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March 27, 2015

TO: Each Supervisor

FROM: Cynthia A. Harding, M.P.H.
Interim Director

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Cynthia A. Harding". The signature is written in a cursive style.

SUBJECT: **NOTICE OF APPLICATION FOR ACCREDITATION FOR THE
DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH THROUGH THE NATIONAL
PUBLIC HEALTH ACCREDITATION BOARD**

This is to notify your Board that the Department of Public Health (DPH) intends to apply for national public health accreditation from the Public Health Accreditation Board (PHAB). This memo provides information about the public health accreditation program, its benefits, and the application process.

Background

Public health departments play a critical role in protecting and improving the health of people and communities. The national public health accreditation program supports the mission of public health departments by setting standards of quality and performance for public health services and activities. The PHAB is the national non-profit organization that administers the accreditation program for all health departments in the United States and is jointly funded by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (RWJF).

Accreditation is voluntary, and public health departments seeking accreditation commit to evaluating their organizations' performance to strengthen and improve existing processes and outcomes. High-performing public health departments are awarded an accreditation status that is valid for a five-year period.

Public health accreditation offers a number of benefits such as:

- Ensuring DPH maintains a competitive position in future funding opportunities;
- Documenting the public health department's capacity to provide the Core Functions and Ten Essential Public Health Services;

- Identifying public health department strengths and weaknesses for improvement;
- Validating improvements in the performance, quality, and outcomes of services;
- Strengthening community and cross-sector partnerships;
- Increasing transparency and accountability to community, stakeholders, and policy makers; and
- Improving visibility and public awareness of the public health department's role and value.

The initial accreditation process requires the completion of three prerequisites predicated on internal and community planning processes: a Strategic Plan, a Community Health Assessment (CHA), and a Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIP). These prerequisites have been selected by the PHAB for their importance in laying the groundwork for programs, policies, and interventions to improve the health of County residents. The Department's Strategic Plan and CHA have been completed, and the CHIP, following a series of Service Planning Area community planning meetings, is nearing completion. We anticipate providing a draft of the CHIP for public comment in April.

DPH obtained grants from the CDC, the Quality and Productivity Commission, and the RWJF to expand its capacity in tracking performance improvement activities, and to complete a number of accreditation-preparedness projects which include the completion of the prerequisites noted above. These efforts have placed DPH in a favorable position to submit its application for accreditation in 2015 and meet the PHAB's requirements.

Accreditation Application Requirements

Public health department applicants must accept certain terms and conditions associated with officially submitting an application for accreditation. County Counsel has reviewed the terms and conditions of the agreement and advised that I inform your Board that the agreement stipulates that PHAB will hold information exchanged throughout the accreditation review process in confidence, except to the extent that PHAB might be required by law, statute, rule, or regulation to disclose such information. California laws prohibit the disclosure of confidential health information of individuals and DPH presumes that its application along with underlying submitted data documents would be subject to public disclosure. Therefore, DPH will ensure that any documentation is reviewed prior to submission to the PHAB, and protected health information will not be included in any part of the accreditation application process.

An application fee of \$79,500, which covers a five-year period and is determined by the jurisdiction's population size, must also be submitted. The fee will be funded by net County cost with DPH's budget.

A letter of support on behalf of your Board must be submitted with the accreditation application, and we will be working with your offices in the next few weeks to fulfill this requirement.

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We will provide you with updates on the status of DPH's PHAB application and our quality improvement activities. Please let me know if you have questions or would like additional information.

CAH:mr

c: Interim Chief Executive Officer
County Counsel
Acting Executive Officer, Board of Supervisors