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Measuring the Benefits and Impacts of the NCLHDA Program

A Master of Public Health Integrated Learning Experience Thesis

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Introduction

This presentation will share results from a research study conducted to determine potential benefits and negative impacts of the NCLHDA Program through an inductive thematic analysis of open-ended survey responses.



NORTH CAROLINA

Local Health Department
Accreditation



Background

While Annual Reports are conducted, qualitative evaluation is missing.

Visible and Previously Identified Benefits

The North Carolina Public Health Task Force found the following benefits as direct results of the program in 2008:

- Quality improvement
- Performance improvement
- Improved relations with governing bodies (Boards of Health, etc.)
- Others

The background of the slide is a solid blue color with abstract, white, wavy line patterns. These patterns are concentrated in the corners and along the sides, creating a sense of movement and depth. The lines are thin and closely spaced, forming a series of concentric, undulating shapes that resemble topographical lines or liquid ripples.

Purpose

The purpose of this research was to further determine how LHDs have benefited from the impacts of the NCLHDA program.

Research Questions

1. In what ways has the NCLHDA program influenced the adherence of LHDs to the 10 EPHS?
2. How has the NCLHDA program altered the policy development process within NC LHDs?
3. How has the NCLHDA program improved LHDs ability to recognize internal weaknesses?
4. What impact has the NCLHDA program had on the relationships between LHDs and their Board of Health?

Methodology - Participants

- 106 LHD Health Directors invited.
- 86 Agency Accreditation Coordinators (AAC) invited.
- Responses for 63 of the 86 LHDs were recorded.
 - 73% of all LHDs
 - Important considerations – adjusted for LHDs where the Health Director serves as the AAC, includes Cabarrus Health Alliance as an LHD

Methodology - Procedures

- Cross-sectional study design.
- Data collected via Microsoft Forms.
- Instrument of measure (survey) and informed consent distributed via email.
- Distribution period:
 - Initial email
 - 1-week after initial email
 - 2-weeks after initial email
 - 5-weeks after initial email
 - 7-weeks after initial email

Survey

Title

Benefits and Impacts of the North Carolina Local Health Department Accreditation Program

Description

Health departments across the state have cited numerous benefits as a result of the NCLHDA program. The purpose of this research is to determine how LHDs have benefited from 4 of the most cited impacts of the NCLHDA program.

The information gathered from this research will be used to assist me in the writing of my Master's Thesis.

Biographical Information

1. Health Department/Multi-County Department

Impact 1 – Adherence to the 10 Essential Public Health Services

1. In what ways has the NCLHDA program influenced your health department in the adherence to the 10 Essential Public Health Services?

Impact 2 – Policy Processes and Procedures

1. Has the NCLHDA program altered the process in which policies are developed within your health department?
 - a. Yes
 - b. No
2. Please elaborate on your answer to the previous question.

Impact 3 – Recognition of Weaknesses

1. How has the NCLHDA Program improved your health department's ability to recognize internal weaknesses?

Impact 4 – Relationship with Board of Health

1. What impact has the NCLHDA program had on the relationships between your health department and your Board of Health?

Additional Feedback

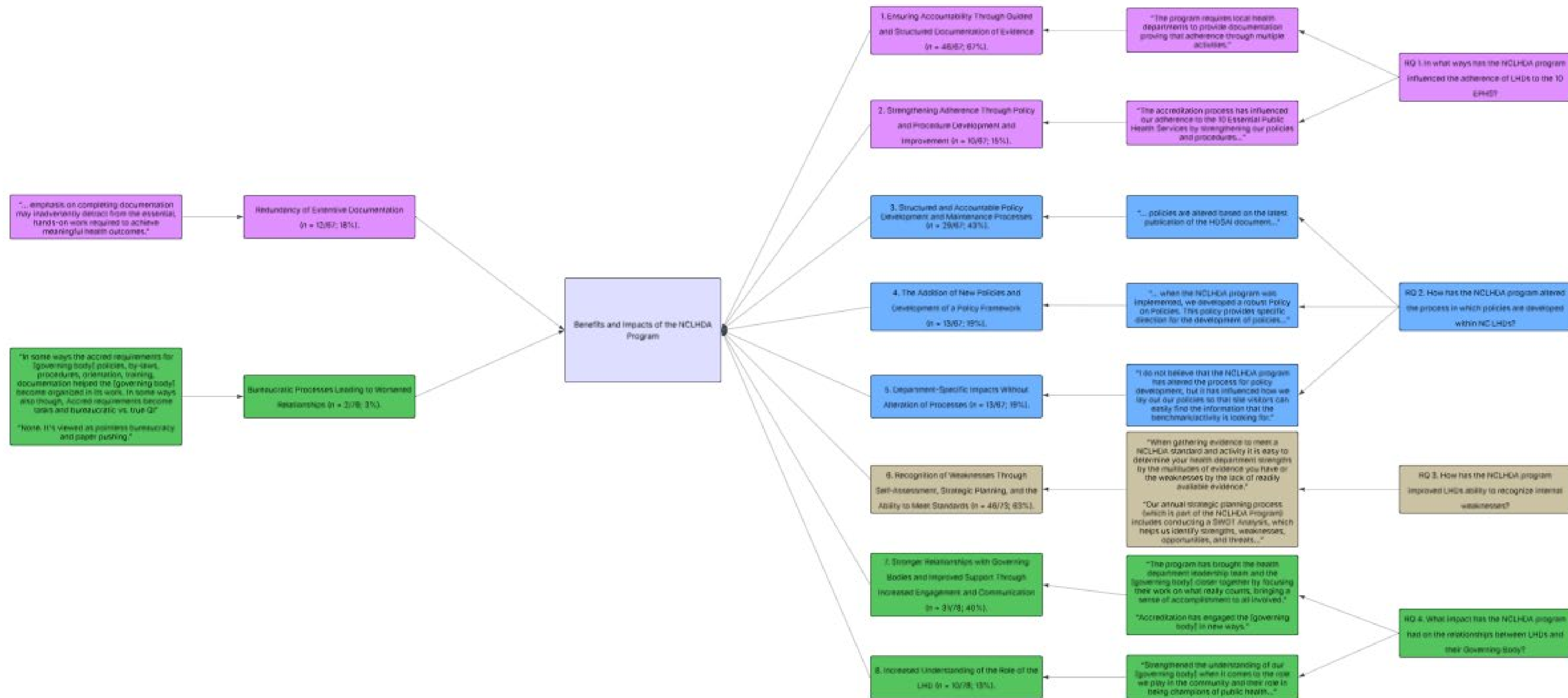
1. What additional feedback do you have regarding the NCLHDA program in which you would like to share?

Analysis

1. Responses exported to a Microsoft Excel sheet for qualitative analysis.
2. A thematic analysis was conducted using the Naeem et al. (2023) guide and Braun and Clarke (2006) framework.
 - a) Sheet 1: Raw data
 - b) Sheet2: Keyword/phrase extraction and review
 - c) Sheet3: Coding assignment and review
3. Rawdata, keywords and codes read and reread to allow inductive emergence of themes.
 - a) Sheet4: Final themes

Results and Discussion

- 67 survey question responses in total.
- 325 assigned codes.
- 8 main themes representing benefits of the NCLHDA program.
- 2 counterthemes representing negative impacts of the program.
 - Countertheme – theme that addresses the research question by representing a drawback or disadvantage to the program.



Themes – Strongest and Weakest

RQ 1. In what ways has the NCLHDA program influenced the adherence of LHDs to the 10 EPHS?

“The program requires LHDs to provide documentation proving that adherence through multiple activities.”

Theme 1: Ensuring Accountability Through Guided and Structured Documentation of Evidence
(*n* = 46/67; 67%)

RQ 3. How has the NCLHDA program improved LHDs ability to recognize internal weaknesses?

“Our annual strategic planning process (which is part of the NCLHDA program) includes conducting a SWOT analysis, which helps us identify strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats...”

Theme 6: Recognition of Weaknesses Through Self-Assessment, Strategic Planning, and the Ability to Meet Standards
(*n* = 46/73; 63%)

RQ 4. What impact has the NCLHDA program had on the relationships between LHDs and their Governing Body?

“Strengthened the understanding of our [governing body] when it comes to the role we play in the community and their role in being champions of public health”

Theme 8: Increased Understanding of the Role of the LHD
(*n* = 10/78; 13%)



Counter themes

RQ 1. In what ways has the NCLHDA program influenced the adherence of LHDs to the 10 EPHS?

“...emphasis on completing documentation may inadvertently detract from the essential, hands-on work required to achieve meaningful health outcomes.”

Countertheme 1: Redundancy of Extensive Documentation
(*n* = 12/67; 18%)

RQ 4. What impact has the NCLHDA program had on the relationships between LHDs and their Governing Body?


“None. It’s viewed as pointless bureaucracy and paper pushing.”

“...in some ways also though, Accred requirements become tasks and bureaucratic vs. true QI.”

Countertheme 2: Bureaucratic Processes Leading to Worsened Relationships
(*n* = 2/78; 3%)



Public Health Implications

- Both extreme support and dissatisfaction reported.
 - Several responses claim that the program had produced results opposite of its intention.
 - There is a necessity for thorough qualitative evaluation of mandated public health requirements, such as this program.
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Limitations and Recommendations

Limitations

- Human resources
- Time constraints

Recommendations

- Team of coders— ensures intercoder reliability
- Member checking

Conclusion

- 69% of all assigned codes (225/325) highlighted a benefit of the NCLHDA program.
- Despite benefits, the negative impacts should still be addressed, such as intensity and rigor of the program and “paper pushing.”



Thank you!

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