

## The Ten Essential Public Health Services and Where They Fit into a DEHS Area Consult

### Background

The 1988 IOM Report, "The Future of Public Health", recommended three core functions of a public health agency: Assessment, Policy Development, and Assurance, which the Indian Health Service Environmental Health Services program adopted as the foundation of their program. As a result of the IOM Report, a partnership of service agencies, academic institutions, businesses, voluntary and advocacy organizations (Public Health Functions Steering Committee, July 1995) developed a set of essential public health services that all public health agencies should be providing. These ten essential services support the public health model and are a succinct way of articulating what IHS is already striving to do. It just focuses us and brings us together with the CDC, state, county, and local health departments.

With the emphasis on enhancing environmental health services throughout the United States right now, CDC has awarded cooperative agreements to state and local health departments to try to build capacity. These agreements were available to tribes, but in 2001, only a couple tribes even applied for them. None were awarded to tribes. IHS should be the leader in building tribal capacity in environmental health, however many of us have never even heard of the ten essential public health services. That brings us to our strategic goals developed in 1998.

The IHS Division of Environmental Health Services (DEHS) held a strategic planning session with internal and external stakeholders that developed a mission for the division:

"Through shared decision making, enhance the health and quality of life of all American Indians and Alaska Natives to the highest possible level by eliminating environmentally related disease and injury through sound public health measures."

In support of that mission, DEHS developed nine goals which are paraphrased as follows:

- 1) Review internal management structures of the program,
- 2) Establish a formal process to facilitate collaboration among tribes and federal programs,
- 3) Promote career growth and professional development of staff,
- 4) Establish a system to market career opportunities among AI/AN youth,
- 5) Conduct environmental health needs assessments in every AI/AN community,
- 6) Develop a comprehensive data system to promote surveillance, analysis and control of community environmental health conditions,

- 7) Secure congressional funding to support the unmet environmental health need in AI/AN communities,
- 8) Develop and implement a marketing plan to share successes and generate a passion for environmental health,
- 9) Increase environmental health services program visibility at the national, area and local levels.

Since our strategic plan was developed, our program has addressed several of these goals, but has failed to expend a great deal of energy on others. We need to refocus our efforts on attaining our goals and at the same time adopt the ten essential services in each organizational unit of the EHS program, including tribal EH programs.

### Issue

Using the ten essential services as a framework, the DEHS Program will use the Area Consults to introduce and discuss the ten essential services with staff. In order to familiarize the consult team with how you address these services, I am asking you to prepare 10 – 15 minute presentations on your programs, using the guidance provided by the Environmental Health Support Center (Consultation Objectives). You should become familiar with the ten essential public health services and the consultation objectives before our meetings. I would like to know how you are currently providing these services in the lowest organizational unit (the Service Unit). If the District will be speaking for a Service Unit, I would expect those presentations to run longer than 10 – 15 minutes. Tribal programs participating in the consult process will be asked to address the consult objectives in their presentations.

### 10 Essential Public Health Services

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