

Public Health Leadership Skills Enhanced as Employees Participate in Regional Training

Twenty-eight public health employees from a variety of disciplines, including three professionals from Alabama, are participating in an eight-month training experience with the Region IV Public Health Leadership Institute (PHLI). Alabama participants Ryan Easterling, Dr. Burnestine Taylor and Elisabeth Welty are in the 2019-2020 cohort of public health fellows.

The training is designed for emerging leaders who work in state, local or tribal public health departments/tribal health organizations in the eight states that comprise the Department of Health and Human Services Region IV. These states are Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina and Tennessee.

The goal of the PHLI is “to advance adaptive and strategic leadership skills to support multi-sector vision setting and leadership necessary to address the social, community-based and economic determinants of health.”

The institute provides participants the opportunity to apply leadership competencies in the context of public health. Participants engage in peer consulting with colleagues and identify personal leadership strengths. Following a virtual orientation by “Zoom” and an in-person retreat, virtual sessions will focus on leadership principles and practices, cultural competence, managing conflict, collaborative leadership and leading change.

Ryan Easterling, Director of Health Media and Communications, Bureau of Prevention, Promotion, and Support, as well as Dr. Taylor and Ms. Welty, have participated in orientation and the three-day PHLI retreat so far.

Easterling commented, “This experience was a great opportunity to pull together broad knowledge and experiences from various health departments. While we come from different backgrounds, it was invaluable in helping mesh our experiences and knowledge together.” He said he has heard PHLI compared favorably with the former TEAM Academy, a workforce development program tailor-made for ADPH which helped train numerous public health employees at the state and local levels a decade ago.

At the retreat, Easterling especially appreciated receiving an “Emergenetics Profile” that helps class

members understand the way they think and their behavioral traits to improve team performance. The group also did peer consulting with real-life scenarios concerning on the job leadership to appreciate others’ perspectives. The closing event featured an impressive address by District Health Director Dr. Elizabeth Ford. Dr. Ford has been director of the DeKalb County, Ga., Board of Health since February 2005 and is Interim District Health Director for Fulton County, Ga.

“The instructors are top notch,” Easterling added, “and I believe that this will give me skills and knowledge to grow in my career.”

Dr. Taylor, Medical Officer for Disease Control and Prevention, added, “The training gives participants the opportunity to participate in surveys and projects that help define our unique, individual, leadership styles and to recognize how our leadership can attribute to the needs of our organization. It has been interesting to meet and network with participants from other health departments and to realize that we share similar concerns and challenges. I look forward to the remainder of the program and the additional leadership insight this opportunity provides.”

Ms. Welty is an Epidemiological Analyst with the Jefferson County Department of Health. Ms. Welty stated “The PHLI retreat was a meaningful way to meet other public health leaders from Alabama and across the region. The opportunity to collaborate and learn alongside various public health leaders is something that will impact myself, the other participants and each of our organizations in a positive way.”

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Among those participating at the PHLI retreat from Alabama were (left to right) Ryan Easterling, Dr. Burnestine Taylor and Elisabeth Welty.

Department Holds PHAB Reaccreditation Training

When the Alabama Department of Public Health was awarded national accreditation from the Public Health Accreditation Board (PHAB) in June 2017, employees breathed a collective sigh of relief after undergoing a rigorous assessment process to ensure the department met or exceeded a set of quality standards and measures. Initial accreditation involved planning meetings, submitting and reviewing documentation and a site visit. Achieving accreditation demonstrates increased accountability and credibility to the public, funders, elected officials and our partner organizations.

PHAB reaccreditation occurs every five years, and the Office of Performance Management in the Office of Management Support continues working to maintain our status. Accreditation Leadership Team members and Document Review Panel members from the department and other states participated in an intense training for PHAB-accredited health departments November 20-21 in Montgomery. The training titled “Reaccreditation Documentation: Not the Same Old Stuff” summarized the reaccreditation process steps and how documentation fits into the process.

While initial accreditation focused on the department’s capacity to provide the 10 essential public health services, reaccreditation focuses on the department’s standard processes and efforts to continue improving operations.

Participants came from Arkansas, Mississippi and five county health departments in Georgia to attend the on-site training at the RSA Tower in Montgomery. David Stone and April Harris from PHAB conducted the training.

About the Public Health Accreditation Board

The Public Health Accreditation Board (PHAB), established in 2007, was created to serve as the national public health accrediting body, and is jointly funded by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation. The development of national public health accreditation has involved, and is supported by, public health leaders and practitioners from the national, Tribal, state, and local levels. Learn more about PHAB by visiting www.phaboard.org.



Public health employees from Alabama and other states attended the on-site training.

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This training is a partnership between the Region IV Public Health Training Center, headquartered at the Rollins School of Public Health, Emory University, and the J.W. Fanning Institute for Leadership Development at the University of Georgia.

For more information about the Region IV Public Health Training Center, go to <http://www.r4phtc.org/leadership-and-management-resources/>.



PHLI Retreat, October 24, 2019, Decatur, Ga.