Environmental Health Program

Environmental health laboratories are essential to protecting the public’s health. There are thousands of toxic or potentially harmful chemicals that people are exposed to daily through consumer products, occupational exposures, accidents and threats.

The Association of Public Health Laboratories (APHL) strives to aid laboratories that are poised to respond to these concerns by using new technologies and methods to determine the chemicals and level of exposure in people.

In order to address the unique challenges faced by public health laboratories, APHL works to:

• raise awareness of environmental health issues;
• increase the visibility of the environmental health laboratory community;
• develop sound national, state and local environmental health policies;
• respond to member laboratory needs;
• increase competency of environmental health laboratory staff;
• expand capability and capacity across environmental health laboratories; and
• serve as liaison between laboratories and CDC’s National Center for Environmental Health Division of Laboratory Sciences.

Ultimately, these activities support the improvement of environmental health laboratory practice.

Other specific activities this year include:

Fellowships that not only trained new scientists, but also provided necessary workforce for public health laboratories.

Educational opportunities for laboratories to attend professional meetings they otherwise would not have been able to attend.

Webinars on hot topics in environmental health. APHL webinars attract thousands from all across the country and Canada.

Blog posts and Lab Matters articles to introduce or further discuss relevant Environmental Health topics to the laboratory audience and the public.
APHL Supports Biomonitoring in the States

Biomonitoring—a tool used to measure hazardous substances once they have entered the body—furthers the ability of the US public health system to identify terrorist or other emergency events and respond to them. APHL assists member laboratories with monitoring and detection by:

Providing guidance to laboratories wanting to improve or build biomonitoring programs

Raising awareness of biomonitoring as an integral component of public health practice

Delivering a Biomonitoring Toolkit to serve as a one-stop shop for anyone working in biomonitoring, to ensure quality, validity and comparability for public health practitioners

Providing access to an APHL Biomonitoring Capabilities List for individuals seeking more information on testing for a specific analyte

Working with members of the Laboratory Response Network (LRN) for Chemical Threat Preparedness to address training, method and instrument needs

Assessing all-hazards laboratory preparedness through an annual survey and issue brief

Planning the LRN National Meeting, which brings together laboratorians to discuss the most recent efforts in laboratory preparedness.

As state and local public health and environmental health laboratories build their environmental health capacity, APHL is committed to working with CDC to broaden services that ensure the quality of test results and continuity of testing during an emergency.

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