

# CDC & APHL Cooperative Agreement OE20-2001 Performance Summary

REPORTING PERIOD: JULY 2020 – JUNE 2021

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

[OE20-2001](#) enhances the effectiveness and operations of public health laboratories (PHLs), individually and as part of a national system. This Cooperative Agreement (CoAg) supports four key strategies and activities to increase the capabilities and capacities of PHLs in nine focus areas. It builds on past and present CoAgs between the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the [Association of Public Health Laboratories \(APHL\)](#).



### 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

### 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

## 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 the laboratory community and other partners and audiences in public health, healthcare and beyond.
- Collect and analyze information, create content, and disseminate products to inform target audiences 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 across diverse settings.
- Develop curriculum frameworks and training and workforce development resources for laboratory professionals across 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 partners.
- 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," 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 public health laboratory science and practice.

FOCUS AREA PERFORMANCE MEASURE HIGHLIGHTS JULY 2020 – JUNE 2021

**Training and Capacity Building** 

**180**  
Number of participants in 2 new APHL webinars: *Environmental Justice in our Communities: Strategy for Laboratory Involvement* and *Strategies to build PFAS Testing*

**100%**  
Percent of individuals that self-reported an increase in knowledge and skills after a norovirus testing workshop.

**Policy, Partnerships, and Communications** 

**26**  
Number of partners engaged at key APHL collaboration events

**4**  
Number of Quarterly Environmental Laboratory Calls held, with 90-100 participants on each call. Topics discussed included EPA Regional Laboratory overviews, EPA method updates, and data management.

**Laboratory Quality, Safety, and Informatics** 

**4**  
Number of clusters detected and monitored; 50% of these Salmonella Typhimurium clusters resulted in major epidemiological investigation and laboratory follow-up with sources identified.

SUCCESS STORIES AND LESSONS LEARNED

**Implementation Successes**

- **Food Safety Committee:** continued to hold monthly calls; key successes included an article examining how metagenomics might be used in food safety, and an APHL annual meeting session outlining how members leveraged resources made available through the pandemic to improve other areas of public health, notably food safety and genomic epidemiology.
- **Environmental Laboratory Science Committee:** Pivoted to working on wastewater surveillance activities; created a webinar entitled "SARS-CoV-2 Wastewater Surveillance: An Introduction for Public Health Laboratories" with 84% of participants reporting having a gap in their knowledge addressed by this webinar.

**A STEP TOWARD NATIONWIDE ADOPTION AND USE OF THE OUTBREAKS OF UNDETERMINED ETIOLOGY (OUE) GUIDELINES**

*APHL developed a specimen collection and testing protocol for the OUE Guidelines and worked with CDC to incorporate the guidelines into*  
*SEDRIC: the System for Enteric Disease Response, Investigation, and Coordination.*



**Implementation Challenges**

- Due to travel restrictions, APHL was unable to organize an in-person PulseNet International Steering Committee meeting; tasks were instead completed over two calls.
- Readjusting priorities led to certain projects being postponed or delayed.

**Implementation Solutions**

- Adapted to changing needs by pivoting to a virtual format for trainings—11th annual CaliciNet training workshop was hosted virtually for the first time.
- Delayed activities were slated for completion by June 2022.

