Master of Public Health Special Project
Towards Determining Organizational Viability for a Health Planning and Policy Division
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Abstract

The three core functions of public health are assessment, assurance, and policy development. Within these core functions align the Ten Essential Public Health Services (ESPHS). Specifically EPHS number five (Develop Policies and Plans that Support Individual and Community Health Efforts), and nine (Evaluate Effectiveness, Accessibility, and Quality of Personal and Population-based Health Services) which form the basis for establishing policy and planning services in local, state, or federal public health agencies. Tarrant County Public Health (TCPH) is in the process of obtaining national accreditation. The Health Planning and Policy division has played an integral role in helping TCPH to ultimately achieve its goal. This has prompted internal reflection by the Division Manager as to how viable her organization is. Organizational viability has been defined as an organization’s ability to maintain a separate existence in its environment and have the potential to adapt and realize its identity and mission. In order to determine viability, a set of goals and objectives were developed. A strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (SWOT) analysis, an Organizational Capacity Assessment Tool (OCAT), observations, comparisons to similarly named agencies, and logic models were employed in order to examine viability. The organization has numerous strengths including staff diversity and expertise. Lack of consistent assignments and lack of a leadership champion were identified as threats. Based on the OCAT, planning was chosen as an area of development and employed to construct a logic model. Organizational structure and function varied significantly from one health planning and policy agency to the next. These results indicated that viability is an ongoing process and cannot be determined at this time. It is recommended that the Health Planning and Policy Division develop a mission, vision, and strategic plan in which it can evaluate in the future. Also it must address the lack of a leadership champion if it wants to fulfill its goal which is to become a stronger voice for planning for the future of TCPH.