A NORTHERN PLAINS APPROACH TO ENHANCING WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

MONTANA ~ NORTH DAKOTA ~ SOUTH DAKOTA ~ WYOMING ~ IDAHO

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IT ALL STARTED IN 2006...

- 3-year CDC grant to “integrate public health testing in clinical laboratories”
- Organized with neighboring states to develop a regional laboratory system, to discuss and coordinate laboratory system improvement activities across the states
- Group of professionals representing PHLs and Communicable Disease/Epis from Montana, North Dakota, South Dakota, and Wyoming (Idaho joined in 2013)
- Share demographic characteristics which contribute to common challenges facing us and our clinical laboratory partners
  - Large states, low population, limited state budget, low pay, limited staff, retention and recruitment issues
Limited formal agreements exist – signed MOU-lite (2017)

- To formally acknowledge the cooperation, efficiency, and resource sharing between the five NPC SPHLs
- Background and Objectives
  - Terms, Amendments, Cessation and Effective Date with signatures

MOUs for COOP – providing testing for surge
- Ability to invoice for services provided
- Ad hoc requests
- Many activities are still done informally (handshake agreement)
Surveys and trainings with clinical laboratories: AST and STD practices, testing of public health significance, QMS, TB NAAT campaign

Shared testing services (hantavirus, Lyme WB, Hep C RNA and genotyping)

Electronic test orders and results (ETORs)

Transportation exercises across state lines

Western States Proficiency testing program

Biosafety outreach – successful focus group

Sharing of resources, technical skills trainings, troubleshooting and lessons learned

SUCCESSION PLANNING
Long time Laboratory Directors were retiring (MT, WY, SD)

Brainstormed and prioritized the skills and knowledge required to be an effective PHL director or manager in a rural state

Generated ideas to capture and transfer institutional knowledge

Brainstormed ways to improve leadership and management skills

Thought about the best way to utilize resources from across the NPC states to implement these ideas

The Regional Northern Plains Consortium Emerging Leaders Program was born!
Year-long program started in March 2015: 8 participants (lab & epi)

Followed a curriculum developed by NPC Laboratory Directors
- Based on succession planning meeting held in April 2014
- Modeled after APHL Emerging Leaders Program
- Facilitated primarily by current leaders in the NPC states
- Presented monthly webinars, in-person meetings, peer-to-peer trainings

Participated in a team project on the impact of culture-independent diagnostic testing (CIDT) on public health surveillance
With APHL funding, commenced in April 2017 (9 month program)– 6 participants

Feedback was incorporated from Cohort 1, but basically followed the same curriculum with a few changes

- Tried a more virtual program than Cohort 1
- Presented topics with the help of APHL staff, professional facilitators, and NPC laboratory directors
- Attended 2017 APHL Annual Meeting and worked on group project
- Focused on leadership, communication, behavior/management style and grant knowledge in a public health setting
- Facilitated primarily by current leaders in the NPC states
- Presented monthly webinars, in-person meetings, peer-to-peer trainings
Regional Emerging Leaders Program
Cohort 2

- Monthly webinars included:
  - Team Management Profile Overview (APHL)
  - Virtual Communication (Leadership Strategies)
  - DISC Communication (Dominance, Influence, Steadiness, Compliance)
  - Public Health Laboratory Competencies
  - Interviewing a Leader
  - Laboratorians and Legislators

- Book Review: Fierce Conversations: Achieving Success at Work and Life One Conversation at a Time, by Susan Scott
Team project focused on updating and improving each of the five states’ websites.

- Analyzed each state’s website to strategically compile the most effective format to provide content
- Utilized APHL’s SharePoint for resource sharing
- Worked on updating websites to meet ADA compliance
- Created a link for each website to a common NPC webpage, hosted by Idaho (3 tabs)
  - Overview of the NPC
  - Publications done by the NPC collectively
  - Members tab, with links to each state’s website

Overview of the NPC
Publications done by the NPC collectively
Members tab, with links to each state’s website
Mission: Combining expertise and resources across peer groups to enhance laboratory capacity

Vision: Serving public health through a collaborative regional laboratory system
In-person meetings and poster

- First in-person meeting at APHL Annual Meeting (June 2017)
- 1½ day meeting in Bismarck, ND (October 2017)
- Presented team project to NPC members (January 2018)
- Submitted poster abstract (January 2018) and accepted!!
- One-day meeting in Helena, MT to finalize poster (March 2018)
- 4 ELP participants attended APHL Annual Meeting (June 2018)

- Pre- and post-assessment provided to evaluate challenges and successes
Advancing Public Health Laboratory Websites:
Northern Plains Consortium - Emerging Leaders Program

The Northern Plains Consortium (NPC), consisting of Mississippi, South Dakota, North Dakota, Nebraska, Wyoming, and Montana, was formed in 2009. The Northern Plains Public Health Laboratory Collaborative (as the NPC was originally known) was formally established in 2015 and currently known as the NPC. The consortium’s mission is to ensure that health laboratories in the region are effective and efficient. The consortium’s goals are to improve the quality of laboratory services, improve the ability of laboratories to respond to public health needs, and enhance the ability of laboratories to share resources and best practices.

The NPC is a collaboration of public health laboratories in the Northern Plains region. The consortium is composed of a core group of public health laboratories and is supported by funding from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). The consortium’s mission is to improve the quality and efficiency of laboratory services in the region.

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Evaluation demonstrated knowledge gained and positive feedback

Many participants have taken on stronger leadership roles

"Not only has the Emerging Leaders Program helped me develop my skills as a leader in the laboratory, it also has afforded me the opportunity to develop life-long professional relationships with other public health colleagues in surrounding states. That opportunity transcends not only for the year, but for many years following, giving all of us a professional database from which we can draw knowledge, experience, and answers."

"The NPC Emerging Leaders Program provided opportunities in leadership growth through training tools such as webinars, exercises, and state lab visits, which we otherwise would not have access too."

"The networking experience between the NPC ELP cohort members was invaluable to me."

"Our Emerging Leader was an excellent employee before the program and even better after completion!"
ELP COHORT 2 CHALLENGES & LESSONS LEARNED

- Choosing a project that meets the needs of all cohort participants is difficult
- Having participants with various backgrounds, including a microbiologist, environmental chemist, QA coordinator and biosafety officer
- Holding first in-person meeting 3 months after program start
- Juggling time devoted to updating websites and work obligations
- Taking time to attend in-person meetings when short staffed
- Gaining permissions to edit website
- Coordinating with other key personnel, including IT, which have limited time
- Working between five states with five different state structures/LIMS/interdepartmental relationships
Held an NPC Strategic Planning Meeting in Denver, CO (April 2018)

- Facilitated by APHL’s Pandora Ray

- Decided to redirect our workforce development efforts towards specific technical skills trainings or focus groups
  - Similar to the NPC Biosafety Officer (BSO) focus group that began in December 2015
    - Biosafety Officers from each NPC state share safety resources, brainstorm safety outreach strategies with their sentinel laboratories, and have created a network of professionals with similar goals (on-going)

- Through ELC funding, have been able to host WGS/Bioinformatics trainings and MALDI-TOF workgroup

- Through 2018 APHL mini-grant funding, IDBL was able to sponsor a 1.5-day workshop focusing on multi-locus sequence typing (MLST) based molecular epidemiology (lab-epi partners)
Our two successful NPC Emerging Leaders Programs would not have been possible without support from APHL’s Mini-grants for Innovation.

We hope to be able to continue this type of networking within the NPC as it opens up unique ways to provide skills building to our staff and enhance workforce development in our NPC SPHLs.

THANK YOU APHL!!!

Questions???