

System (Infrastructure) Priority: Sufficient, Competent Workforce

The following is an excerpt taken from the publication Healthiest Wisconsin 2010 Implementation Plan.

The full publication can be found at the **Wisconsin Department of Health and Family Services** website <http://dhfs.wisconsin.gov/statehealthplan/Implementation/pdf-files/summary.pdf>

Background

Many system partners (e.g., institutions of higher education, technical colleges, Area Health Education Centers, local health departments) have key roles in the development of the public health workforce. There must be a sufficient number of competent workers in Wisconsin's communities to carry out the core public health functions and essential public health services. Competent leaders, policy developers, planners, epidemiologists, philanthropists, evaluators, laboratory staff, environmental specialists, health care providers, and others must be in place to protect the health of the public. This workforce must be culturally and linguistically competent to understand the needs and deliver services to diverse populations in all Wisconsin communities.

Long-term (2010) Outcome Objectives

- 1. Competency** By 2010, Wisconsin's public health system will assure a competent public health workforce through a collaborative information and education network for workforce preparation, support of current practice, and continuing education.
- 2. Diversity** By 2010, the composition of Wisconsin's public health system workforce, at all levels, will approach the demographic profile of the community.
- 3. Enumeration** By 2010, Wisconsin will have a monitoring system in place with the capacity to describe the current and future composition, distribution, and trends of Wisconsin's public health system workforce.

Key Interventions and Strategies

Objective 1: Competency

- Identify core competencies for the governmental public health workforce by specific discipline (e.g., medicine, nursing, health education, nutrition, environmental health specialists).
- Promote the development of joint faculty appointments in state and local health departments.

- Ensure that the state and local health department workforce has position descriptions that reflect specific competencies in the essential public health services.
- Foster interventions using a “champion” strategy to promote policy and system changes.
- Establish an education and practice forum composed of representatives from Wisconsin’s institutions of higher education, technical colleges, and the Division of Public Health, among others.
- Engage the workforce in the modernization of Wisconsin’s public health statutes.
- Design and implement orientation programs for new state and local health department staff that focus on the essential public health services and are computer-based. The Division of Public Health will study the possibility of expanding the orientation program to include new audiences from state and local public health systems.
- Utilize the Health Alert Network to share a Web-based catalog of education programs and activities that support continuing education of the public health system workforce.
- Institute ongoing review of core competencies in health promotion and disease prevention in institutions of higher education and technical college programs that educate and/or train the public health workforce.
- Offer a continuing education course series that will address public health core competencies.
- Link all training and education sponsored and/or provided by the Division of Public Health to professional competencies and the twelve essential public health services.
- Link local health departments' continuing education budgets to professional competencies or the essential public health services provided by the health department.
- Develop a system to communicate evidence-based practice to the public health system workforce.
- Collaborate in the development of a management and leadership development program for the public health system workforce.
- Develop a system to identify and monitor the current and emerging continuing education needs of the public health system workforce.

Objective 2: Diversity

- Create a media campaign to positively influence attitudes and perceptions about public health careers among school-age and college-age students.
- Develop mentoring relationships between public health partners and children/youth groups from communities with minority populations.
- Use career development offices as vehicles to communicate and disseminate information about public health careers – special targets include primary, secondary, and post-secondary students.

- Promote models that promote academic success among minority students.
- Promote summer internship programs for minority students interested in or enrolled in public health careers.
- Create a media campaign to increase knowledge of the benefits of having a diverse public health workforce.
- Engage public health partners to champion successful models in recruitment of minority public health workers.
- Institute policies within public health partner agencies and organizations that promote recruitment of staff who reflect the demographic profile of the community.
- Create a media campaign on the benefits of investing in retention strategies to promote a diverse public health workforce.
- Engage public health partners to champion successful models of advancement and career change opportunities to promote diversity of the public health workforce.
- Public health partners will institute policies that incorporate state and national retention strategies that promote a diverse public health workforce.

Objective 3: Enumeration

- Establish an enumeration task force to provide oversight into the development and implementation of Wisconsin's public health workforce enumerating system.
- Identify public health workforce categories and minimum data elements for enumerating the public health system workforce.
- Link the enumeration system with the efforts of Wisconsin's Integrated Public Health Data System and national enumeration efforts.
- Conduct a media campaign among public health system workforce partners and policymakers on the benefits of enumerating the public health workforce.
- Begin by biennially enumerating Wisconsin's governmental public health workforce, with the intention of expanding the biennial enumeration to the entire public health workforce in the state.
- Link enumeration information and data to continuing education, recruitment, and retention planning.
- Develop a system to link public health workforce information and data to state and local community health priorities and needs.