LSIP Improvement Project

Oregon State Public Health Laboratory

The improvement project proposed by the Oregon State Public Health Laboratory (LSIP) for an APHL mini grant was to build a stronger sense of community and system-wide perspective among Oregon's clinical and public health laboratories. The initial assessment of the Oregon Laboratory System (OLS) identified the need to enhance communication, collaboration and training for public and private-sector laboratories.

OSPHL was able to obtain access to GovSpace, a virtual networking tool which is part of the Oregon government's rapidly growing E-Government effort. The APHL grant supported OSPHL in setting up an Oregon Laboratory System space at the electronic site, introducing the tool to system partners, and administering the site. Funds were not previously available to support the staff, facilitator and expenses.

The GovSpace concept was presented at a gathering of OLS partners on April12, 2011. Solid feedback was obtained during a facilitated discussion. The group consensus at the meeting was to "test" the Oregon Laboratory System granting access to those attending the meeting and identify modifications prior to inviting all laboratory partners to the space. The group also discussed the information that would support collaboration among partner laboratories. OSPHL agreed to develop a laboratory profile template to capture this information and present it at the June 14, 2011 partner meeting. Partners approved the template at the June meeting and a local health department (LHD) suggested adding reference laboratories used by a system partner. This information would reduce the number of phone calls made by LHD staff when tracking down results on possible outbreaks or exposures. The suggested modifications have been made and the template was posted on the Oregon Laboratory System space for partner laboratories to use to post their information.

A brochure was developed and printed which explains the Oregon laboratory System, the value and purpose of GovSpace and information for gaining access to GovSpace. The brochure will be presented at the August 2, 2011 meeting.

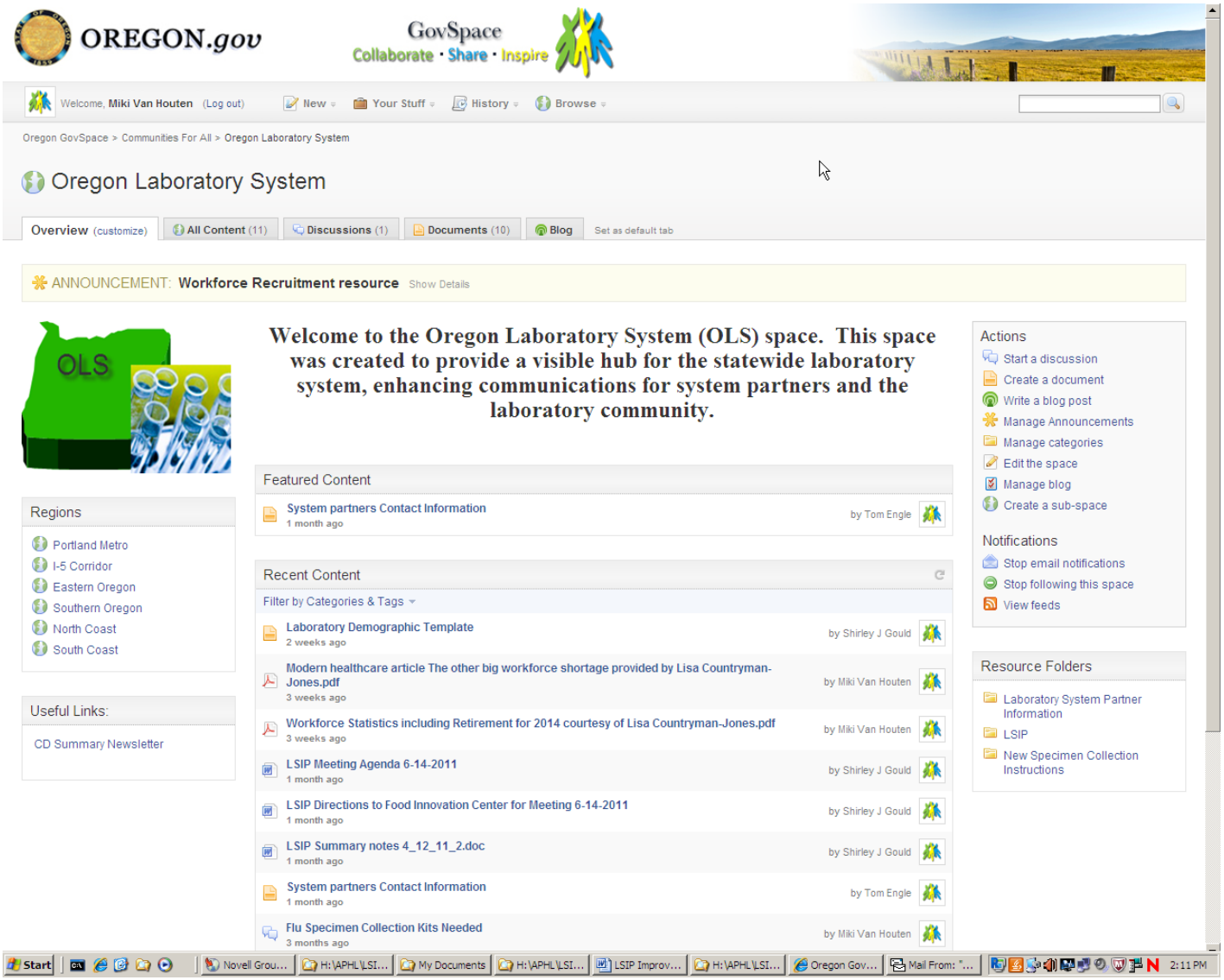
Additional discussion at the April and June partner meetings identified other gaps during discussion of Essential Services 4, 7, 8, and 9 that have not yet been addressed. These included:

- Work force development- rural areas especially hard hit- distance learning opportunities
- Continuing education opportunities not always available
- Cohesive approach to gathering, tracking and reporting data across the laboratory system including environmental, veterinary and agricultural labs
- Formalize coordinated state and private courier services

The new partner meeting will be August 2, 2011 to discuss Essential Services 10 and 1. The remaining essential services will be discussed at partner meetings in October and November.

Measurable Objectives:

1. A power point demonstration of GovSpace was presented at the April 12 partners meeting and changes were made to the space based on feedback from attendees.
2. A list of laboratories and their key leaders was developed and will provide the basis for contacting laboratories.
3. Laboratory specific information has not been developed in GovSpace since the system partners decided to "test" the space prior to expanding access. GovSpace was also not discussed at the statewide Oregon Epidemiologists meeting for the same reason.
4. The GovSpace site has been created. Its use is being piloted by 28 members of the LSIP group. Suggestions have been incorporated and documents submitted by members shared.



Access activity of the OLS space is monitored and the System partner Contact information was viewed 33 times by June 30, 2010.

5. A trifold brochure to explain the Oregon Laboratory System and GovSpace has been developed and printed. It will be used to recruit member laboratories when the pilot is complete. The brochure is shown on the next two pages.

Follow-Up Questions

What had prevented this project from taking place earlier?

Funds were not available to develop GovSpace or to recruit members to participate.

What examples or discussions during the assessment or follow-up identified the gap?

It was clear from Oregon's initial assessment that communication among partners in the Oregon Laboratory System was a gap that needed to be filled as a first step for other improvements.

What is the impact that completing this project has or will have on your laboratory system?

We have seen a continuing increase in participation in GovSpace and we are using it as a communication tool for sharing information from our follow up meetings.

Please identify other gaps that have not yet been addressed. What are the barriers to carrying out improvement projects that would address or correct the issue?

Our follow up meetings have identified a diminishing workforce as a crucial gap. We are currently looking for funding to conduct an Oregon specific assessment of workforce needs both in the near future and long term as the first step in addressing this problem.

Want to know more about the Oregon Laboratory System?

Want to get involved?

Want to join GovSpace?

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Oregon Health Authority
PUBLIC HEALTH DIVISION
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OREGON LABORATORY SYSTEM

Oregon Laboratory System professionals provide information critical to saving lives and preventing disease for thousands of Oregonans every day.

- **What is the system?**
- **Is it something new?**
- **Am I a participant?**

What is the Oregon Laboratory System?

The Oregon Laboratory System includes more than 2,000 Oregon public and private sector laboratories that support public health activities by working together to perform medical, food, agricultural, environmental and veterinary testing.

Is the system something new?

No. The system has been functioning informally for many years. However, a recent assessment has identified opportunities for communication and workforce improvements.

Am I a participant?

You are a participant if you provide test results that are used to protect and preserve the health of all Oregonians. This includes not only human clinical results, but also food, crop, water, environmental or animal testing.

History of collaboration

Representatives of partner laboratories met with local health departments, state epidemiologists, health care providers, first responders, and other key stakeholders in June 2010 to assess the strengths and gaps in laboratory support for the essential services of public health.

Recommendations from this initial session now are being translated into action through a process involving laboratories and partners.

Mission

The Oregon Laboratory System is a collaborative partnership that provides comprehensive, high quality and efficient services to promote health communities.

Partners in the system are committed to the following guiding principles:

- Continous quality improvement;
- Communication;
- Cost effectiveness; and
- Coordination.

Improved communications

One identified gap is the need for better communication among system partners.

Oregon GovSpace is being piloted as a possible solution. GovSpace is a versatile electronic tool that allows state agencies and their partners to build online communities. The Oregon State Public Health Laboratory is providing the leadership for this pilot.

GovSpace supports:

- Posting documents of common interest;
- Conducting discussions or polls;
- Writing and posting blogs;
- Sharing real-time information and updates;
- Exchanging technical information.

Laboratory workforce development

Laboratory workforce development is also a high priority. Initiatives and resources to assess and improve workforce challenges are being explored.