

Local Health Department Perspectives on Public Health Accreditation in the State of Oregon

Jenna Ciszewski
Accreditation Specialist
Coos Health & Wellness



April 2018

Survey Objectives

- (1) Identify perceived and realized benefits of public health accreditation
- (2) Understand challenges faced by local health departments in achieving accreditation
- (3) Compare urban vs. rural health department perspectives
- (4) Collect best practices on gaining governing entity support for accreditation

Quick Facts

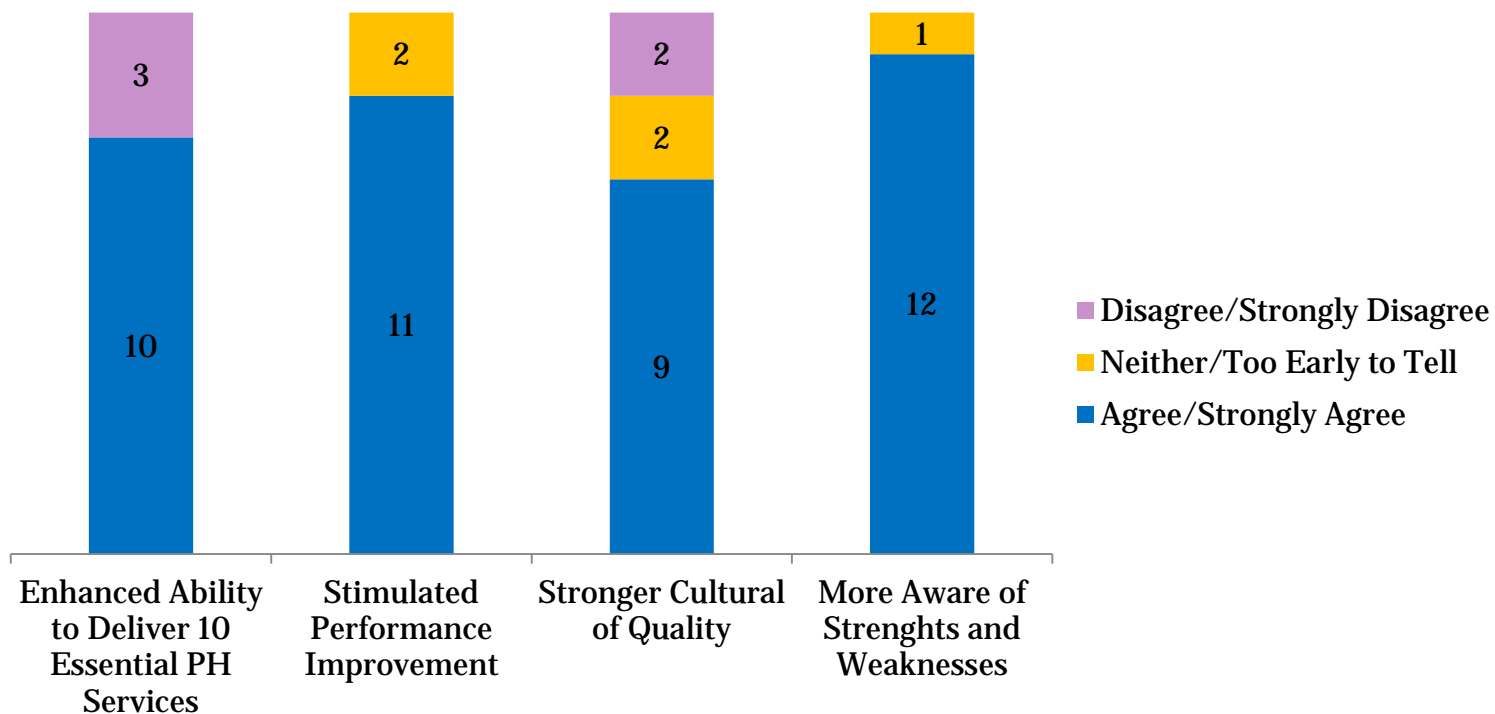
Number of Respondents = 22

Response Rate = 65%

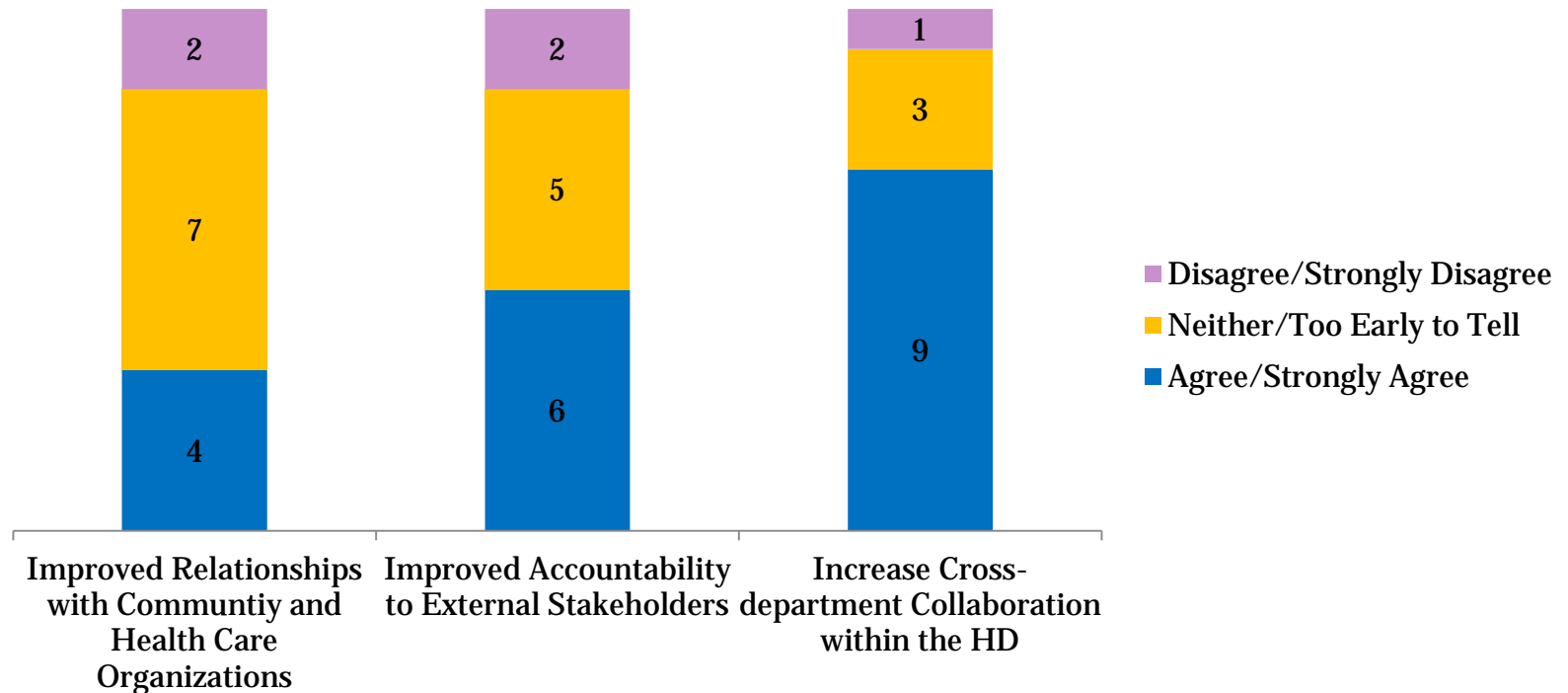
Stage in Accreditation Process	Number of Respondents	Rural	Urban
Accredited	5	2	3
Process Initiated	8	5	3
Considering Accreditation	9	9	0

Benefits of Accreditation

Indicate the degree to which you agree or disagree with the following statements about the benefits of accreditation.



Please indicate the degree to which you agree or disagree with the following statements about engagement with stakeholders.



Most Commonly Cited Benefits

- (1) Increased quality improvement activities
- (2) Building stronger performance management systems
- (3) Better internal collaboration and communication
- (4) Improved relationships with stakeholders

Additional Findings

- While “competitiveness for funding” was listed as a motivating factor to apply for accreditation by many health departments, only 2/5 accredited health departments agreed that accreditation has made the health department more competitive for funding opportunities.
- Both rural and urban health departments reported similar benefits as a result of the accreditation process.

Obstacles & Challenges

Top three challenges all relate to capacity

- (1) Time
- (2) Staffing
- (3) Cost

Additional Challenges

- **Ambiguity of the PHAB Standards & Measures**
- **Need for technical assistance developing major systems and plans (i.e. performance management, community health improvement plan, strategic plan, etc.)**

Rural vs. Urban Perspectives

Rural vs. Urban Health Departments

Number of respondents serving
rural counties = 16

Number of responses serving
urban counties = 6

- Rural health departments reported *greater* constraints in capacity and costs
- Of the 11 accredited local HDs in Oregon, only 3 serve rural counties as defined by the OHSU Office of Rural Health
- Rural HDs appear to be more skeptical about the value of seeking public health accreditation
 - 5/8 health departments who are considering accreditation were unsure what the benefits (if any) to their health department would be

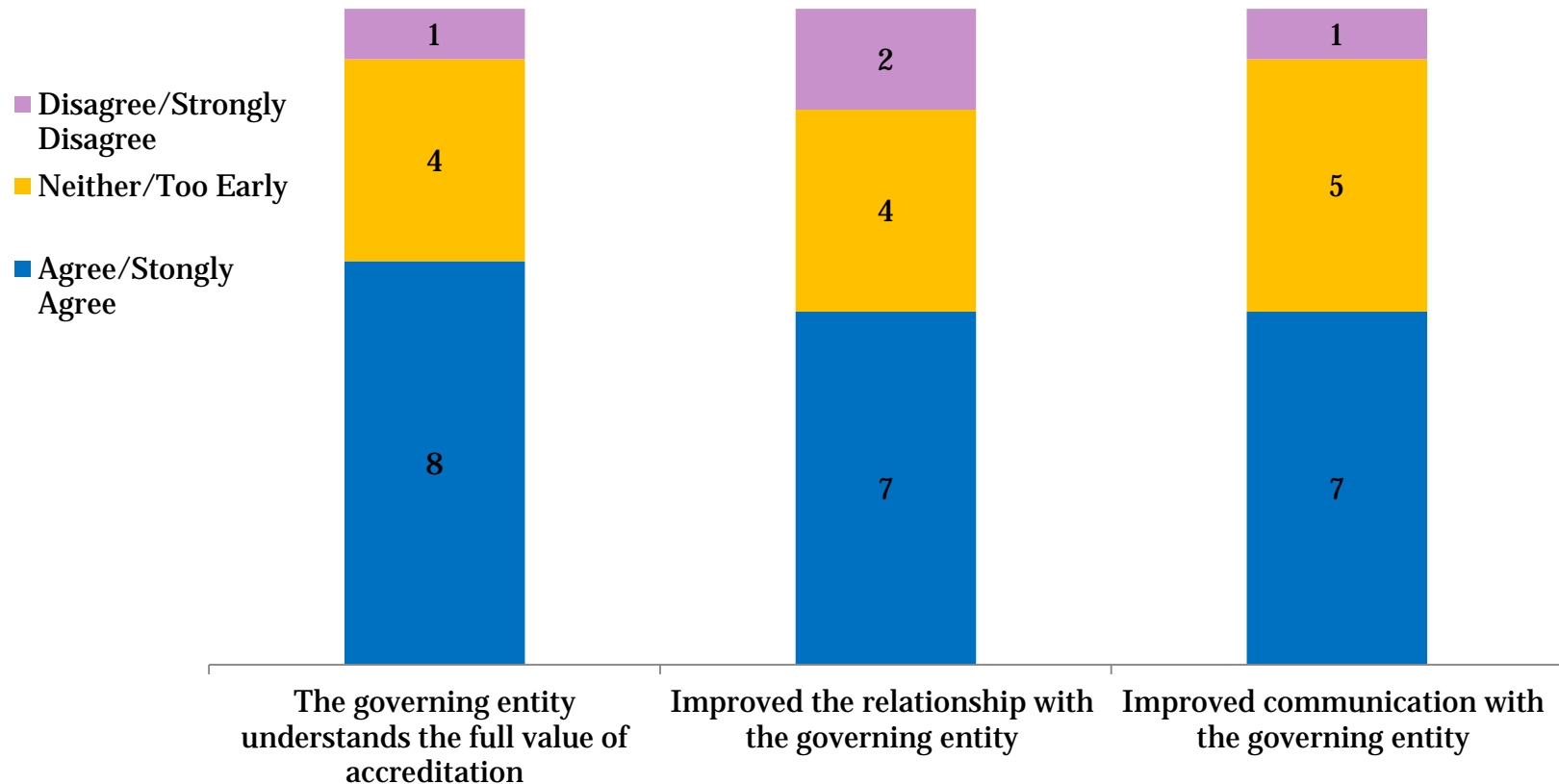
“For small health departments the cost to both get accredited and to free up staff time is almost impossible. We are trying to get creative about using scarce resources wisely. I love the direction that accreditation takes us but the support is not adequate.”

Suggestions to Address urban/rural Disparities

- (1) Truncated requirements for rural health departments
- (2) Hiring support staff for all of Oregon dedicated to accreditation
- (3) Additional funding streams for accreditation related activities
- (4) Greater rewards/increased incentives for achieving public health accreditation

Engaging the Governing Entity

Please indicate the degree to which you agree or disagree with the following statements.
Accreditation has....



Gaining Support

Most Effective Arguments

No cost to governing entity members

Future funding may be tied to accreditation

Quality assurance/More effective and efficient services

Accountability; Strengthens relationships with the community

Recognition and credibility

Implications for Practice

- Monetary values are the most convincing arguments, but other benefits are also persuasive
- As more local HDs in Oregon achieve accreditation, it would be interesting to develop mechanisms to measure any time and cost efficiencies that result from the accreditation process.
- Any of the benefits listed in these survey results can assist health departments looking to gain support from their governing entities
- Health departments can share best practices with each other about how to use a “bottom-up” approach to engaging their governing entity

Conclusions

- (1) All health departments experience at least some benefits from accreditation. Many of these benefits manifest throughout the process, not just after accredited status is achieved.
- (2) Rural health departments face greater constraints in capacity to complete the accreditation process than their urban counterparts
- (3) Finding better ways to measure the impact of accreditation will be important to gain governing entity support for the process and to motivate other health departments to undergo accreditation

What Questions Do You Have?