

EMAIL TO ODH from NALBOH  
08/24/2012

Hello Joe, Again I hope the Legislative Committee on Public Health Futures will find NALBOH's publication on Conducting the Feasibility of Consolidation of Local Public Health Jurisdictions informative and perhaps helpful to their process. The document emphasizes the importance of involving the community in any feasibility study and making the commitment for implementation. Thanks for the invitation as an interested party to join the committee's meeting via conference call and webinar. Since I will be travelling at that time and might not be able join in the call I have asked Stephanie Branco of the NALBOH staff to join. Stephanie is NALBOH'S Director of Program Planning and Evaluation.

NALBOH is driven by our mission to strengthen and improve public health governance, NALBOH informs, guides and is the national voice for the boards that govern health departments and shape public health policy. Public health is a community affair and as such citizens of the community should have a voice in determining the public health needs and services provided for their communities. NALBOH further believes that the most effective way to provide this voice is through a citizen board of health that governs the local public health agency. Ohio's local boards of health serve in this capacity and are the link between the community, elected officials and the public health agency. They have an important role not only being an advocate for public health, but oversight to budgets and expenditures as well as assuring that the Core Functions and Essential Public Health Services are available and provided for their constituents.

As the Legislative Committee considers possible legislation impacting the delivery of local public health in Ohio we encourage that they consider the primary focus being to strengthen the ability of the local public health agency and their citizen appointed boards to effectively deliver necessary public health services which are a necessary part of Building Healthy Communities and a Healthy Ohio.

My involvement with NALBOH after being one of its founders 20 years ago has given me the opportunity to observe local public health across the country. In my opinion Ohio has one of the better local public health systems in the country which includes effective citizen board of health /health commissioner partnerships in providing public health services for the constituents of the local health district. While some adjustments to the system might be in order I urge the committee to consider very carefully only changes that could strengthen our local public health system while keeping in mind the value and important role that local boards of health play in governing and advocating for public health.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment and please feel free to contact us whenever we can be of further assistance to you or the committee. Thank you also for including a representative of the Ohio Association of Boards of Health on the committee.

**Ned E. Baker, MPH**

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