

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



> 200

Number of individuals that attended the APHL 2020 environmental metagenomics session.

82%

Percent of respondents that self-reported an increase in knowledge and skills after attending CaliciNet laboratorian training.

Policy, Partnerships,
and Communications



100%

Percent of policy priorities on track for completion in the first 6 months of the workplan.

> 15

Number of local, state and federal organizations Food Safety and Environmental Health staff partnered with.

Laboratory Quality,
Safety, and Informatics



100%

Percent of participating laboratories incorporated updated standards into their work as evidenced by PulseNet certification.

100%

Percent of PulseNet USA certification submissions (236/236) completed.

SUCCESS STORIES AND LESSONS LEARNED

Implementation Successes

Food Safety Committee:

- Held monthly calls during the pandemic and accomplished >75% of its annual work plan while members addressed day-to-day needs around pandemic response.
- Continued to hold monthly calls to share updates on food safety activities and lessons learned for peer-to-peer learning in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Environmental Microbiology Work:

- Environmental laboratories from 20-35 states participated in quarterly calls focusing on wastewater surveillance, electronic lab notebooks, and microbiology work in EPA Regions 3 and 4 laboratories.

Environmental Microbiology Work (cont.):

- The Environmental Laboratory Science Committee co-drafted a comment letter on the possible roles of PHL and environmental labs in the National Antimicrobial Resistance Monitoring System.
- Through COVID-19 funding, APHL established the National Wastewater Surveillance System Laboratory Community of Practice which provided peer-to-peer learning and resources for PHLs conducting [SARS-CoV-2 wastewater testing](#).



Implementation Challenges

- Shift in priorities due to the response to the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Travel restrictions impeded aspects of 2020 work.
- Video clips for PulseNet training could not be created due to restricted access on the CDC campus.
- Environmental Microbiology funding was received partway through the year, making it challenging to complete all activities in a strategic way.

Implementation Solutions

- Adapted to changing needs during the COVID-19 pandemic by pivoting to virtual events.
 - The 11th annual CaliciNet training workshop was virtual for the 1st time.
 - Virtual PulseNet Regional Meetings were planned during this period.
- Activities that could not move forward due to the pandemic will be accomplished in the next implementation year.
- Staff granted extensions to PHL's that were completing CaliciNet certifications.