



FAQs about PHACs

What is the Public Health Advisory Council (PHAC)? The Public Health Advisory Council (PHAC) is an important aspect of a comprehensive statewide initiative to improve coordination, capacity, and effectiveness of the public health system in New Hampshire. This initiative builds on prior work focused on building local public health infrastructure and is responsive to input from many stakeholders calling for greater integration and regionalization of community and public health services.

What is the Regional Public Health Network (RPHN)? The State of New Hampshire has established 13 Regional Public Health Networks (RPHNs), each comprised of a broad partnership of organizations, to coordinate the development and implementation of a range of community and public health improvement activities. Included among these activities are planning, training, and response for public health emergencies, implementation of the regional strategic plan for substance misuse prevention, and related health promotion and disease prevention activities.

What is the role of the PHAC? The role of the PHAC is to advise the RPHN by identifying regional public health priorities based on assessments of community health; guiding the implementation of programs, practices and policies that are evidence-based to meet improved health outcomes; and advancing the coordination of services among partners.

What can a PHAC member contribute? Advisory councils are often made up of community leaders, key stakeholders, concerned citizens, and/or experts who provide guidance on a goal-oriented process. Neither the council nor its members are obligated contractually to an effort, but serve in a voluntary capacity for the benefit of, in this case, the region and its health outcomes. Advisory Councils often serve as a community sounding board and think tank, both listening to progress, challenges, and successes as well as providing input, ideas, counsel, and perspective. Their individual and collective knowledge and expertise can help the network trouble-shoot challenges, champion priorities, share and honor successes, monitor outcomes, secure resources, improve coordination, assure quality, and bring visibility to the RPHN and its priorities.

Who is the ideal representative from our municipality, SAU, business or organization to represent us on the PHAC? The ideal PHAC member will be a decision-maker from your organization. We are looking for community leaders who can represent their community or sector concerning public health needs, priorities and solutions.

What is the time commitment involved in being a PHAC Member? According to the Principles of Organization, the PHAC will be required to meet annually to elect Executive Committee members and officers and vote on any proposed changes to the Principles of Organization or other matters submitted by the Executive Committee. The PHAC will likely meet two or three additional times throughout the year, as requested by the Executive Committee, to fulfill its required purpose and functions. Terms of membership are for two years.



Who does the PHAC advise? The PHAC advises the RPHN, its members, and constituents.

Who does the PHAC represent? The PHAC represents the communities of a defined region, its various populations, cultures, and sectors, including key organizations involved in community and public health activities, including schools, municipalities, health care organizations, businesses and social service agencies.

What are other ways for my organization to be involved? If you are interested in a leadership role on the PHAC, please consider becoming an Executive Committee member. The Executive Committee acts on behalf of the full PHAC and meets on a monthly basis. In addition, there are many other opportunities for your active involvement on a subcommittee or workgroup of the Capital Area Public Health Network. Current workgroups address the following issues: emergency preparedness and response, substance misuse prevention, and suicide prevention.

What work has been accomplished to date in establishing the PHAC in the Capital Area? In 2013, the NH DHHS combined the contracts for the Regional Prevention Networks and the Regional Public Health Networks. The scope of work for the new, combined contracts includes substance misuse prevention, public health preparedness and response, school-based influenza vaccination services, and the formation of a Public Health Advisory Council (PHAC).

In August of 2013, Granite United Way hosted a kickoff to begin its efforts to establish a PHAC in the Capital Area. Participants included over 70 individuals from a wide variety of community sectors, including emergency management, prevention, education, business, government, law enforcement, and health. Nominations for Steering Committee members were accepted immediately following the kickoff.

Over the past nine months, the Steering Committee has made significant progress in creating an organizational framework for the PHAC and has evolved into an active Executive Committee, meeting on a monthly basis. Significant accomplishments of this group include developing formal principles of organization, an organizational chart, membership structure and guidelines. Discussions have begun concerning community health assessments and the process for developing priorities and plans for improvement.

What are the PHAC's on-going responsibilities? The PHAC will advise public health system partners engaged in the following activities, at a minimum, and explore other potential activities to meet the needs of our region:

- Work with state-contracted agencies to establish annual priorities for improving capacity to address Emergency Preparedness, Substance Misuse Prevention and related health promotion, and disease prevention activities.



CAPITAL AREA Public Health Network

an initiative of Granite United Way

- Align with other regional entities addressing public health issues to assure that services are based on health assessments, are evidence-based, and are coordinated among partners.
- Collaborate with partners to collect, analyze, and disseminate health-related data and information.
- Identify gaps in public health capacity and services and develop strategic responses.
- Communicate with county and municipal leaders to promote awareness of RPHN and encourage their participation.

PHACs may consider other activities that meet their own internal or external goals, such as strengthening cohesion, building common knowledge, or serving as agents of change. Below are just a few activities the PHAC may consider over time:

- Inviting presentations to the PHAC by community and statewide organizations about emerging health concerns, special population needs and services, cultural considerations, sector-based public health initiatives, and other topics of interest to the region.
- Advising or participating in community health assessments and community benefit planning for community and public health improvement.
- Developing key messages for PHAC members that help define and articulate the PHAC's goals, and encourage public engagement in public health.
- Developing a speaker's bureau of PHAC members who can serve as spokespersons for the region's public health efforts.
- Responding to partnership and resource development opportunities, such as collaborative proposals to public health funders or business sponsorships.
- Engaging local and county government to support policies that support improved public health.
- Inviting public comment on key milestones or strategy changes.

Who can I contact with additional questions or concerns?

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