

## **Institute for Public Health Innovation Establishes Public Health Accreditation Technical Assistance Team**

The newly developed voluntary accreditation process designed to enhance public health practice throughout the U.S. provides important opportunities for state and local governments to make greater strides in protecting the public's health. Additionally, if framed properly, officials can leverage accreditation to educate policymakers about the critical role public health departments play in protecting community health.

Identifying experts in government and community public health practice, policy development, adult education, and quality improvement, IPHi recently established a technical assistance team to assist interested public health departments and agencies that wish to prepare for accreditation. This team of experts will offer technical support services in such areas as: accreditation preparedness assessment, designing and implementing approaches to fulfilling the three accreditation prerequisites, accreditation process management, stakeholder engagement, policymaker education, and ongoing quality improvement planning. IPHi believes that public health institutes are uniquely positioned to support governments interested in pursuing accreditation because of the capacity they bring, their neutral positioning, and their ability to draw on NNPHI and other institutes to create a national community of learning and peer support.

IPHi is already assisting Montgomery County, Maryland's Department of Health and Human Services (MCDHHS) to prepare for its potential pursuit of accreditation by playing an integral role in the implementation of a county-wide community health assessment and the development of a community health improvement plan. MCDHHS was looking for a competent, neutral organization that could design and conduct qualitative research to complement existing county capacity for quantitative research. They also needed outside help to facilitate a process of issue prioritization and action agenda development with a steering committee of diverse county leaders. MCDHHS turned to IPHi as the natural partner. The experiences and lessons learned from work in Montgomery County will inform how we support other jurisdictions throughout the DC-MD-VA region that are interested in fulfilling the necessary accreditation prerequisites.