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## **Riverside University Health System-Public Health earns national accreditation**

Riverside University Health System-Public Health has been awarded national accreditation by the Public Health Accreditation Board.

“The designation affirms much of what we have always known at Public Health,” said Kim Saruwatari, director of the 650-employee department. “The doctors, nurses, nutritionists, social workers, lab technicians, epidemiologists, support staff and so many others who make up the Public Health staff are hardworking, professional and compassionate. They are the heart and soul of the department and this recognition reinforces that idea.

“The programs that the Health Department provides, everything from immunizations to nutrition services, improves the health of the community and that is reflected through this accreditation.”

To receive accreditation, a health department must undergo a rigorous, multi-faceted, peer-reviewed assessment process to ensure it meets or exceeds a specific set of standards and measures. 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 in the communities they serve.

Riverside County Public Health is the 16<sup>th</sup> health department in California to receive accreditation. San Bernardino County Public Health Department has also been awarded accreditation.

The Public Health Accreditation Board (PHAB) 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. PHAB, the non-profit, non-governmental organization that administers the national public health accreditation program, aims to improve and protect the health of the public by advancing and ultimately transforming the quality and performance of the nation's state, Tribal, local, and territorial public health departments.

"Through the achievement of national accreditation, a health department sends a powerful message to the community about its commitment to being the best organization it can be," said PHAB President and CEO Kaye Bender, PhD, RN, FAAN. "Accredited health departments demonstrate that they have the capacity to meet or exceed a rigorous set of public health standards and measures that accurately reflect the most up-to-date research and knowledge base."