

# Visioning the Los Angeles County Public Health Department: *Strategic Planning in the Era of Health Reform*

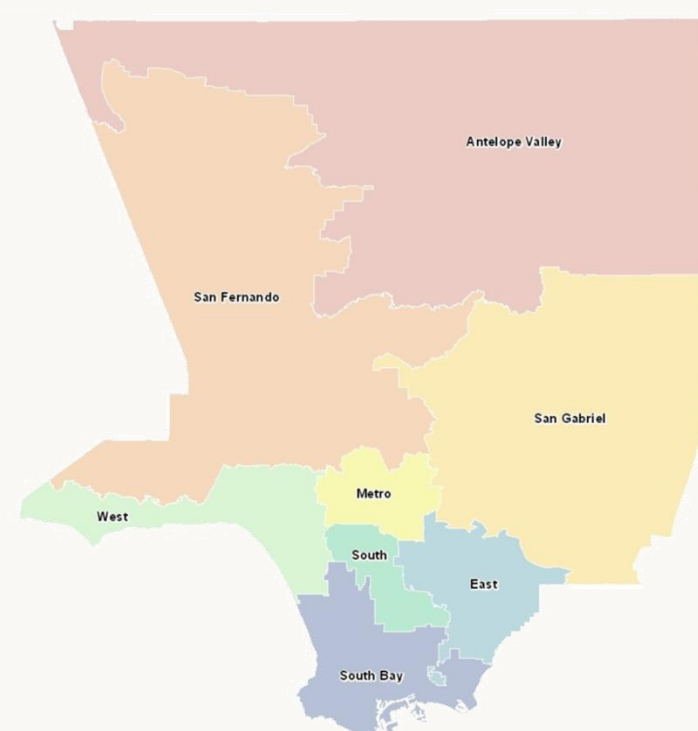
Joshua M. Bobrowsky, JD, MPH ▪ Wendy K. Schiffer, MSPH ▪ Virginia Huang Richman, PhD, MPH ▪ Susan H. Blackwell, MA ▪ Kim Harrison Eowan, MPH, MCHES



## Background & Context

Los Angeles County Department of Public Health (LAC-DPH) facts:

- 14 public health centers
- 8 Service Planning Areas
- \$750 million+ budget
- 4,000 staff in 70+ worksites
- 9.9 million residents served

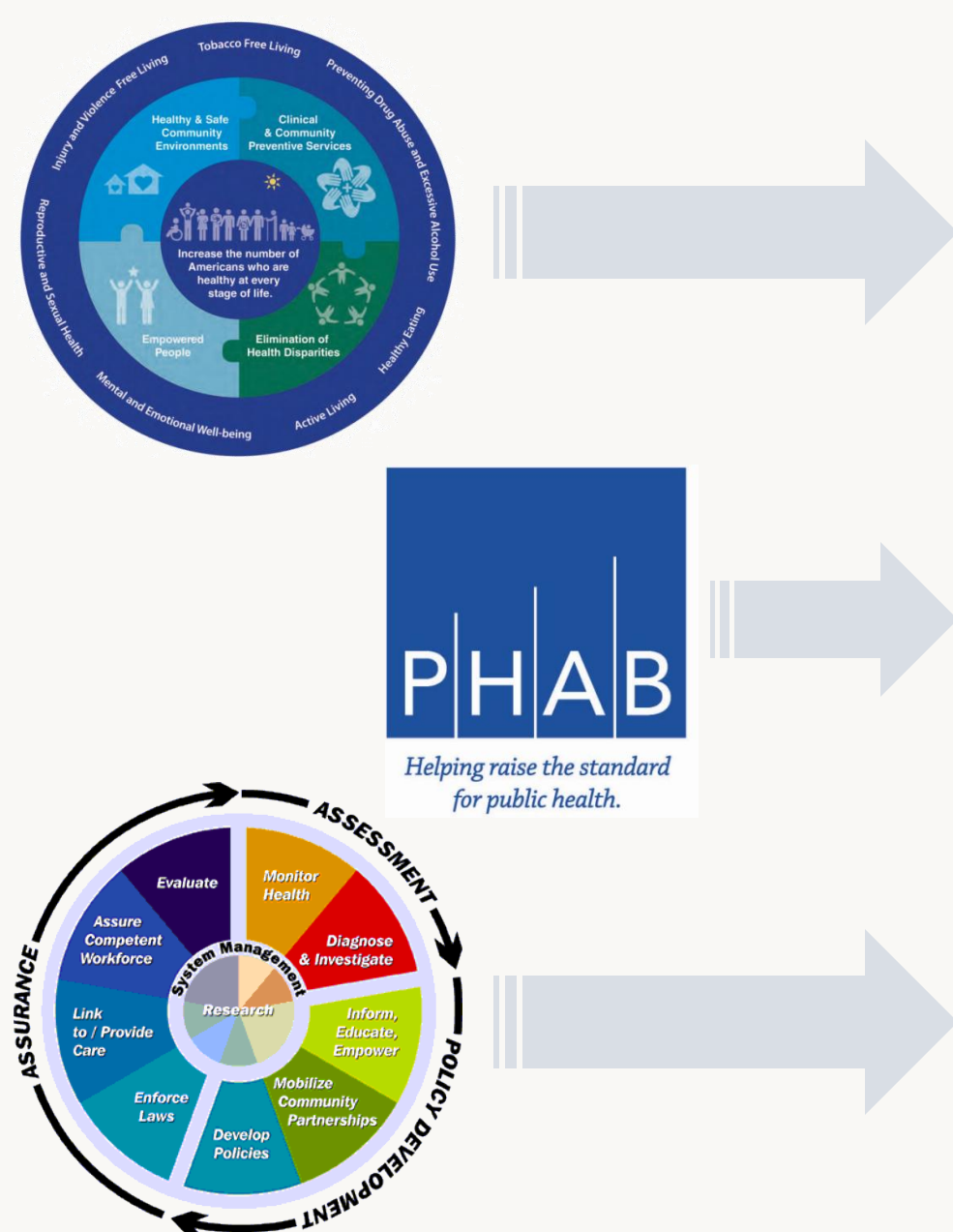


**Vision:** Healthy People in Healthy Communities

**Mission:** To protect health, prevent disease and injury, and promote health and well-being for everyone in Los Angeles County

LAC-DPH is undergoing a strategic planning process to define its priorities for the next five years. The end goal is a functional internal strategic plan that will ensure better alignment of the department's core functions within this changing landscape and articulate key priorities for the upcoming five years.

The strategic planning process is being conducted within the framework of broader community health planning, using Public Health Accreditation Board requirements as a guiding structure and considering the National Prevention Strategy and the Essential Public Health Services.

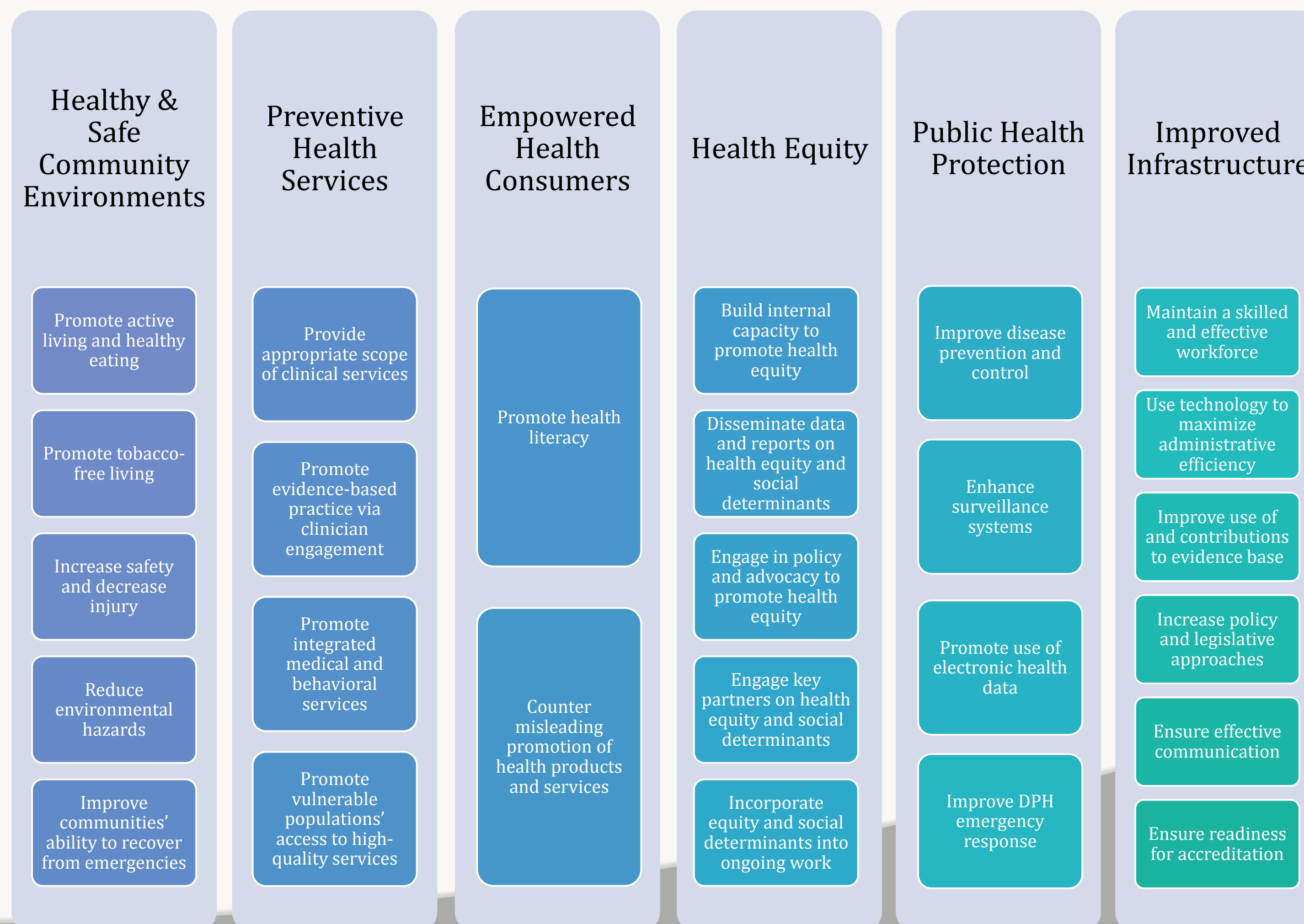


## Methods

The LAC-DPH Office of Planning, Evaluation, and Development took the following steps to inform the strategic planning process:



Strategic areas for organizational change were drafted based on above noted inputs and leadership from the Internal Advisory Group and Executive Working Group, which consist of LAC-DPH program and division directors. Departmental subject area experts then participated in priority area workgroups to refine goals and develop objectives and activities. Finalized objectives reflect the highest-priority issues that each program needs to address in the coming years and offer opportunities for measurement and accountability.



## Results & Lessons Learned

There is the need to balance the desire to move toward strategic new directions and the need to maintain services that the department is mandated to provide. Planners encouraged staff and stakeholders to envision the new strategic plan as a largely internal document that provides a "short list" of forward-thinking priorities, not as a list of daily or mandated activities.

A notable challenge while developing a strategic plan in a large, urban public health department is the increasing demand for policy-level/social determinants work, while categorical funding and demand for clinical public health services diminish. This led to discussions and executive decisions regarding shifted resources and staff. Also, as this process began while health reform was still uncertain, planning staff considered contingency plans for various programs and activities.

## Conclusions & Next Steps

Final steps include conducting webinars for LAC-DPH staff and external stakeholders to solicit input on the plan. In addition, performance measures will be developed for all activities and a dashboard created that will allow easy assessment of progress toward meeting goals. Finally, a written strategic plan will be completed and distributed in early 2013.

The strategic planning process engaged DPH staff and stakeholders to identify forward thinking strategic priorities, goals and objectives. These will carry out the Department's vision for the next five years as health reform develops, and produce measurable improvements in the health of all Los Angeles County residents.

## Contact

Susan Blackwell, MA  
213-250-8556 ▪ sblackwell@ph.lacounty.gov