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## **Comanche County Health Department Among First to Receive National Accreditation**

The Comanche County Health Department announced today that it is one of 11 public health departments in the nation to receive newly established national public health department accreditation status through the Public Health Accreditation Board (PHAB). The group of 11 health departments receiving the new accreditation status also includes the Oklahoma State Department of Health and the Oklahoma City-County Health Department.

“We are very excited to be one of the first health departments in the nation to achieve national standards that foster effectiveness and promote continuous quality improvement,” said Brandie O’Connor, Administrative Director of the Comanche County Health Department. “The accreditation process helps to ensure that the programs and services we provide are as responsive as possible to the needs of our community. With accreditation, the Comanche County Health Department is demonstrating increased accountability and credibility to the public, funders, elected officials and partner organizations with which we work.”

To receive accreditation, a health department must undergo a rigorous, multi-faceted, peer-reviewed process to ensure it meets or exceeds a set of quality standards and measures.

Public health departments play a critical role in protecting and improving the health of people and communities. In cities, towns and states across the nation, health departments provide a range of services aimed at promoting healthy behaviors; preventing disease and injuries; ensuring access to safe food and life-saving immunizations; and preparing for and responding to public health emergencies. “Comanche County Health Department would not have been as successful in seeking national accreditation without the collaborative efforts we have with numerous community partners,” said Keith Reed, previous administrative director of the Comanche County Health Department and current Director of the Center for the Advancement of Wellness at Oklahoma State Dept of Health. “Community engagement has been crucial to this experience. We are very appreciative of the community partner’s continuous support of public health initiatives. It is through these partnerships we will surely improve the community’s health.”

“The Comanche County Health Department is one of the first of many health departments that we look forward to being able to recognize as a high-performing public health department,” said PHAB President and CEO Kaye Bender, PhD, RN, FAAN.

The Public Health Accreditation Board is the independent organization that administers the national accreditation program, which is jointly sponsored by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the Robert Wood Johnson foundation. The

program was created collaboratively over a 10-year period by public health practitioners working at the national, tribal, state and local public health levels. While public health departments provide expert leadership in protecting and promoting the health of people in communities across the country, there has not

been a set of nationally recognized standards until now. Standards cover issues ranging from community health, chronic disease prevention and control, communicable disease prevention and control, injury prevention, health education, health promotion, maternal and child health, public health emergency preparedness, access to clinical services, public health laboratory services, management and administration, and governance.

“We are proud that we will be able to post the PHAB seal of accreditation, said O’Connor. “This seal will be a visual reminder of our commitment to work collaboratively with community partners to improve the health of Comanche County residents.

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