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MEDIA RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Pierce County Health Department Awarded National Accreditation by the Public Health Accreditation Board

PHAB-Accredited Health Departments Demonstrate the Capacity to Serve their Communities Well

Pierce County Health Department announced today that it has achieved national accreditation through the Public Health Accreditation Board (PHAB). The national accreditation program works to improve and protect the health of the public by advancing the quality and performance of the nation's Tribal, state, local, and territorial public health departments. Pierce County Health Department is one of hundreds of health departments across the country that are preparing to seek accreditation through PHAB, the non-profit organization that administers the national public health accreditation program.

"We are pleased and excited to be recognized for achieving national standards that foster effectiveness and promote continuous quality improvement," said Sue Galoff, Director/Health Officer of the Pierce 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, Pierce County Health Department is demonstrating increased accountability and credibility to the public, funders, elected officials and partner organizations with which we work."

The national accreditation program, jointly supported by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, sets standards against which the nation's more than 3,000 governmental public health departments can continuously improve the quality of their services and performance. To receive accreditation, a health department must undergo a rigorous, multi-faceted, peer-reviewed assessment process to ensure it meets or exceeds a set of quality standards and measures.

"Whenever you see our seal of accreditation, you will know that Pierce County Health Department has been rigorously examined and meets or exceeds national standards that promote continuous quality improvement for public health," Galoff said. "By continuing to

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improve our services and performance, we can be sure we are meeting the public health needs of those we serve as effectively as possible.”

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 diseases and injuries; ensuring access to safe food, water, clean air, and life-saving immunizations; and preparing for and responding to public health emergencies.

Pierce County Health Department provides a myriad of services for individuals and families such as the Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children (WIC), Home Care, Reproductive Health and Prenatal Care Coordination. In recent years, however, a noticeable shift toward collaboration with community partners to improve health outcomes for the population has been occurring. The department is proud of the results of many successful partnerships aimed at implementing proven, community-based prevention strategies. A variety of reports and studies have shown that preventing disease and injury is the most cost-effective way to improve health.

“The Pierce County Health Department joins the growing ranks of accredited health departments in a strong commitment to their public health mission,” said PHAB President and CEO Kaye Bender, PhD, RN, FAAN. “The peer-review process provides valuable feedback to inform health departments of their strengths and areas for improvement, so that they can better protect and promote the health of the people they serve in their communities. Residents of a community served by a nationally accredited health department can be assured that their health department has demonstrated the capacity to protect and promote the health of that community.”

The national accreditation program was created collaboratively over a 10-year period by hundreds of public health practitioners working at the national, Tribal, state, and local levels. Since the program’s launch in September 2011, hundreds of public health departments have applied to PHAB for accreditation, and hundreds of public health practitioners from across the nation have been trained to serve as volunteer peer site visitors for the program.

“Achieving accreditation indicates that Pierce County Health Department is dedicated to improving and protecting the health of the community by striving to continuously improve the quality of the services it delivers,” said Leslie M. Beitsch, MD, JD, chair of PHAB’s Board of Directors and chair of the Department of Behavioral Sciences and Social Medicine at Florida State University College of Medicine. “Accreditation also promotes consistency in meeting standards. With an ever-increasing number of health departments now applying for and becoming accredited, you will be able to expect to receive the same quality of public health services wherever you go in the United States.”

Pierce County Health Department, established in 1943, strives to assure the health of the public, prevent disease and injury, promote healthy behaviors and protect against environmental hazards. The department has offices in Ellsworth and River Falls. For more information, call 715-273-6755 or visit our website at www.co.pierce.wi.us.

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About the Public Health Accreditation Board

The Public Health Accreditation Board (PHAB), established in 2007, was created to serve as the national public health accrediting body, and is jointly funded by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation. The development of national public health accreditation has involved, and is supported by, public health leaders and practitioners from the national, Tribal, state, and local levels. Learn more about PHAB or sign up for the PHAB e-newsletter by visiting www.phaboard.org.

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