

CDC & APHL Cooperative Agreement OE20-2001 Performance Summary

REPORTING PERIOD: JULY – DECEMBER 2020

OE20-2001: Enhancing Public Health Laboratory Capabilities and Increasing Capacity

Building upon previous and currently funded Cooperative Agreements (CoAg) between CDC and the [Association of Public Health Laboratories \(APHL\)](#), [OE20-2001](#) aims to improve public health in the United States and globally by enhancing the effectiveness and functionality of public health laboratories (PHLs), individually and as components of a national system. This CoAg supports four key strategies and activities that will enhance the capabilities and increase the capacities of PHLs in nine focus areas.

9 FOCUS AREAS

- A. Foundational Leadership and Support
- B. Environmental Health
- C. Foodborne, Waterborne, and Environmentally Transmitted Diseases
- D. Infectious Diseases
- E. Informatics
- F. Newborn Screening and Genetics
- G. Preparedness and Response
- H. Quality and Safety Systems
- I. Workforce Development



STRATEGY 1

Science, Management and Operations



STRATEGY 2

Policy, Partnership and Communications



STRATEGY 3

Training and Capacity Building



STRATEGY 4

Laboratory Quality, Safety, and Informatics

SELECTED STRATEGIES AND ACTIVITIES

POLICY, PARTNERSHIP AND COMMUNICATIONS



- Develop policy and issues analyses to promote public health laboratory interests.
- Facilitate information exchange and dissemination between laboratory professionals and other stakeholders in public health, healthcare and beyond.
- Collect, analyze, create content and disseminate information to inform stakeholders about the role of public health laboratories and the tools and resources available to them.

TRAINING AND CAPACITY BUILDING



- Identify training and workforce development needs among laboratory professionals in diverse settings.
- Develop curriculum frameworks and training and workforce development resources for laboratory professionals in diverse settings.
- Design and implement programs to strengthen the public health laboratory workforce pipeline.

LABORATORY QUALITY, SAFETY, AND INFORMATICS



- Develop and implement solutions and standards to improve data exchange and interoperability.
- Improve the practice of laboratory quality and safety in public health laboratories.
- Employ emerging methodologies and process improvements in public health laboratories.
- Provide technical assistance to public health laboratories and other stakeholders.
- Identify and address gaps in laboratory preparedness and response to public health threats.

ABOUT THE RECIPIENT: Association of Public Health Laboratories (APHL)



APHL works to strengthen laboratory systems serving the public's health in the United States and globally. Its members, known as "public health laboratories" or "PHLs," monitor, detect and respond to health threats. With over 20 years' experience in more than 30 countries, APHL is recognized internationally as a leader in laboratory science and practice.

FOCUS AREA PERFORMANCE MEASURE HIGHLIGHTS: JULY–DECEMBER 2020

Training And Capacity Building

100%

Percent of fellows that self-reported an increase in knowledge, skills, and resources via training and/or professional development.

100%

Percent of fellows who were engaged and participated in diverse public health laboratory settings.

Policy, Partnerships, and Communications

100%

Percent of partner engagements completed via monthly Newborn Screening (NBS) Committee calls.

100%

Percent of evidence-based tools or resources developed according to the workplan.

Laboratory Quality, Safety, and Informatics

100%

Percent of priority technical assistance (TA) needs addressed through a mix of solutions and services such as a national webinar, developing a new resource document, developing a workgroup on vendor engagement, and numerous email exchanges and discussions responding to TA requests.

SUCCESS STORIES AND LESSONS LEARNED

Implementation Successes

- The APHL NBS Committee and its subcommittees completed their review and revisions of the Clinical Laboratory Standards Institute NBS terms and definitions.
- The APHL NBS program created the NBS Epidemiology User group, comprised of epidemiologists and dried blood spot (DBS) and point-of-care staff from NBS programs, as a venue for members to discuss the various ways they use the data they collect.
- The APHL Hemoglobinopathies Workgroup developed and held a live roundtable session during the 2020 NBS Symposium. The roundtable and interactive "Discussion of current variations in practice in screening and reporting of alpha- and beta-thalassemia" drew 55 attendees.

Implementation Challenges

- NBS members have been pulled into COVID-19 responses in their respective states and have competing priorities due to the pandemic.
- With tightening resources and hiring freezes in place due to COVID-19, states are unable to hire and/or learn data visualization skills to advocate for resources for their programs.
- Plaintiffs alleging 4th and 14th amendment violations against the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS) raise concerns on the ability of NBS programs to use DBS for quality assurance and quality improvement.



2020 NBS VIRTUAL SYMPOSIUM HIGHLIGHTS

- 599** attendees using virtual platform
- 71** speakers
- 40** posters
- 16** pre-recorded sessions, live Q&As
- 13** exhibitors
- 6** types of CEUs provided
- 5** roundtables
- 4** live sessions
- 3** fun virtual activities: DJ, trivia, and yoga

Implementation Solutions

- The APHL NBS program issued a data analytics professional development opportunity offering funding to states who demonstrated a need for software, courses, and/or other resources to support their data analysis and visualization efforts.
- The APHL NBS program hired legal support to develop documentation of the Michigan NBS program and MDHHS explaining why DBS are crucial to NBS operations.