Health Policy & Management Department News (Through 6/28)

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Health Policy & Management News

Georgia Southern University

Georgia Southern Collaborates with Researchers from CDC and NACCHO to Create a Taxonomy of LBoH, Based on LHDs Perspectives

February 8, 2017

Dr. Gulzar Shah led a collaborative effort to develop a local board of health (LBoH) classification scheme and empirical definitions to provide a coherent framework for describing variation in the LBoHs.

The study is based on data from the 2015 Local Board of Health Survey, conducted among a nationally representative sample of local health department (LHD) administrators, with 394 responses. The classification development consisted of the following steps: (1) theoretically guided initial domain development, (2) mapping of the survey variables to the proposed domains, (3) data reduction using principal component analysis and group consensus, and (4) scale development and testing for internal consistency.

The final classification scheme included 60 items across 6 governance function domains and an additional domain—LBoH characteristics and strengths, such as meeting frequency, composition, and diversity of information sources. Empirical application of this classification strongly supports the premise that LBoHs differ in their performance of governance functions and in other characteristics.

The LBoH taxonomy provides an empirically tested standardized tool for classifying LBoHs from the viewpoint of local health department administrators. Future studies can use this taxonomy to better characterize the impact of LBoHs. The study recommended that in addition to the 6 governance functions, additional characteristics of LBoH may capture positive features of an LBoH, including board composition and member qualifications, diversity of information sources used by the board to seek community perspectives, and LBoH meeting frequency.

Contributions and functioning of LBoHs are more diverse than generally assumed in the previous research.

"Creating a Taxonomy of Local Boards of Health Based on Local Health Departments' Perspectives," was published in the American Journal of Public Health.

Dr. Gulzar Shah, Associate Dean of Research at the Jiann-Ping Hsu College of Public Health Georgia Southern University, was the lead author. The coauthors of this study included Dr. Sergey Sotnikov, Office for State, Tribal, Local, and Territorial Support, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), Atlanta, GA; Dr. Carolyn J. Leep, National Association of County and City Health Officials (NACCHO); Dr. Jiali Ye, NACHHO; and Dr. Timothy W. Van Wave, Office for State, Tribal, Local, and Territorial Support, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Atlanta, GA were co-authors.

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