

# 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.
- Develop training and workforce development resources for laboratory professionals in diverse settings.
- Develop and implement fellowship programs.

### 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.

## HIGHLIGHTS: CROSS-CUTTING PERFORMANCE MEASURES

### Policy, Partnerships and Communications

**100%**

of policy priorities were on track for completion.

**77%**

of evidence-based tools/resources were developed according to the workplan.

**81%**

of stakeholder engagements were completed.

**96%**

of completed responses were received for formal needs assessments for resource development.

### Training and Capacity Building

**90%**

of learners self-reported an increase in knowledge, skills and abilities.

**91%**

of fellowship positions were filled.

**100%**

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

**29**

trainings and workforce development opportunities were delivered to address the identified priority needs.

### Laboratory Quality, Safety, and Informatics

**265**

standardized guidelines for data exchange or transmissions developed or updated.

**140**

informatics improvements were implemented.

**90%**

of priority technical assistance needs were addressed.

**175**

PHLs met the lab testing capacity for emergency response.

## IMPLEMENTATION SUCCESSES, CHALLENGES, AND LESSONS LEARNED

### New and Existing Partnerships

#### Developed and strengthened partnerships to address evolving priorities:



- **Focus Area E. Informatics:** expanded development of laboratory and clinical data standards, increased Epi-Lab communication and collaboration, participated in data modernization initiative.
- **Focus Area G. Preparedness and Response:** updated 12 Sentinel Level Clinical Laboratory Protocols in partnership with the American Society for Microbiology.
- **Focus Area H. Quality and Safety Systems:** provided a consistent platform for collaboration via Regional Consortia with existing and expansion of attendees to share peer-to-peer learning related to COVID-19 response.
- **Focus Area I. Training and Workforce Development:** collaborated with key partners to modify the application process and rapidly recruited 30 associates to support the COVID-19 response.

### COVID-19 Pandemic Impact

- Cancellation of in-person events (training, meetings, conferences).
- Staffing shortages and competing priorities for non-COVID-19 response activities.
- Availability of critical laboratory supplies and reagents needed for routine clinical testing.

### Adaptations & Implementation Solutions

- Adapted to virtual format by conducting branding and promotion of conferences and symposium digitally.
- Prioritized activities based on available resources.
- Streamlined and centralized the Evaluation and Performance Management Plan (EPMP).

“The success of the APHL/CDC Cooperative Agreement is self-evident. It’s about partnerships, people, and good ideas to improve the public health laboratory system.”

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**Scott Becker**  
CEO of APHL