

## Background

Governmental public health (i.e., state, local, Tribal health departments) has faced declining investment for over a decade. COVID-19 increased awareness of many known infrastructure challenges, including insufficient data. The time is now to build a better public health infrastructure that meets current and future needs of all people in all communities.

## About PHNCI at PHAB

Since 2015, the [Public Health National Center for Innovations](#) (PHNCI) at the [Public Health Accreditation Board](#) (PHAB) has fostered public health innovation, modernization, and transformation through developing resources, fostering shared learning, and building relationships with stakeholders. In support of data modernization and transformation, PHNCI is home to the 21<sup>st</sup> Century (21C) Learning Community, a group of states at various stages of adopting the Foundational Public Health Services (FPHS) framework.

Through learning with 21C, PHNCI has gained insights and built relationships to support governmental health departments in building equitable public health systems and a robust infrastructure to serve all communities and acquiring sustainable funding to support the system long term.

## Public Health Data Systems Transformation and Modernization

To serve our communities equitably, governmental health departments need access to modern, real-time, hyperlocal data and tools. These are critical in understanding the needs of our communities, making data-driven decisions that address community priorities, and transforming public health infrastructure. Governmental public health in the United States currently lacks modern data systems and structures to do this, which have had a direct and negative impact on health and equity.

To transform public health data systems, the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation's [National Commission to Transform Public Health Data Systems](#) developed three recommendations:

- Center health equity and well-being in narrative change
- Prioritize equitable governance and community engagement
- Ensure public health measurement captures and addresses structural racism and other inequities

Beginning January 2022, PHNCI will launch a new initiative aimed at supporting the modernization and transformation of data infrastructure and systems in governmental health departments. PHNCI will:

- Focus on data modernization efforts as part of our [21C initiative](#).
  - 21C states will have access to peer learning and subject matter experts to advance their efforts in this area.
- Engage up to three 21C state public health systems to begin implementing the Commission's recommendations.
  - These states will serve as a Learning Lab for data modernization practices. Efforts will include stakeholder and power mapping, developing a plan to prioritize and begin implementation of the Recommendations, and documenting lessons learned, challenges, and leading practices for advancing data systems transformation that centers equity.
- Disseminate learnings and innovations with the field at large.
- Develop an excellence recognition program that recognizes health departments who are conducting exemplary work related to data modernization and will be designed to highlight work that exceeds the [PHAB accreditation standards](#).
  - Through partnership with key stakeholders, data from 21C and accreditation efforts, and a Think Tank convening, we will establish national criteria for health department data excellence that will focus on equity-focused, multisector data systems.
  - Exemplary work will be collected and shared broadly as examples to help drive the field forward.
- Ensure coordination across various national and regional initiatives focused on public health transformation and modernization, to align efforts and share practices and data across initiatives.

**Interested in getting involved?** Contact Reena Chudgar at [rchudgar@phnci.org](mailto:rchudgar@phnci.org) or visit [phnci.org/transformation](https://phnci.org/transformation) for updates.