**Abstract**

Defining the critical services offered by Texas’ public health system provides a basis for equal access to quality public health services throughout Texas. This paper provides a framework for standardization of core public health services through identification of four main public health system functions and five associate core public health activities used to identify tailored core public health service provision tailored to jurisdictional need. Through acceptance of this framework by public health professionals and organizations, the Texas public health system can ensure consistent quality statewide public health services appropriate to individual community needs.

**Problem Statement**

This paper addresses the challenge of identifying core public health system services that are feasible, suitable and acceptable by the Texas public health system for implementation across the state.

**Background**

The Public Health Funding and Policy Committee (PHFPC) is charged with identification of core public health services as part of Senate Bill 969 of the 8xth Legislature. PHFPC has approached this charge in different ways that have sought to characterize how the Texas Public Health System – a system based on Home Rule, local ordnance and code, state, and regional organization – might develop a standardized set of agreed upon core services. To date, proposed options have not satisfied PHFPC members warranting a different method for identifying these services.

The PHFPC Chair, recognizing that core service definition must meet the needs of individual jurisdictional needs in order to be acceptable to all parties, proposed a different approach to unifying the manner in which core services are defined. This approach focused on first identifying the fundamental functions of the Texas Public Health System with subsequent identification of categories of services for each of these functions. For these functions, individual jurisdictions can identify specific services that support the common strategic functions of the system. This strategic approach to individual services recognizes the needs of communities, the role of public health in population health, and the ability and requirement of different public health entities to serve their specific constituent needs.

**Solution**

In identifying a Framework for Core Public Health System Services based on discussions within the public health community, evidence-based knowledge and the structure of the Texas public health environment this paper proposes the following 10 core services with their associated categories listed under them:

Chronic Disease Prevention and Control

Nutrition

Physical Activity

Tobacco

Chronic Disease Detection and Management

(Heart Disease, Cancer, Stroke, Diabetes)

Communicable Disease Prevention and Control

HIV/STD/Viral Hepatitis

TB

Emerging Infectious Disease/HCID

Immunizations

Food Borne

Zoonotic Diseases (vector)

Healthcare Acquired Infections

Environmental/Regulatory Services

Food Safety

Water Safety

Air Safety

Environmental Health Hazards

Rodent and Vector Control

Maternal/Child Health

Prenatal Care

Family Planning

Health Screening and Child Development

Infant Mortality

Breastfeeding/Nutrition

Injury Prevention and Control

Intentional

Unintentional

Infrastructure/Foundational Capabilities

Workforce Development

Technology

Business Efficiencies

Fund Development

Accreditation

Operations/Finance

Advocacy

Laboratory

Environmental

Human

Zoonotic/Vector

Access and Linkage to Care

Behavioral Health & Substance Abuse

Surveillance /Epidemiology

Disease/Condition Reporting and Surveillance

Data Collection and Reporting

Epi Investigation and Study

Syndromic Surveillance

Data Sharing and Exchange

Preparedness, Response and Recovery

Community Preparedness/Mitigation

Community Response

Community Recovery

Resilience

These services and associated categories serve as the basis for individual communities defining community responsive core services based on specific community needs and the feasibility, suitability and acceptable of delivering specific programs. These individually community-based core services are unified by heredity to the proposed statewide strategic functions and core activities (Figure 2).

How a jurisdiction addresses each category is based on the individual jurisdiction’s needs, resources, policies and integration with other health entities. The jurisdiction is responsible for determination of whether a public health function is addressed by a stand-alone health department, incorporated into a different agency/organization or reliant on an external entity through formal agreement.

This approach lays the basis for standardized core public health service delivery across the state and recognizes that these services are delivered based on local community demographics and needs.

This framework for the Texas public health system is:

* Supportive of a System Approach
* Supportive of Accreditation
* Supportive of Individual CHIP studies
* Supportive of One Health

**Conclusion**

Texas is a diverse state that requires tailored services based on specific community needs. This applies to the delivery of public health services in which a solid foundation of strategic public health functions lays the basis for community-based core health services.