

*“Evidence-based public health is the process of integrating science-based interventions with community preferences to improve the health of populations” (Kohatsu et al., 2004). Using evidence-based public health can help boards of health efficiently and effectively meet the public health needs of communities.*

## The Community Guide: Uses and Benefits

The National Association of Local Boards of Health (NALBOH) promotes and provides technical assistance for *The Guide to Community Preventive Services* (Community Guide), a **free resource designed to help you choose evidence-based programs, practices, and policies** to improve health and prevent disease, injury, and disability in your community.

Using evidence-based approaches, such as those found in *The Community Guide*, may help boards of health better perform statutory functions. Boards of health continually promote public health by:

- Ensuring health agencies operate efficiently, effectively, and with integrity through recommendation, development, or approval of appropriate policies, practices, and programs
- Supporting local, state, and national efforts to set performance standards for quality improvement, accountability, and advocacy purposes
- Overseeing the development of the state or local health agency to achieve its mission, goals, and strategic plan

NALBOH is currently employing field consultants to target boards of health in four states (Michigan, Missouri, North Carolina, and Washington). Not only are we interested in **how your community uses *The Community Guide*** in the field, we also want to know what works and what does not work so we may provide better technical assistance to boards of health across the country.

Just a few of the **ways boards of health can use *The Community Guide***:

- Develop a protocol identifying the health agency’s commitment to use evidence-based approaches, such as those found in *The Community Guide*, when developing new policies, practices, or programs
- Compare existing health agency policies, practices, and programs to those in *The Community Guide*
- Advise, advocate, or assist in the development of evidence-based policies for the health agency
- Justify funding decisions and proposals using evidence-based approaches by referencing *The Community Guide* or other scientific reviews

Just a few of the **benefits of using *The Community Guide***:

- Increases the legitimacy of the board of health’s decisions
- Optimizes use of limited resources
- Ensures documented effectiveness by using state-of-the-science systematic reviews for quality improvement, quality control, and accreditation.
- Fills existing research gaps and identifies research needs

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