Public Health Laboratory Services: Public vs. Outsourcing Option

The public health lab [insert name here] provides 24/7 availability for testing agents of concern such as rabies, suspicious “white powders,” “Do Not Board” directives for infectious TB patients and other public health emergency events.

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| PHL Option | Outsourcing Option |
| Rabies Testing performed | No rabies testing is performed in the private sector |
| Influenza Surveillance performed for the detection of novel strains of influenza virus[[1]](#endnote-1) (state lab is a collaborating laboratory for the global WHO/CDC Influenza Strain Surveillance Network) | No influenza surveillance is performed in the private sector |
| Arbovirus surveillance (West Nile Virus, Eastern Equine Encephalitis, and Saint Louis Encephalitis viruses) among others performed[[2]](#endnote-2) | No arbovirus surveillance performed in the private sector. |
| Definitive testing for bioterrorism agents performed[[3]](#endnote-3) | No definitive testing for bioterrorism agents in performed in the private sector. FBI will only work with state public health laboratories for their referrals/lab analysis. |
| Testing performed in response to outbreaks of food borne and waterborne illnesses.[[4]](#endnote-4) | No testing is performed in response to outbreaks of food borne and waterborne illnesses in the private sector. |
| Molecular detection (by pulsed field gel electrophoresis (PFGE)) of outbreaks, including *Salmonella, E. Coli 0157:H7, Listeria*, and contributed into the national PulseNet database. | No PFGE is performed to detect outbreak clusters and contributed into the national PulseNet database by the private sector. |
| Testing in support of outbreak investigations, such as salmonella typing, and Department of Health Programs[[5]](#endnote-5) | State law mandates that certain laboratory specimens be submitted to the state public health laboratory. No private sector laboratory could have this function. |
| Testing in support of drugs of abuse/blood alcohol | No private sector laboratory could perform this testing for law enforcement/other government agencies. |
| Required to be the gatekeeper for sending specimens to the CDC for very high complexity testing. | Specimens are referred to CDC for very high complexity testing no performed by the private sector. |
| Reference and confirmatory testing for a variety of diseases.[[6]](#endnote-6) | Private sector and hospitals refers testing to the state public health laboratory for tests not frequently seen or mandated by state law [add state specific reference here] (notifiable diseases or conditions) |
| Radiation monitoring for any nuclear power plant in the state | Questionable if any private lab would take this on as it is a governmental program to monitor. |

1. Only public health laboratories, and not private sector laboratories, have access to influenza testing reagents that are provided (free of charge) by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. [↑](#endnote-ref-1)
2. Only public health laboratories, and not private sector laboratories, have access to arbovirus testing reagents that are provided (free of charge) by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. [↑](#endnote-ref-2)
3. Only public health laboratories, and not private sector laboratories, have access to CDC Laboratory Response Network (LRN) testing protocols and reagents that are provided (free of charge) by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. [↑](#endnote-ref-3)
4. Only public health laboratories, and not private sector laboratories have access to USD/FDA Food Emergency Response Network Testing protocols and reagents. [↑](#endnote-ref-4)
5. Only public health laboratories, not private sector laboratories, have access to Salmonella typing reagents that are provided by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. [↑](#endnote-ref-5)
6. Includes isolates or specimens for confirmation: [add state specific list here] [↑](#endnote-ref-6)