The Texas Public Health Information Network

The Texas Public Health Information Network (TxPHIN) is an online portal containing a collection of applications, such as the Health Alert Network and Document Sharing, which provide users with a range of functions to carry out public health preparedness goals and duties. Examples of these functions include call down and alerting, bio-surveillance tools and communication systems designed to enhance collaboration between public health preparedness stakeholders. PHIN is a national initiative created by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention to increase the capacity of public health to exchange data and information electronically across organizational and jurisdictional boundaries. This is done by promoting the use of standards and defining functional and technical requirements. More information about the CDC's PHIN concept is available at www.cdc.gov/phin/index.html The Texas PHIN portal is an implementation of CDC's PHIN concept, plus much more.

Users in Texas will have the ability to learn and share critical information amongst them by accessing an efficient, effective and interoperable public health information system. The Texas PHIN portal is utilized by a variety of people involved in public health activities, and in particular public health preparedness and emergency response. Users include persons from state and local governments, hospitals, physician offices, emergency responders and community based organizations. These users represent a wide array of professionals including public health and hospital administrators, physicians, nurses, epidemiologists, emergency responders, laboratory specialists, communicable and infectious disease specialists, public information officers and more.

The Department of State Health Services (DSHS) manages the TxPHIN. Many more applications, features and refinements will be added to the portal in the future. This is the third major version of the PHIN portal in Texas.

GAINING ACCESS TO THE TxPHIN PORTAL

To access the TxPHIN, go to the website at https://www.txphin.org. On the home page you will be asked to sign in to your account. This will require you to have a username and password.

Need an account? Select 'Sign up'. An email confirmation will be sent to you. Once you've confirmed you'll be able to login to TxPHIN.

Forgot password? Select 'Forgot password?', enter your email address. An email confirmation will be sent to you with a link to change your password. Click on the link or copy it into a browser address bar if your email client has disabled the link. The link will take you to a webpage on which there are controls for changing your password. Follow the instructions to change your password.

If you encounter issues during this process, send an email to phinadmin@txphin.org

If you are a new user click on the link labeled "Sign Up", located to the right of the "Log In" button. Your browser will be directed to a form on which you should fill in the required information: First Name, Last Name, Email Address, and Password. Please take the time to fill in the optional information as well. Listed below are the different profile attributes the form requests:

Language: Check your preferred language as either English or Spanish.

Job Title: Please provide your job title so administrators can better decide what roles to grant you.

Home Jurisdiction: When choosing your Home Jurisdiction, from the drop down box click on the county or DSHS Health Service Region that you operate in for your job. If you have responsibility for statewide activities that are not limited to a certain county or region, click on "Texas". Your choice of jurisdiction is very important. The portal presents content and functionality based on this attribute. For example, it is possible for jurisdiction administrators to load news content that specifically pertains to their county. If you are not registered in that county, you won't see that custom, localized content.

Requesting a Public Health Professional Role Be Assigned to You: Access to applications and features within the TxPHIN portal is highly dependent upon what Roles are assigned to your user profile. Check the box next to the question "Public Health Professional?". When the box is checked more form fields will appear. Scroll through the list of Roles and click on the one that best describes your designated role in public health or emergency activities. You do not have to choose a Role. You will automatically be assigned the Role of Public if you do not choose a

different Role. You will have the opportunity to request more Roles after gaining access to the portal.

Professional Organization: If you are affiliated with any of the professional organizations listed in the next drop down box, click on the appropriate organization. If you are not affiliated, you do not have to choose an organization.

Role: Briefly describe your role in your organization. This information will assist administrators in evaluating your user application and deciding to grant Roles to your user profile.

Lastly, click on the Submit button when you have entered all required information. After submitting the registration you will receive an email from the phinadmin@dshs.state.tx.us asking you to confirm your email address by clicking on the link within the email. If your email client disables the link, copy it out of the email and enter it in your browser address bar.

You will also receive an email confirming your Role assigned by the TxPHIN administrator. This role is the public health professional role you chose during the registration process.

Once you have confirmed your email address you will be directed to the TxPHIN webpage.

UNDERSTANDING THE TxPHIN PORTAL'S DASHBOARD

After successfully logging in, you will see the Dashboard. The TxPHIN Dashboard is the main navigation page that allows you to see and share information, update your profile and find people within the PHIN network. There are two main navigation tool bars on the page. The TxPHIN Navigation Tool Bar is at the top of the page and the Mini-Applications Tool Tabs are at

the bottom of the page. Dashboard options will vary with different Roles. For instance, if you are assigned the 'administrator' Role, you will see more options on your dashboard upon sign in, such as "admin" and "manage groups." For now, we will explore only the Dashboard elements available to regular users.

The TxPHIN navigation toolbar at the top of the page contains link for the Health Alert Network. It also contains links to your personal profile and a link to 'Find People' within the TxPHIN community. For users who only have the "Public" Role, the 'Find People' link is not available.

The TxPHIN icon located to the far left of the toolbar can be use at any time to navigate back to the main page. The Dashboard's main page acts as a news section for articles relevant to health issues on local, state, and national levels. Notice that the news articles are truncated, with a clickable link that will expand the article to its full length. These links can be toggled to collapse the article back to its truncated size.

Immediately to the right of the TxPHIN icon is a list of available applications/information. In the picture above, those applications/information links are HAN, FAQs and Tutorials. Clicking on these links will take you away from the Dashboard's main news page and will bring you into that particular application.

VIEWING AND EDITING YOUR ACCOUNT PROFILE

Select your Username at the top right corner. This is where all details of your profile are stored for personal viewing and editing. You can request Roles, add/edit alerting devices, change language, change your email and/or password, and add information about yourself such as current employer, credentials, biography, job title, job description and experience in your field. There is also an option to upload your picture. This information is what is displayed to other users if you add your profile to public access. Select 'View my Profile', you will be able to view all details that are currently in your profile.

If you wish to edit your professional details, type into the desired textbox(es).

To change your language, locate the "Preferred Language" option underneath the password boxes. You can choose English or Spanish.

To change your password, enter desired password into the "Password" boxes. Be sure to enter the same password into both boxes.

To request a new Role, choose your jurisdiction and Role from the drop down menus. To delete a Role, simply click the red "x" button located next to each Role listed. This will remove that Role from your profile.

You may add alerting devices to your profile that will allow people to contact you through multiple outlets. You may add an email, phone, SMS, fax(TBD), and even blackberry PIN number. On the right column of the page in blue writing you will see your current devices which should

include your log-in email as a default contact option. Click the blue "Add Device" link and a drop box will appear next to it. Click the arrow and select which type of device you would like to add and a text box will appear beneath it. Type in the number or email address in the box and click the blue "Add" link.

To delete any of your alerting devices, click the red circle X next to the device. A dialogue box will pop up asking, "Are you sure you want to delete?" Click OK and your device will be permanently deleted. You may click cancel if you change your mind or accidently hit the red circle X.

To upload a photo, click the "Browse" button and a dialogue box will pop open. Search the pictures on your computer's hard drive. Once you find the photo you would like to upload, click the photo and click open. The box will close and you can now click "Upload Picture" under the "Browse" search bar. The link to the photo should appear in the "Browse" search bar.

When you are done editing, click the "Save" button on the bottom of your screen to ensure all changes made to your profile are submitted. It is not required that you fill out any part of this profile or that you make the information available to the public.

As a registered user, you have the option to allow or disallow public access to your profile through the TxPHIN directory. All information entered in "My Account" will be viewable to others should you choose to allow public access. This feature allows other users to view you through the "Find People" option and is a great tool for networking and connecting with peers, however, this step is not the same as obtaining a "public" role in a jurisdiction. To allow public access, simply check the "Make this profile public?" box on the right hand side of your screen. If you currently allow public access and wish to disallow, uncheck the "Make this profile public?" box. When complete, click "Save Changes" on the bottom of the screen.

USING THE "FIND PEOPLE" LINK TO SEARCH THE TxPHIN DIRECTORY

For those who has been assigned with a role other than 'Public' role, 'Find People' link are available to you. This feature allows you to search for any individual who is currently registered on the TxPHIN. If the individual has chosen to make their profile visible to the public, you will be able to view their full profile. If a profile is kept private, you will only be able to view their name within search results. This tool is especially helpful for networking with peers and obtaining important contact information.

Click on the "Find People" option located on the top right hand side of your home screen. You will be directed to a search tool where you can enter either a partial or full name of the individual or individuals you are searching for. After results are returned, you will be able to view profiles by clicking on each name. If the user has a private profile, you will receive the message "This user's profile is not public" and will not be able to view details regarding the user. You may also enter an email address as search criteria.

USING THE MINI-APP TABS

The Mini-Applications navigation toolbar at the bottom of the page site contains popup tools that can help you plan and develop public health activities with other PHIN users.
Applications include: Documents, Forums and Links