

PURPOSE

In Phase Three of the Mobilizing for Action Through Planning and Partnerships, or MAPP, process, four different assessments are conducted to paint a comprehensive picture of health in the community.

The Local Public Health System Assessment (LPHSA) evaluates the activities, competencies, and capacities of the local public health system, broadly defined. It answers questions like:

- How are the 10 Essential Public Health Services being provided to our community?
- What weaknesses must be improved and what strengths can be leveraged?
- What opportunities are there to improve local public health system performance, with an eye towards advancing health equity?



PROCESS

The IPLAN core team used the framework of the [10 Essential Public Health Services \(EPHS\)](#) to structure its LPHSA and assess how the local public health system broadly defined – including but not limited to the Oak Park Health Department – protects and promotes the health of all people in all communities. The team used the updated 2020 version of the framework which puts equity at the center of all 10 EPHS.



A facilitated in-person meeting was held with IPLAN core team members and other partners on June 2, 2022 in which participants worked in small groups to discuss and rate two of the EPHS and all sub-elements within that service. In addition, a self-evaluation version of the assessment was conducted among all health department staff where all 10 EPHS were rated so as to capture both internal and external perspectives.

Both at the meeting and in the self-assessment, each individual rated EPHS sub-element on a scale from 1 to 5, where 1 meant the local public health system had no activity in that area, and 5 meant it had an optimal level of activity in that area. The average scores were then compiled and opportunities for improvement discussed based on the results.

RESULTS

After averaging the ratings of each sub-element of EPHS among those who discussed and voted, the EPHS where the local public health system was seen as performing best was investigating, diagnosing, and addressing health hazards and root causes. Other particularly strong areas included:

- Improving and innovating through evaluation, research, and quality improvement
- Creating, championing, and implementing policies, plans, and laws.
- Communicating effectively to inform and educate

The essential public health service that was seen as the weakest – and the only one that averaged below a “moderate” level of activity - was utilizing legal and regulatory actions, reflecting the fact that some of the regulatory activities discussed in this element, such as licensing nursing homes and reviewing drug or biologic applications, occur at the county, state, or national level and not locally.



1 = No Activity

2 = Minimal

3 = Moderate

4 = Significant

5 = Optimal

From discussions around all 10 EPHS, some opportunities for systems improvement emerged:

Local Public Health System Strengths/Successes to Build Upon

- Many community partners, new relationships formed during COVID; many community resources
- Very successful at COVID outbreak investigation, vaccination efforts, policy work
- Opportunity to build on awareness of public health

Local Public Health System Weakness/Challenges to Overcome

- Staff retention, recruitment, diversity
- Negative effects of staff turnover on relationship-building
- Local health department has more limited role/control in some areas; overlapping jurisdictions with state, county, and other agencies