

*From a SYSTEMS perspective, financial issues (e.g., Costs, financial analysis, etc) are a vital component of a quality improvement and performance measurement process. The U S Department of Health and Human press release posted below formally announces the release of a Consensus Statement on Quality in the Public Health System. Public Health Finance activities should and will play a major role in creating a culture for quality in the public health system. This site will be populated with major sources of information and educational materials to ensure quality promoting financial practices and activities with a particular emphasis on achieving system-wide Transparency in public health.*

*Peggy Honoré*

## **U S Department of Health and Human Services – Notice to Interested Parties:**

October 17, 2008

A ground breaking *Consensus Statement on Quality in the Public Health System* has been released by the U S Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), Office of Public Health and Science (OPHS). In April 2008, the Assistant Secretary for Health (ASH), Dr. Joxel Garcia, established the Public Health Quality Forum (PHQF). The group was charged with establishing a macro-level framework to guide and provide uniformity for existing and future quality improvement programs and day-to-day practices across all sectors of the public health system. This has been an important project because while private industry and other sectors of healthcare have progressed in establishing quality indicators, the public health sector has lagged behind.

This Consensus Statement is noteworthy because it provides a system-wide framework to guide quality improvement programs. The **primary objective** of the Consensus Statement is to promote a culture for quality improvement in public health by clearly articulating a vision for system-wide quality. Key components of the document are the nine aims identified by the PHQF to describe characteristics for improving quality in public health. **The aims are: population-centered, equitable, proactive, health promoting, risk-reducing, vigilant, transparent, effective, and efficient.** Given the need for greater integration between public health and healthcare, some of the aims and related definitions reflect priorities established in 2001 by the Institute of Medicine for quality in the delivery of patient care. A copy of the Consensus Statement can be found at the Office of Public Health and Science Website:

<http://www.hhs.gov/ophs/programs/initiatives/phqf-consensus-statement.html> .

### **Public Health Quality Forum Leadership**

The Office of Public Health and Science (OPHS) provides leadership in the development of policy recommendations on population-based public health and science as well as the coordination of initiatives that cut across agencies and operating divisions at HHS. As the Assistant Secretary for Health, Dr. Joxel Garcia is the head of OPHS as well as the U.S. Public Health Service and serves as chair of the PHQF. He has led the development of the Consensus Statement and the implementation of the quality framework within the U. S. Public Health

Service Commissioned Corps. Dr. Garth Graham, Deputy Assistant Secretary for Minority Health, is its Executive Director. PHQF's membership includes a number of HHS agencies and the HHS Public Health Systems Working Group, chaired by Dr. Peggy Honoré, coordinated the development of the Consensus Statement. Executive Directors of the Association of State and Territorial Health Officials (ASTHO), National Association of County and City Health Officials (NACCHO), National Association of Local Boards of Health (NALBOH), the American Public Health Association (APHA) and representatives from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation participated as key informants to the process. The complete list of PHQF members follows the Consensus Statement accessible in the above link. For more information please contact Peggy Honoré at [Peggy.Honore@hhs.gov](mailto:Peggy.Honore@hhs.gov).