

# **PUBLIC HEALTH ASSOCIATION OF NEBRASKA**

ADVOCATES FOR A  
HEALTHY NEBRASKA



## **Local Health Department Guide to Roles and Responsibilities**

**NEBRASKA PARTNERSHIP OF  
LOCAL HEALTH DIRECTORS SECTION**

**NEBRASKA BOARDS OF HEALTH SECTION**

September 2003  
Revised January 2014

*We are pleased to acknowledge financial support  
of the Nebraska Medical Association in assisting  
with the printing of this booklet.*



Nebraska  

---

Medical  

---

Association

*Advocating for Physicians and the Health of all Nebraskans*

**[www.nebmed.org](http://www.nebmed.org)**

# **PUBLIC HEALTH ASSOCIATION OF NEBRASKA**

**NEBRASKA PARTNERSHIP OF  
LOCAL HEALTH DIRECTORS SECTION**

**NEBRASKA BOARDS OF HEALTH SECTION**

**Local Health Department  
Guide to  
Roles and Responsibilities**

## **Special Thanks**

The Ohio Association of boards of health provided much of the information in this booklet by providing a copy of Board of Health Member Guide to Roles and Responsibilities; produced by the Ohio Association of Boards of Health, 4683 Winterset Drive, Columbus, OH 43220, 614-459-4456

And

To Everyone who helped with editing this booklet, especially Mararet Brink-Four Corners Health Department, Sara Cameron-Elkhorn Logan Valley Health Department, Judy Soper-Panhandle Public Health Department, and Pat Lopez, Public Health Association in Nebraska

## **Public Health Association of Nebraska**

1321 South 37th Street

Lincoln, NE 68510

Phone: 402-483-1039

Fax: 402-483-0570

E-mail: [PublicHealthNe@cs.com](mailto:PublicHealthNe@cs.com)

Website: [www.PublicHealthNe.org](http://www.PublicHealthNe.org)

First Edition  
September 2003

## **INTRODUCTION**

Shakespeare wrote, "Above all else, to thy own self be true." As a local health director and Board of Health member, a person is charged with totally honest presentation to his/her community of the important role that public health has to play.

## **AUTHORITY OF PUBLIC HEALTH IN NEBRASKA**

In Nebraska, the Authority of Public Health can be found in the Nebraska State Statutes – Article 16, Section 71-1601 through 71-1636.

## **STATE APPROVED LOCAL FULL-TIME PUBLIC HEALTH SERVICE**

The Board of Health is responsible for hiring the Local Health Director. **LAW 71-1626.** A county, district, or city-county health department shall mean a state- approved local full-time public health service (1) utilizing local, state, federal, and other funds or any combination thereof, (2) employing qualified public health medical, nursing, environmental health, health education, and other essential personnel who work under the direction and supervision of a full-time qualified medical director or of a full-time qualified lay administrator, are well-trained in public health work, and are assisted at least part time by at least one medical consultant who shall be a licensed physician, and (3) conducted in conformity with the rules, regulations, and policies of the Department of Health and Human Services, the Department of Health and Human Services Regulation and Licensure, and the Department of Health and Human Services Finance and Support. The medical director or lay administrator shall be called the health director.

## **WHAT IS A BOARD?**

Local Boards of Health are the most powerful part of an organization. They set policies, employ and terminate the local health director, review all operational data and they can challenge any organizational activities. Most importantly, they control expenditures.

## **TYPE OF BOARD**

Nebraska primarily has Governing Boards. They are the governing body for the department and make policy decisions regarding purposes, functions, goals and activities; and expenditures. They select, employ and evaluate the local health director who reports to the board and is responsible to it.

# **FUNCTIONS OF A BOARD**

## **1. Administration:**

The board defines the organization's purpose by establishing a clear statement of mission.

- Determines policy of the organization

## **2. Program Planning and Budgeting**

The board defines specific needs to be addressed and target populations to be served.

- Establishes goals and objectives in order of priority, consistent with the mission
- Develops realistic budget to support the program plan
- Adapts the program plan and budget annually

## **3. Evaluation of Organizational Effectiveness**

The board regularly evaluates the accomplishments of the program plan.

- Assesses the achievement of the overall mission
- Evaluates the responsiveness to new situations
- Evaluates the degree of effectiveness of volunteer leadership

## **4. Retention and Evaluation of the Local Health Director**

The board hires the local health director

- Establishes compensation and conditions of employment
- Evaluates the local health director's performance at least once per year

## **5. Financial Stewardship**

The board must take a lead in the development of financial resources

- Exercises fiduciary care of the funds entrusted to the agency's use (approve budgets, audits, appropriate policies and controls)
- Engages in sound long-range financial planning (tomorrow's money)

## **6. Constituting the Community Connection**

The board represents the public interest

- Represents the interests of particular publics
- Represents the organization to the community
- Affords community sanction to the agency and its programs

## **GOVERNANCE FUNCTION DEVELOPED BY NALBOH**

NALBOH worked with the CDC and other national partners to identify, review, and develop the following model of six functions of public health governance.

**Policy development:** Lead and contribute to the development of policies that protect, promote, and improve public health while ensuring that the agency and its components remain consistent with the laws and rules (local, state, and federal) to which it is subject. These may include, but are not limited to:

- Developing internal and external policies that support public health agency goals and utilize the best available evidence;
- Adopting and ensuring enforcement of regulations that protect the health of the community;
- Developing and regularly updating vision, mission, goals, measurable outcomes, and values statements;
- Setting short- and long-term priorities and strategic plans;
- Ensuring that necessary policies exist, new policies are proposed/implemented where needed, and existing policies reflect evidence-based public health practices; and
- Evaluating existing policies on a regular basis to ensure that they are based on the best available evidence for public health practice.

**Resource Stewardship:** Assure the availability of adequate resources (legal, financial, human, technological, and material) to perform essential public health services. These may include, but are not limited to:

- Ensuring adequate facilities and legal resources;
- Developing agreements to streamline cross-jurisdictional sharing of resources with neighboring governing entities;
- Developing or approving a budget that is aligned with identified agency needs;
- Engaging in sound long-range fiscal planning as part of strategic planning efforts;
- Exercising fiduciary care of the funds entrusted to the agency for its use; and
- Advocating for necessary funding to sustain public health agency activities, when appropriate, from approving/appropriating authorities.

**Legal authority:** Exercise legal authority as applicable by law and understand the roles, responsibilities, obligations, and functions of the governing body, health officer, and agency staff. These may include, but are not limited to:

- Ensuring that the governing body and its agency act ethically within the laws and rules (local, state, and federal) to which it is subject;
- Providing or arranging for the provision of quality core services to the population as mandated by law, through the public health agency or other implementing body; and
- Engaging legal counsel when appropriate.

**Partner engagement:** Build and strengthen community partnerships through education and engagement to ensure the collaboration of all relevant stakeholders in promoting and protecting the community's health. These may include, but are not limited to:

- Representing a broad cross-section of the community;
- Leading and fully participating in open, constructive dialogue with a broad cross-section of members of the community regarding public health issues;
- Serving as a strong link between the public health agency, the community, and other stakeholder organizations; and
- Building linkages between the public and partners that can mitigate negative impacts and emphasize positive impacts of current health trends.

**Continuous improvement:** Routinely evaluate, monitor, and set measurable outcomes for improving community health status and the public health agency's/governing body's own ability to meet its responsibilities. These may include, but are not limited to:

- Assessing the health status of the community and achievement of the public health agency's mission, including setting targets for quality and performance improvement;
- Supporting a culture of quality improvement within the governing body and at the public health agency;
- Holding governing body members and the health director/health officer to high performance standards and evaluating their effectiveness;
- Examining structure, compensation, and core functions and roles of the governing body and the public health agency on a regular basis; and
- Providing orientation and ongoing professional development for governing body members.

**Oversight:** Assume ultimate responsibility for public health performance in the community by providing necessary leadership and guidance in order to support the public health agency in achieving measurable outcomes. These may include, but are not limited to:

- Assuming individual responsibility, as members of the governing body, for actively participating in governing entity activities to fulfill the core functions;
- Evaluating professional competencies and job descriptions of the health director/health officer to ensure that mandates are being met and quality services are being provided for fair compensation;
- Maintaining a good relationship with health director/health officer in a culture of mutual trust to ensure that public health rules are administered/enforced appropriately;
- Hiring and regularly evaluating the performance of the health director; and
- Acting as a go-between for the public health agency and elected officials when appropriate.

All public health governing entities are responsible for some aspects of each function. No one function is more important than another. For more information about the six governance functions, please visit [www.nalboh.org](http://www.nalboh.org).

## **KEY QUESTIONS**

1. Does your board devote most of its time to developing and setting policies for your agency? Is your policy manual current?
2. Does your board have working committees to initiate and monitor much of the board's work?
3. Does a current job description exist for your board members?
4. Does your board have a systematic planning process?
5. Is your board knowledgeable about current issues in public health?
6. Does your board have a mission statement?
7. Do your board members understand their responsibility for the finances of your organization?
8. Are your bylaws reviewed regularly and do you operate in accordance with them?
9. Are relationships between board members and staff members characterized by openness, trust and mutual respect?

## **QUESTIONS A BOARD SHOULD ASK ITSELF**

1. WHAT DO WE WANT TO ACCOMPLISH? (Setting policy and establishing goals)
2. WHAT IS THE ROAD MAP TO FOLLOW? (Formulating guidelines, making plans, suggesting alternatives)
3. HOW WILL WE PAY FOR IT? (Getting and spending money)
4. HOW DO WE REACH OUR GOALS? (Establishing priorities, delegating responsibilities)
5. DID WE SUCCEED OR FAIL? (Evaluating)

## **A LOCAL HEALTH DIRECTOR EXPECTS A BOARD WILL**

1. Counsel and advise using professional expertise and familiarity with the community.
2. Consult with the Local Health Director on issues the Board is considering.
3. Delegate responsibility to the Local Health Director for all administrative functions.
4. Refrain from micromanaging administrative details.
5. Recognize that agency staff is responsible to the Local Health Director.
6. Share all communications with the Local Health Director.
7. Support the Local Health Director and staff in carrying out their professional duties.
8. Support the Local Health Director in all decisions and actions consistent with policies of the Board and the standards of the agency.
9. Hold the Local Health Director accountable for the supervision of the agency.
10. Evaluate and recognize the work of the Local Health Director.

## WHO IS RESPONSIBLE? – BOARD OR LOCAL HEALTH DIRECTOR

AREA	BOARD	LOCAL HEALTH DIRECTOR
Long Term Goals (More than 1 yr.)	Approves	Recommends and provides input
Short Term Goals (Less than 1 yr.)	Monitors	Establishes and carries out
Day to Day Operations	No Role	Makes all management decisions
Budget	Approves	Developes and recommends
Capital Purchases	Approves	Prepares requests
Decisions on building, renovations, leasing, expansion	Makes decisions and assumes responsibility	Recommends (could sign contracts if given authority)
Supply Purchases	Establishes policies and budget	Purchases according to policy and maintains adequate audit trail
Major Repairs	Approves	Obtains estimates and prepares recommendations
Minor Repairs	Establishes Policy on dollar Amount	Authorizes repairs up to prearranged amount
Emergency Repairs	Works with Local Health Director	Notifies chairperson and acts with concurrence from the chair
Cleaning/Maintenance	Oversight only	Sets up schedule
Fees	Adopts Policy	Develops fee schedule
Billing, Credit Collection	Adopts Policy	Proposes policy and implements
Hiring Staff	No Role (Approves new positions & promotions)	Approves all hiring
Staff Development and Assignment	No Role	Establishes
Firing Staff	No Role	Makes termination decisions
Staff Grievances	No Role	Grievances stop with Local Health Director
Personnel Policies	Adopts Policies	Recommends and administers
Staff Salaries	Allocates line item in Budget	Approves salaries with recommendations from supervisory staff
Staff Evaluations	Evaluates Local Health Director only	Evaluates other staff

## **A BOARD EXPECTS ITS LOCAL HEALTH DIRECTOR WILL**

1. Serve as Local Health Director of the agency.
2. Advise the Board on issues under discussion.
3. Develop and recommend policies for consideration.
4. Effectively implement Board policies.
5. Keep the Board informed fully and accurately on activities of the agency.
6. Make professional recommendations on all problems and issues being considered by the Board.
7. Develop the agency budget with the finance committee and keep the Board advised of budget problems.
8. Recruit and retain the most competent personnel and supervise accordingly.
9. Devote time to professional development for the staff and Local Health Director.

## **EFFECTIVE BOARD MEMBERS ARE**

**Committed:** Dedicated to the work of the agency and its vision for the future.

**Involved:** Attend meetings, works in partnership with staff, lends their skills, expertise and talents through committee participation.

**Informed:** Educate themselves about policies, procedures, and budgets.

**Challenged:** Seeks to learn new skills.

**Trained:** Orientation program provided for new members.

**Accountable:** Honors commitment.

## **CHARACTERISTICS OF AN EFFECTIVE BOARD MEMBER**

- No one dominates the board
- Work with the local health director
- Collective decision-making
- Learn job duties
- Problem-solving
- Develop a unifying purpose
- Open-minded
- Develop a sense of camaraderie on the board
- Willing to compromise
- Accept personal sacrifices
- Community interest
- Constantly look for ways to improve
- Build relationships
- Do all things with integrity
- Be receptive to public input
- Be careful of bias
- Focus on long-range planning
- Make decisions based on facts
- Pledge to become educated
- Does not micromanage

## **QUESTIONS FOR BOARD CANDIDATES**

1. What issues are most important to you?
2. Why do you want to serve on this board?
3. How much time and energy can you contribute?
4. What skills do you bring to the board?
5. What are your expectations from board service?
6. Are you willing to attend board training programs and board retreats?
7. What kind of people do you like to work with?
8. What attributes and characteristics do you think are necessary to become an effective board member?

## **BOARD MEMBERS WILL**

1. Be aware of the goals of the agency. Know its service objectives.
2. Know the policies, guidelines and rules of the agency for both program and the board
3. Be regular and punctual at board and committee meetings. If unable to attend, give early notice to the appropriate staff member.
4. Be involved at meetings and ask questions. Discuss and participate in the decision-making. When you are not clear on the facts, ideas, or suggestions, ask for clarification. Be careful not to take too much of the meeting time for items that could be accomplished before or after the meeting.
5. Be informed about the issues in order to discuss them responsibly.
6. Speak out on ideas you do not favor. Silence is often interpreted as consent.
7. Know and understand the roles and responsibilities of the board and staff.
8. Know and maintain the lines of communication between the board and staff.
9. Understand the financial statements presented. As a board member, you are responsible for the financial stability of the agency.
10. Maintain the confidentiality of board members.
11. Participate in recruiting new board members.
12. Support and assist in identifying prospective sources of funding.

## **AS A BOARD MEMBER YOU SHOULD**

- 1. BE INFORMED** – Know what your board is about and what its mission is to your community.
  - a. Become familiar with all of the programs and services provided.
  - b. Spend time with your local health director to learn of their goals and roles.
  - c. Assess the needs of your community.
  
- 2. PROMOTE SERVICES** – Evaluate what is being done to inform the community.
  - a. Create a marketing plan suitable to the local health department resources.
  - b. Refer to the 10 essential services.
  
- 3. BE COMMUNITY CONSCIOUS** – Offer programs that are tailored for specific needs that will make the community aware that you are there.
  - a. Establish programs aimed at being accessible to the public.
  - b. Streamline handling of nuisance complaints.

## **MODEL BOARD MEMBER JOB DESCRIPTION**

**TITLE:** Member, \_\_\_\_\_ Board of Health

**PURPOSE:** To serve the board as a voting member, to develop policies, long-range plans, approve procedures and regulations for the operation of the health district, to monitor finances, programs and performance of the health district.

### **ATTENDANCE:**

- Regularly attend meetings as scheduled
- Attend standing committee meetings, if a member
- Participate as an ad hoc committee member, if appointed
- Attend board retreats, in-service workshops and other board development activities
- Attend and participate in special events as needed

**OBLIGATIONS:**

- Establish policy
- Hire, supervise, and evaluate the local health director
- Monitor finances
- Maintain and update long-range plans

**DUTIES:**

- Attend meetings and show commitment to board activities
- Be well informed on issues and agenda items in advance of meetings, programs, services?
- Contribute skills, knowledge, and experience when appropriate
- Listen respectfully to other points of view
- Participate in organizational decision-making
- Assume leadership roles in all board activities, including fund-raising
- Represent the health district to the public and to private industry
- Educate yourself about the needs of the people served

\_\_\_\_\_  
Board Member Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Local Health Director's Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

## MODEL BOARD CANDIDATE INTERVIEW FORM

Please fill in the responses of each board candidate, and then compare his or her qualifications to those we are seeking.

**Name of candidate:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Employer:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Position:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Address:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Home Phone:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Business Phone:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Email:** \_\_\_\_\_

### QUALIFICATIONS NEEDED:

1. List any past or present involvement with this board.
2. What knowledge do you have about this agency, its history, philosophy, programs, services?
3. What experience have you had on other boards?
4. Would you briefly describe what you believe our mission to be?
5. What is your belief about service to the community?
6. What do you understand the responsibility of a Board of Health member to be?
7. If asked, would you accept appointment to the Board? Why or why not?

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Interviewer

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

## **ESSENTIAL PUBLIC HEALTH SERVICES**

1. Monitor health status to identify community health problems.
2. Diagnose and investigate health problems and health hazards in the community.
3. Inform, educate and empower people about health issues.
4. Mobilize community partnerships to identify and solve health problems.
5. Develop policies and plans that support individual and community health efforts.
6. Enforce laws and regulations that protect health and ensure safety.
7. Link people to needed personal health services and assure the provision of health care when otherwise unavailable.
8. Assure a competent public health and personal health care workforce.
9. Evaluation effectiveness, accessibility and quality of personal and population-based health services.
10. Research for new insights and innovative solutions to health problems.

## COMMON PUBLIC HEALTH TERMS

**Accreditation:** PHAB's public health department accreditation process seeks to advance quality and performance within public health departments. Accreditation standards define the expectations for all public health departments that seek to become accredited. National public health department accreditation has been developed because of the desire to improve service, value, and accountability to stakeholders.

Accreditation through PHAB provides a means for a department to identify performance improvement opportunities, to improve management, develop leadership, and improve relationships with the community. The process is one that will challenge the health department to think about what business it does and how it does that business. It will encourage and stimulate quality and performance improvement in the health department. It will also stimulate greater accountability and transparency.

Accreditation documents the capacity of the public health department to deliver the three core functions of public health and the Ten Essential Public Health Services. Thus, accreditation gives reasonable assurance of the range of public health services a department should provide. Accreditation declares that the health department has an appropriate mission and purpose and can demonstrate that it will continue to accomplish its mission and purpose. <http://www.naccho.org/topics/infrastructure/accreditation/lge.cfm>

**Assessment:** Regular and systematic collection, assembly, analysis and the availability of community health information.

**Assurance:** Public health agencies assure that necessary services are provided to achieve community goals and objectives for health people.

**Capacity Standards:** Statements of what public health agencies must do as part of ongoing daily operations to adequately protect and promote health, prevent disease, injury and premature death.

**Chlamydia:** A sexually-transmitted disease transmitted by a particular microorganism.

**Community Guide:** The Guide to Community Preventive Services, often called The Community Guide (CG), is an ever-expanding free resource providing recommendations on evidence based interventions to improve public health and prevent disease in your community. [http://nalboh.org/Community\\_Guide.htm](http://nalboh.org/Community_Guide.htm)

**Community Health Assessment:** Community health assessment is a systematic examination of the health status indicators for a given population that is used to identify key problems and assets in a community. The ultimate goal of a community health assessment is to develop strategies to address the community's health needs and identified issues. A variety of tools and processes may be used to conduct a community health assessment; the essential ingredients are community engagement and collaborative participation. (Turnock, B. Public Health: What It Is and How It Works. Jones and Bartlett, 2009). This definition of community health assessment also refers to a Tribal, state, or territorial community health assessment.

**Community Health Improvement Plan:** A community health improvement plan is a long-term, systematic effort to address public health problems on the basis of the results of community health assessment activities and the community health improvement process. This plan is used by health and other governmental education and human service agencies, in collaboration with community partners, to set priorities and coordinate and target resources. A community health improvement plan is critical for developing policies and defining actions to target efforts that promote health. It should define the vision for the health of the community through a collaborative process and should address the gamut of strengths, weaknesses, challenges, and opportunities that exist in the community to improve the health status of that community. (Adapted from: United States Department of Health and Human Services, Healthy People 2010. Washington, DC; Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Public Health Performance Standards Program, [www.cdc.gov/nphpsp/FAQ.pdf](http://www.cdc.gov/nphpsp/FAQ.pdf)). This definition of community health improvement plan also refers to a Tribal, state or territorial community health improvement plan.

**Core Functions:** The three basic functions of the public health system: assessment, policy development, and assurance.

**E-Coli:** Common species of bacteria that occasionally results in gastrointestinal disease.

**Environmental Health:** An organized community effort to minimize the public's exposure to environmental hazards and preventing transmission of the disease or injury agent.

**Epidemic:** The occurrence in a community or region of disease cases in excess of expectancy.

**Epidemiology:** The study of disease and injuries in the human population, their distribution and determinants.

**Fee-for-service:** A charge made for each unit of health service, usually set by the provider. Some service fees may be controlled by the State. Fees for state mandated programs are determined by cost methodology set by the State.

**Foodborne Illness:** Illness caused by the transfer or disease organisms or toxins from food to humans.

**Groundwater:** Water beneath the earth's surface between saturated soil and rock that supplies wells and springs.

**Healthy People 2020:** A prevention initiative that presents a national strategy for improving the health of America.

**Human Immunodeficiency Virus:** The retrovirus (and RNA based virus) which causes AIDS.

**Incidence:** The number of new cases of a specific disease diagnosed or reported during a defined period of time.

**Infectious Disease:** A disease caused by organisms that cause infection in a human host and may be communicable (contagious) to other persons, animals or through other intermediaries.

**Local Board of Health:** Governing or advisory bodies who are appointed to protect and improve the health of the community. Appointments are made in accordance with the Nebraska Statutes Article 16, Section 71-1601 through 71-1636.

**Managed Care:** Health care provided within a system using a defined network of providers.

**Medicaid:** A program authorized under Title XIX of the Social Security Act to provide medical services to clients who meet eligibility requirements.

**Medicare:** Federal insurance program covering delivery of medical services to people ages 65 or older.

**Morbidity:** Incidence of disease or the state of being diseased.

**Mortality:** Incidence of death or the state of being deceased.

**Outcome Standards:** Long-term objectives that define optimal, measurable future levels of health status, maximum acceptable levels of disease, injury or dysfunction or prevalence of risk factors.

**Particulate Matter:** Matter in the form of small liquid or solid particles.

**Performance Management System:** A fully functioning performance management system that is completely integrated into health department daily practice at all levels includes: 1) setting organizational objectives across all levels of the department, 2) identifying indicators to measure progress toward achieving objectives on a regular basis, 3) identifying responsibility for monitoring progress and reporting, and 4) identifying areas where achieving objectives requires focused quality improvement processes. (Public Health Accreditation Board. Standards and Measures Version 1.0. Alexandria, VA, May 2011).

**Point Source:** Sources of pollution that can be readily identified because of their location of origin.

**Policy Development:** The process whereby public health agencies evaluate and determine health needs and the best way to address them.

**Population-based:** Pertaining to the entire population in a particular area.

**Prevention:** Actions taken to detect and reduce susceptibility or exposure to health problems.

**Promotion:** Health education and the fostering of health living conditions and lifestyles.

**Public Health:** Prevention of disease, injury or disability and promotion of good physical and mental health.

**Public Health District/Department:** Local (county, city combined city-county or multi- county) health agency with oversight and direction from local boards of health who provide health services throughout the defined geographic area.

**Quality Assurance:** Monitoring and maintaining the quality of public health services through licensing and discipline of health professionals, licensing of health facilities and the enforcement of standards and regulations.

**Quality Improvement (QI):** Quality improvement in public health is the use of a deliberate and defined improvement process, such as Plan-Do-Check-Act, which is focused on activities that are responsive to community needs and improving population health. It refers to a continuous and ongoing effort to achieve measurable improvements in the efficiency, effectiveness, performance, accountability, outcomes, and other indicators of quality in services or processes which achieve equity and improve the health of the community. (Riley, Moran, Corso, Beitsch, Bialek, and Cofsky. Defining Quality Improvement in Public Health. *Journal of Public Health Management and Practice*. January/February 2010).

**Risk Assessment:** To identify and measure the presence of causes and risk factors that are thought to have a direct influence on the level of a specific health problem, based on scientific evidence or theory.

**Risk Factor:** Any personal or societal condition that leads to the possibility of a problem.

**Sexually-transmitted Disease:** Infectious disease that can be transmitted by sexual contact.

**Standards:** Accepted measures of comparison having quantitative or qualitative value.

**Strategic Plan:** A strategic plan results from a deliberate decision-making process and defines where an organization is going. The plan sets the direction for the organization and, through a common understanding of the mission, vision, goals, and objectives, provides a template for all employees and stakeholders to make decisions that move the organization forward. (Swayne, Duncan, and Ginter. *Strategic Management of Health Care Organizations*. Jossey Bass. New Jersey. 2008).

**Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS):** Unexplained sudden death of an infant under one-year of age.

**Surface Water:** Any fresh water located above ground, such as rivers, lakes, and ponds.

**Third-party Payment:** Payment for health services provided through public or private insurance.

ADVOCATES FOR A  
HEALTHY NEBRASKA



**Public Health Association of Nebraska**

1321 South 37th Street

Lincoln, NE 68510

Phone: 402-483-1039

Fax: 402-483-0570

E-mail: [PublicHealthNe@cs.com](mailto:PublicHealthNe@cs.com)

Website: [www.PublicHealthNe.org](http://www.PublicHealthNe.org)