

APHL Laboratory System Improvement Program Improvement Subcommittee

Key Elements/Capacities for Highly Functioning State Public Health Laboratory Systems

Purpose:

The following identifies what might be considered key elements or capacities that should be in place in a state public health laboratory system in order for that system to be functioning at a high (or “Gold”) level. The document was prepared and reviewed by the L-SIP Improvement Committee in work to define laboratory system improvement.

Over Arching Considerations for Long-Term System Improvement:

- 1) System partners meet at least twice a year to work on follow up issues

Essential Service #1: Monitor Health Status to Identify Community Health Problems

1. System partners participate in health initiatives and collaborate effectively to identify sentinel health events, infectious diseases, and trends through a variety of surveillance strategies
2. Improving public health surveillance is a laboratory system priority, to be addressed through partnership among system partners
3. A well defined system is in place to enable the collection of comprehensive laboratory data and samples; the system links all laboratory testing in the state, including but not limited to environmental, veterinary, agricultural, and local and national systems where applicable
4. A secure, accountable, highly integrated and comprehensive data/information system is in place to support data storage, analysis, retrieval, reporting, monitoring and exchange of information among system partners

Essential Service #2: Diagnose and Investigate Health Problems and Health Hazards in the Community

1. The SPHL System has the capability to diagnose and investigate health problems in an effective and high quality manner
2. The SPHL System members have clearly defined roles for participating and collaborating in public health emergency preparedness and response activities
3. Redundant and effective communication plans and capacity is in place for all SPHL system partners
4. The SPHL System has the capacity, authority and readiness to assure a rapid response to public health emergencies by all system partners

Essential Service #3: Inform, Educate, and Empower People About Health Issues

1. A system is in place to support outreach to and communication among system partners through a variety of modes
2. A group of system partners provides feedback on a regular basis to the state public health laboratory
3. A mechanism is in place to identify information needs of and providing targeted and

proactive messaging to health and non-health partners

4. The state public health laboratory system has a process in place to evaluate the utility and improve effectiveness of educational initiatives with community and system partners

Essential Service #4: Mobilize community partnerships to identify and solve health problems

1. The key partners in the state public health laboratory system have each other's contact information
2. There is agreement to collaborate on improving performance of the system
3. The key system partners are aware of their role in the system and are current with key laboratory system issues
4. Key system partners have worked together to develop a plan for regular information sharing and collaboration
5. System partners work together to address resource needs to address laboratory health issues and have agreed to share resources where possible

Essential Service #5: Develop Policies and Plans that Support Individual and Community Health Efforts

1. The SPH laboratory and system partners actively contribute to the development of policy—including laws, regulations and plans—that impact the State PHL System
2. SPHL system partners provide evidence-based data to assure ensure policy is scientifically sound
3. A mechanism is in place to collect feedback, data and information regarding effectiveness of existing policies and plans
4. Reviews, revisions and updates of policies and plans are completed on a regular basis
5. Policies and plans are dispersed to all system partners and to the public as deemed appropriate

Essential Service #6: Enforce Laws and Regulations that Protect Health and Ensure Safety

1. SPH Laboratory and system partners contribute to the review and revision of laws and regulations that pertain to Laboratory practice annually or as otherwise appropriate
2. The SPHL system has a mechanism in place to encourage compliance with relevant laws and regulations, and provides technical assistance to support compliance
3. All laboratories in the system comply fully with laboratory certification and compliance programs
4. Adequate authority and resources to enforce laws and regulations exists within the SPHL system

Essential Service #7: Link People to Needed Personal Health Services and Assure the Provision of Healthcare When Otherwise Unavailable

1. Laboratory services are available to all those in need of essential laboratory testing
2. All system partners participate in assessments to inform strategic planning for future capacity needs
3. Resources are identified and SPHL system partners collaborate to fill service gaps

Essential Service #8: Assure a competent public health and personal health care workforce

1. Workforce competencies and expectations are clear for all laboratory workforce categories in system laboratories
2. Tools that support system improvement are available to system partners to assess laboratory workforce competency
3. Resources for staff development are widely available and accessible
4. Work environment and resource allocation assures adequate workforce numbers without shortage or significant turnover

Essential Service #9: Evaluate Effectiveness, Accessibility, and Quality of Personal and Population-Based Services

1. Partners in the SPHL system have collaborated to define a mission for the system and to regularly review and update the mission
2. A mechanism is in place to regularly identify and evaluate the scope of services provided by the system, and its adequacy relative to the defined mission
3. The SPHL system has a mechanism in place to identify and evaluate the test menus and technologies in place in all system laboratories
4. Tools are developed and being used on a scheduled basis to assess availability, accessibility and timeliness of laboratory services
5. The SPHL system has a mechanism in place to measure consumer satisfaction with laboratory services

Essential Service #10: Research for Insights and Innovative Solutions to Health Problems

1. SPHL system partners collaborate to identify system needs that would benefit from further research
2. SPHL system partners collaborate in identifying resources or provide mechanisms to support system research
3. A research committee is in place within the SPHL system or in one of its partner organizations
4. The SPHL system has a mechanism in place to disseminate research findings and innovative solutions of laboratory system issues