



Competency

Benefits Health

Quality

Diversity

Care

# Public Health Nursing Competencies

Christine Schmidt, R.N., M.S.

Public Health Nurse Supervisor

Jefferson County Department of Health and Environment

Golden, Colorado

Public Health Nursing Competencies represent a set of **skills**, **knowledge** and **attitudes** necessary for the broad practice of public health.



# The 8 domains:

1. Analytic Assessment Skills
2. Policy Development/Program Planning
3. Communication Skills
4. Cultural Competency Skills
5. Community Dimensions of Practice Skills
6. Basic Public Health Sciences Skills
7. Financial Planning and Management Skills
8. Leadership and Systems Thinking Skills



For each domain there are a list of actions that describe the attributes and skills needed to achieve competency.

### Domain # 1: Analytic Assessment Skills

1. Defines a problem
2. Determines appropriate uses and limitations of both quantitative and qualitative data.
3. Selects and defines variables relevant to defined public health problems.



Mastery of each level progresses from

*awareness . . .*

to *knowledge . . .*

to *proficiency. . .*

which is on a continuum.



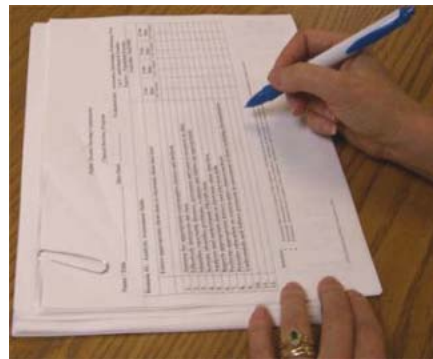
# Application to Practice

- Orientation tool selected for model
- Identified for Jefferson County Management Excellence Program Project



# Pilot Process

1. Existing orientation tools reviewed for content
2. Ideas shared from other county competency project
3. Language adapted for PHN competencies



# Pilot Process (continued)

4. Three month initial trial with new and experienced PHNs
5. Used quarterly evaluation meeting time
6. Supervisor group met monthly to review findings and make revisions
7. Pilot progressed for one year with new PHNs





# Implementing Tool for JCDHE Program Areas

- Communicable Disease Control (CDC)  
*Surveillance, Immunizations, Travel Clinic, Resource PHN*
- Maternal Child Health (MCH)  
*Prenatal Plus, Partners for Healthy Families, Health Care Program for Children with Special Needs*
- Clinic Services  
*Family Planning, STD, HIV, Adult Health, Cancer Control*



# JCDHE PHN Competency Orientation Tool



Jefferson County Department of Health and Environment – Colorado

## Public Health Nursing Competencies

### CDC PHN Program

Name / Title Polly Proficient, PHN I Hire Date: 7/7/07

Evaluation key: Awareness, Knowledge, Proficiency, N/A  
I & F – Individual & Families  
Pop/Sys – Population/Systems

Domain #1: Analytic Assessment Skills		Generalist / Staff PHN			
		3 mo Date	6 mo Date	9 mo Date	12 mo Date
a.	Identifies reportable disease characteristics including confirmation of diagnosis, transmission modes and methods of control for:	I & F / Pop/Sys	I & F / Pop/Sys	I & F / Pop/Sys	I & F / Pop/Sys
i.	• Vaccine-preventable diseases, e.g. pertussis, influenza				
ii.	• Foodborne and Enteric Diseases, e.g. e. coli 0157, salmonellosis				
iii.	• Zoonotic Diseases, e.g. West Nile Virus, hantavirus, tularemia				
iv.	• Meningitis/Encephalitis and Invasive Disease				
v.	• Other Important Reportable Diseases including active and chronic Hepatitis C, malaria, tuberculosis				
vi.	• Sexually Transmitted Diseases, e.g. AIDS and HIV, gonorrhea				
b.	Screens for recommended schedule of pediatric immunizations				
c.	Screens for recommended schedule of adult immunizations				
d.	Plans childhood immunization catch-up schedule				
e.	Screens for contraindications and precautions to vaccination				
f.	Uses appropriate injection techniques – uses “Five Rights”				
g.	Assesses for and uses appropriate universal precautions				
h.	Performs verbal nursing assessment of client’s condition and needs and refers appropriately				

**Definitions:**

- Awareness: Basic level of mastery of the competency. Individuals may be able to identify the concept or skill but have limited ability to apply it.
- Knowledge: Intermediate level of mastery of the competency. Individuals are able to apply and describe the skill.
- Proficiency: Advanced level of mastery of the competency. Individuals are able to synthesize, critique or teach the skill.



# Domain #1:

## Analytic Assessment Skills

### CDC

- a. Identifies reportable disease characteristics including confirmation of diagnosis, transmission modes and methods of control.
- b. Screens for recommended schedule of pediatric immunizations

### MCH

- a. Obtains infant weight, length, head circumference (HC)/Growth & Development (G&D)
- b. Performs newborn, postpartum, Antepartum, Prenatal+, Expedited Permanency Planning, Breastfeeding, Partners For Healthy Families program assessments

### Clinic

- a. Assesses for appropriate contraceptive choices and methods
- b. Effectively interprets lab data



## Domain #8:

# Leadership and Systems Thinking Skills

### CDC

- a. Role models ethical and values standards within the organization
- b. Participates in strategic planning to improve services

### MCH

- a. Participates in leadership activities, e.g. report, case conference, team minutes, and agenda
- b. Precepts nursing students and/or takes students on home visits

### Clinic

- a. Participates in leadership activities, e.g. report, case conference, team minutes, and agenda
- b. Precepts and mentors students in providing clinics and services



# Empirical Findings and Recommendations

*What worked best . . . Most Effective Use of Tool*

- Self-scoring for introspection
- Review during quarterly evaluation meetings
- Goal setting guide
- Quad Council document defines ratings, clarifies terminology



# Comments from Pilot

PHN Staff:

*“Tool requires critical thinking, introspection, and reprioritization.”*

*“This is a road map for where I want my career to go.”*

*“This is dynamic and flexible and there is always room for improvement.”*

*“This is a conversation between you and your supervisor.”*

Supervisory Staff:

*“Tool demonstrates unique level of critical thinking, skill and impact that PHN practice requires.”*



# Next Steps

- Encourage use of model for public health professionals to evaluate their level of competency and identify/take opportunities for growth
- Apply to job descriptions, interview questions, and evaluation materials
- Share work and experiences with PHN groups in other counties and states
  - Pilot of PHN Competencies Immunization template for Colorado



# Colorado State Immunization Template (Pilot)

## Public Health Nursing Competencies Immunization PHN Program – pilot

Name / Title \_\_\_\_\_ Hire Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Evaluation key\*: Awareness, Knowledge, Proficiency, N/A  
 I & F – Individual & Families  
 Pop/Sys – Population/Systems

Domain #2: Policy Development / Program Planning Skills		Generalist / Staff PHN							
		3 mo Date		6 mo Date		9 mo Date		12 mo Date	
		I & F / Pop/Sy	I & F / Pop/Sy	I & F / Pop/Sy	I & F / Pop/Sy	I & F / Pop/Sy	I & F / Pop/Sy	I & F / Pop/Sy	I & F / Pop/Sy
1.	Understands and applies Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment current recommendations and guidelines <a href="http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/rr5515a1.htm">http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/rr5515a1.htm</a>								
2.	Understands and applies current recommendations i.e. Advisory Committee for Immunization Practices <a href="http://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/pubs/pinkbook/pink-chapters.htm">http://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/pubs/pinkbook/pink-chapters.htm</a> (pink book), CDC <a href="http://wwwn.cdc.gov/travel/ybToc.aspx">http://wwwn.cdc.gov/travel/ybToc.aspx</a> (yellow book). <b>Note: you will need to cut and paste the URL then select the appropriate chapter.</b>								
3.	Understands and applies state and federal program regulations and recommendations e.g. Vaccines Children (VFC) <a href="http://www.cdphe.state.co.us/dc/immunization/Forms/rules.pdf">http://www.cdphe.state.co.us/dc/immunization/Forms/rules.pdf</a>								
4.	Understands and applies Colorado school immunization laws <a href="http://www.cdphe.state.co.us/dc/immunization/Forms/rules.pdf">http://www.cdphe.state.co.us/dc/immunization/Forms/rules.pdf</a>								
5.	Understands and applies information from the latest CDPHE immunization manual <a href="http://www.cdphe.state.co.us/dc/Immunization/index.html">http://www.cdphe.state.co.us/dc/Immunization/index.html</a>								
6.	Contributes information/planning to the program annual reports								
7.	Successfully accesses and uses on-line immunization resources/ information including CIIS <a href="http://www.immunize.org">http://www.immunize.org</a> and <a href="http://cor.uchsc.edu/ciis">http://cor.uchsc.edu/ciis</a>								
8.	Contributes to quality assurance and improvement activities <a href="http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/mm5240a8.htm">http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/mm5240a8.htm</a>								
9.	Understands agency IZ protocols								
10.	Understands the role of the following and how they are used for program planning: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>□ HP 2010 goals and objectives - <a href="http://www.healthypeople.gov/">http://www.healthypeople.gov/</a></li> <li>□ National Immunization Survey - <a href="http://www.cdc.gov/nis/">http://www.cdc.gov/nis/</a></li> <li>□ Local and regional “up-to-date” rates</li> <li>□ State data - <a href="http://www.cdphe.state.co.us/ps/mch/mchdatasets.html">http://www.cdphe.state.co.us/ps/mch/mchdatasets.html</a></li> </ul>								



# Suggested Reading:

- Council of Linkages Core Competencies for Public Health Professionals <http://www.phf.org/competencies.htm>
- Quad Council PHN Competencies [http://www.astdn.org/publication\\_quad\\_council\\_phn\\_competencies.htm](http://www.astdn.org/publication_quad_council_phn_competencies.htm)
- Public Health Nursing, Volume 23, Number 2 (March/April 2006)  
\*Special issue on PHN competencies\*

To locate JCDHE orientation tools go to:

- JCDHE website <http://health.jeffco.us>  
On the *Community Health Service Page*, under *Quick Links*
- NACCHO Toolbox [www.naccho.org/toolbox](http://www.naccho.org/toolbox)  
Type *PUBLIC HEALTH NURSING* in search box



# Presented by...

Christine Schmidt  
Public Health Nurse Supervisor  
JCDHE  
303-239-7136  
[cschmidt@jeffco.us](mailto:cschmidt@jeffco.us)

