program, region-by-region strategic assessment

Strategic Goal: Establish ADPH's niche by county.

Action Steps:
2.2.1. Conduct statewide focus groups to solicit staff input
2.2.2. Identify current services provided and services at risk
2.2.3. Identify competition/lack of providers
2.2.4. Identify existing partnerships/collaborations
2.2.5. Develop Public Health Area specific action plan for specific programs

2.3. Access to Care

ACHIP Priority Issue: Access to Health Care

ACHIP Goals:
2.3.1. Reduce transportation barriers
2.3.2. Increase access to ambulatory primary care

3. DEVELOP MARKETING, COMMUNICATION, AND BRANDING STRATEGIES

3.1. Marketing/communication/branding

Strategic Goal: Increase the public's awareness and understanding of ADPH and the services/products provided.

Action Steps:
3.1.1. Develop a survey to determine public perception and knowledge of ADPH
3.1.2. Determine the best rebranding strategy based upon survey results
3.1.3. Determine the services for which we need to increase public awareness

4. IMPROVE NUTRITION AND INCREASE PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

4.1. Improve nutrition and physical activity

ACHIP Priority Issue: Nutrition and Physical Activity

ACHIP Goals:
4.1.1. Increase physical activity
4.1.2. Improve access to healthy foods

5. STRENGTHEN MENTAL HEALTH AND SUBSTANCE ABUSE INFRASTRUCTURE AND INTERVENTIONS

5.1. Mental health and substance abuse

ACHIP Priority Issue: Mental Health and Substance Abuse

ACHIP Goals:

5.1.1. Strengthen infrastructure for mental health promotion and substance abuse prevention

5.1.2. Strengthen training and technical assistance of primary care providers and community leaders in behavioral health promotion and behavioral health disorder prevention

5.1.3. Reduce the prevalence of individuals with or at risk of substance abuse or mental illness

6. ADVANCE THE CULTURE AND COMPETENCIES OF ADPH'S WORKFORCE

6.1. Valued and Competent Public Health Workforce

Strategic Goal: Assess and improve workforce exposure to training and development opportunities

Action Steps:

6.1.1. Identify staff competencies and training needs against adopted public health core competencies

6.1.2. Develop a Workforce Development Plan to improve workforce culture and competencies

6.1.3. Promote and expand workforce development opportunities to address training gaps

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Suggested Citation:
Alabama Department of Public Health 2015-2016 Strategic Plan, Montgomery, AL, June 2015.

Online:
To view this document online, visit the Strategic Plan section of the ADPH accreditation website at www.adph.org/accreditation.

Acknowledgments:
This plan is the result of the dedicated effort of staff of the Alabama Department of Public Health including, but not limited to, the State Health Officer, Deputy Directors, Bureau Directors, Public Health Area and Local Health Department staff, Accreditation Leadership Team Leads for PHAB Domains 1 and 5 and their respective workgroups, and the Office of Performance Management. The contributions of representatives of the University of Alabama at Birmingham, School of Public Health and CHA and ACHIP partners and stakeholders were also invaluable.

Acknowledgement of funding source:
This project was supported by funds made available from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Office for State, Tribal, Local, and Territorial Support, under Grant Number 5U58CD001273-03 – Revised, and 5U58CD001273-04.

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The contents of this plan are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent the official position of or endorsement by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.