Reviewer-2

Yes. PHAB accreditation is an effort to improve public health efforts and should be evaluated. This study is one of the first to evaluate accreditation efforts in terms of health outcomes.

Title should be more specific to include type of study design. The type of study is not mentioned in the article.

Sections of the paper covered the necessary information of the research. Statistical analysis does not account for variables that may affect the measures of effect. This methodological issue may result in underestimation of effects.

Specific Comments:

Concern that the statistical analysis does not account for variables that may affect the measures of effect. This methodological issue may result in underestimation of effects between the independent and dependent variables. Because of this, serious concerns exist about the findings. Previous research has demonstrated that demographic, socioeconomic, and other social determinants of health factors impact health outcomes at the individual- and population-level. Without consideration of these factors, comparison of county-level data may be erroneous. Author should consider including rationale in manuscript addressing these concerns. Questions about, or suggested improvements to, the manuscript: • Study design is not clearly articulated. • Question about this statement "based on key demographic, social, and economic indicators." More details should be provided about these indicators as they could impact the interpretation of the analysis. • Can we justify a finding of "no difference" using the identified health indicators alone? Other health outcomes may indicate that there are differences between accredited and non-accredited counties. • More details should be included addressing variables that may impact health outcomes and measures of effects. These confounding variables may account for the findings. • More details should be provided regarding the formula used for random selection of peer non-accredited LPHA counties so that the reader can clearly understand this process. As it is written, the selection process is opaque. • Potential issues of bias and limitations are not included in the discussion section. What are possible biases in the study and limitations? How did the authors address these? How do the biases and limitations impact the findings and interpretation? These questions should be discussed. • A discussion regarding sample size is warranted, i.e. is the sample size adequate, how was the final sample size determined or was it? Why was a ratio of 1:1 decided?