



# INFORMATICS INSIGHTS

Public Health Informatics for Leaders

## Christine Steward, MPH Sedgwick County Division of Health

The insights below are adapted from a March 2017 interview featuring Health Protection Director, Christine (Chris) Steward, MPH, from Sedgwick County Division of Health in Wichita Kansas.



### On demonstrating value

To prove the value of our work in the community, we track performance measures that demonstrate outcomes. Technology provides flexibility to define and monitor these measures; canned reports do not provide the best data for your programs. Informatics helped us upgrade our systems and capacity to analyze and report useful data.



### On getting buy-in to change

Incorporating informatics into existing policies is key to getting buy-in from everyone, including other leaders. If I start by saying, "We're just going to add this sentence to an existing policy," informatics becomes less of a major change and more of a culture shift where different people start adopting informatics principles into their work.



### On making the most of what's available

We take advantage of systems we can use without additional cost, like ESSENCE, EpiInfo, and our state-maintained disease investigation software. These federal and state electronic systems improve our ability to monitor diseases and protect the public from health threats.



### On the role of leaders

As an agency leader, I often get information about new systems and tools. I make sure agency staff know about these resources and I push them to take advantage of new informatics opportunities. I also share informatics information with health partners who are external to the agency.



### On the importance of building informatics capacity in the larger network

For public health to move forward with technology, we need to help our local clinics and partners move forward too. Increasing everyone's informatics capacity will help us lead in improving the community's health.



### On getting started

We used PHII's Informatics-Savvy Self-Assessment, which provided us with a roadmap for our informatics journey. It showed us areas where we could immediately incorporate informatics to build capacity. The assessment helped us identify existing policies that were easily modified to include informatics principles. We also realized the need for written procedures on collecting and reporting performance data on our programs.