Association of Public Health Laboratories
Laboratory System Improvement Program (L-SIP)
Elements of Long-Term System Improvement

Purpose:

This document provides a sample listing of improvement actions and resources that state public health laboratory system partners might consider in undertaking system improvement. It is recommended that these elements be considered during the pre-assessment (or planning) phase as well as the day of the assessment to assure that the purpose of doing the assessment – system improvement – is understood and addressed. Reviewing these elements with system partners on the day of the assessment will help provide a road map for activity following the assessment. The elements can also be helpful after the system assessment in determining next steps and in developing a long-term system improvement plan.

Target Audience:

Those involved in planning the assessment, participants in the system assessment, system partners working with improvement, key leaders and interested others.

Suggested Improvement Activities and Timelines:

- Assessment Day: Timeline: day of assessment
    - ☐ Tentative agreement on initial issues to focus on
    - ☐ Identify who will convene issue work
    - ☐ Obtain preliminary agreement to collaborate on improvement at conclusion of assessment
    - ☐ Set date for reconvening

- First Meeting after Assessment: Timeline: Ideally, within three months of assessment
    - ☐ Review results of assessment and any subsequent progress
    - ☐ Review core system capacities (to be developed) as a checklist for consideration in creating a system improvement work plan
    - ☐ Reconfirm/revise initial issues to address
    - ☐ Prioritize work focus
    - ☐ Structure roles and responsibilities, committees, etc.
    - ☐ Identify infrastructure needs, including resources, leadership, tools, etc.
    - ☐ Define initial improvement plan and timelines

- Ongoing System improvement activities: Timeline: Varies; 6 to 18 months
    - ❖ State level:
        - ☐ Update phone system information for system, with contact names, phone numbers, etc.

- ☐ Create a shared website (could be from APHL web template)
- ☐ Phased and ongoing review of and action on parking lot issues
- ☐ Expansion of system membership
- ☐ Create an electronic newsletter on system improvement
- ☐ Progress reports from improvement committees
- ☐ Regular update of website
- ☐ Recognition of partner accomplishments in improvement

- ❖ National or Regional Level
  - ☐ Monthly state teleconference calls on lab topics
  - ☐ Quarterly conversations among SPH laboratories re progress, experiences, challenges, ideas, successes, failures
  - ☐ Regional state laboratory director meetings
  - ☐ Regular sessions at APHL meetings

Improvement Tools

- ▪ Currently Exist:
  - ☐ Questions at end of each essential service in assessment tool
  - ☐ APHL On-line Resource Center: http://www.aphl.org/orc
  - ☐ Public Health Foundation Improvement Website: http://www.phf.org/infrastructure/phfpage.php?page_id=55&pp_id=52
  - ☐ CDC Improvement Website: http://www.cdc.gov/od/ocphp/nphpsp/PIindex.htm

- ▪ To Be Developed:
  - ☐ Piece on the compelling reasons to work on system improvement
  - ☐ Improvement manual & training resources
  - ☐ "Should have" and "Must have" guidelines for improvement by essential service
  - ☐ Web template to connect APHL and states with each other for improvement work and resources
  - ☐ Training/dialogue on "How to formalize and improve a public health laboratory system"
  - ☐ Regular collection and sharing of "model practices"
  - ☐ Identification of attributes of a fully functional state public health laboratory (modeled after NACCHO's piece)

Next Steps for Improvement Development Work:

- ▪ Include reasonable stretch goals when developing this timeline checklist

- ▪ Pilot this work in the Fall 2009 Phase of L-SIP Assessments and improvement work