

# Quality Improvement Forum



**THE NC L-SIP  
EXPERIENCE  
DECEMBER 2, 2014**

# Goals

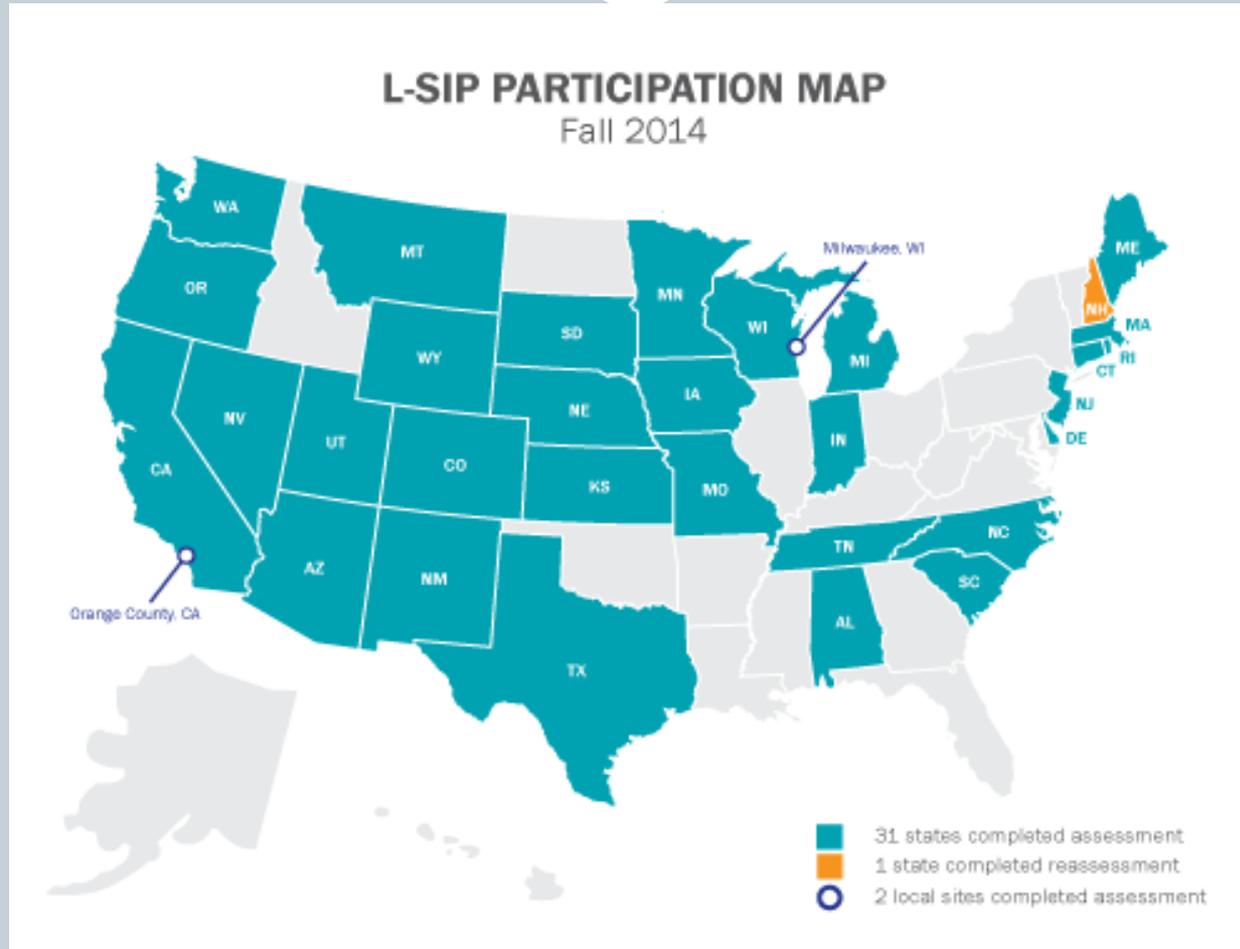


- To provide an overview of the NC L-SIP experience
- To describe lessons learned from the L-SIP process
  - Pre-planning
  - Planning
  - Assessment
  - Post-assessment

# North Carolina: The 31<sup>st</sup> State



**L-SIP PARTICIPATION MAP**  
Fall 2014



# Overview of NC L-SIP



- The assessment was conducted on September 23, 2014 at the McKimmon Conference and Training Center in Raleigh, NC.
- There were three facilitators and six themetakers present for the assessment.
- 85 participants attended the one-day meeting that represented many of the key stakeholders.
- 54 out of 85 evaluations were returned, giving a 63.5% response rate.

# Pre-planning



- Pre-planning activities included gaining support from leadership within the agency (for NC, within the Division of Public Health and the Department of Health and Human Services) and identifying a project coordinator.
  - Presenting L-SIP as a mechanism to build a strategic plan and a business plan for the laboratory, with an emphasis on sustainability, was key to gaining approval.
  - Identifying funding for a dedicated Project Coordinator was important due to staffing shortages and other competing priorities within the laboratory.

# Pre-planning (cont'd)



- **Pre-planning also included connecting with APHL and speaking with other public health laboratory directors at the state or local level who had completed L-SIP assessments.**
  - Connecting with APHL (Tina Su) allowed NC to gain access to L-SIP information on a dedicated SharePoint site and have an early conference call to get answers to preliminary questions.
  - APHL also facilitated a conference call with another state that had recently completed L-SIP and was willing to serve as a mentor.
  - Speaking with other laboratory directors allowed us to gather feedback on the successes and challenges identified during their assessments.

# Pre-planning (cont'd)



- Formation of a steering committee, made up of state laboratory personnel, was critical to begin the planning process.
  - Dr. Scott Zimmerman, PH Laboratory Director, and Dr. Leslie Wolf, L-SIP Project Coordinator, decided how big the team should be for maximum effectiveness.
  - Each made a list of staff members that represented each Unit of the NCSLPH, and who also had strong relationships with their stakeholders.
  - Dr. Zimmerman made the final decision regarding the makeup of the steering committee based on workload of each person.

# Pre-planning: Lessons Learned



- When forming the steering committee, we added a few more staff to ensure coverage (final count 14).
  - While a large committee (greater than 10) may seem unwieldy for rapid decision making, not everyone could attend every meeting.
  - Having a mixture staff (first line, supervisors, managers, and laboratory administration) was important so that many different perspectives were represented.

# Planning



- The earliest decisions to be made were to choose a date and identify stakeholders for the assessment.
  - To choose a date, the project coordinator found dates for all major local and professional meetings that would involve key stakeholders.
  - To identify stakeholders, using the “jellybean” diagram helped the steering committee think through the agencies and representatives that should be invited.

# Planning (cont'd)



- At the same time, decisions regarding the location and budget need to be made.
  - To find a location, the team identified potential facilities that were easily accessible and reasonably priced, and supported both plenary and breakout sessions.
  - NC developed a budget using guidance from APHL and previous L-SIP participants. It is necessary to have a close estimate of the number of participants when setting the budget.

# Planning (cont'd)



- **Following Appendix J of the L-SIP User's Guide was extremely useful in the planning process.**
  - Once the steering committee decided on a date for the assessment, a timeline was created with NC specific dates.
  - This allowed the planning process to stay on track for critical milestones, such as sending out invitations to stakeholders and following up with non-respondents.
  - Appendix J also mentions key roles related to tasks, and the project coordinator was able to identify staff to fill these roles (AV Coordinator, Web Communicator leader, Break/Lunch Coordinator, Facilitators, Themetakers, and Registration team).

# Planning (cont'd)



- Took into account internal processes and the time required to complete them, since these are not listed in Appendix J.
  - Contractual process with APHL to receive L-SIP funds
  - NC Conference authorization form
  - NC Travel authorization form
- Reviewed policies related to providing meals and travel reimbursements to state and local attendees.
- Reviewed payment policies for caterers versus state or local government payment policies.

# Planning (cont'd)



- **Decided how to handle RSVPs from the invited stakeholders.**
  - NC decided to use a web-based approach, with a registration link embedded in the invitation that was sent electronically.
- **Used the APHL Web Communicator template to communicate with stakeholders.**
  - Ensured that an L-SIP steering committee member lead coordinated with an IT staff person.
  - It was helpful to post a preliminary agenda, copies of invitation and links to the APHL User Guide and Assessment tool prior to the assessment date.

# Planning (cont'd)



- **Made sure that the steering committee reviewed and had access to the APHL User Guide and Assessment Tool.**
  - It was helpful to have the project coordinator lead the team through the background and timeline, plus key roles required in the L-SIP assessment.
  - Prior to the L-SIP Assessment, the project coordinator led the team through two of the essential public health services to gain familiarity with the tool and to brainstorm about ways the NCSLPH was or was not meeting the “gold standard”.

# Planning (cont'd)



- **Provided copies of the User Guide, Glossary, Assessment Tool, and draft agenda to the facilitators and themetakers.**
- **Provided training for the facilitators and themetakers three weeks prior to the assessment.**
  - Be sure they are clear about their respective roles and the goal(s) of the L-SIP assessment.
  - Allow plenty of time for discussion.
  - Ensure they know who to contact if they have questions between the training and the day before the assessment.

# Planning: Lessons Learned



- When choosing a date, find out when local boards of health typically meet; many Local Health Directors were not able to attend due to scheduled board meetings.
- When choosing a facility, try to ensure that breakout session locations are near the plenary location; one of the breakout sessions was located some distance from the others during the NC L-SIP Assessment.

# Planning: Lessons Learned (cont'd)



- **Have the steering committee go through Essential Services #5 and #9 in advance of the assessment.**
  - These were the most difficult conceptually and breakout sessions were challenging as a result.
- **Assign a leader for the internal budget, contract, purchasing and payment processes early on to ensure that these requirements are met.**
  - Some of these processes are lengthy and were not completed until after the L-SIP Assessment.

# Assessment



- NC L-SIP Registration team assembled packets the week before the meeting.
  - Packets included an agenda, the participant list, and the meeting evaluation form.
  - APHL provided the voting cards, the assessment tool, the definition of a state PH laboratory system, and the 10 essential PH services.
  - Name tags and sign in sheet were prepared as well by NC team.

# Assessment (cont'd)



- **Orientation**

- The NC L-SIP included a welcome by the Director of the Division of Public Health and the Director of the State Laboratory of Public Health, Dr. Scott Zimmerman.
- It was helpful to review presentations from other states and to include examples of past collaborations with system partners in NC.

- **Essential Public Health Service #2**

- Karen Breckenridge served as one of the facilitators and led the entire group with this essential service to orient participants to the assessment process.

# Assessment (cont'd)



- **Facilitators prepared themselves well by reviewing the L-SIP Assessment Tool and the User's Guide.**
  - Some had counted the number of voting opportunities for each essential service they were assigned, then planned their time accordingly for each breakout session.
  - Facilitators did an excellent job in keeping the discussions on track and trying to identify parking lot issues and next steps.
- **Themetaker pairs prepared themselves well by deciding how they wanted to divide the work and take notes (template on laptop or use of flip charts).**

# Assessment (cont'd)



- The Director of the State Laboratory of Public Health and the Project Coordinator opted to “float” among the breakout sessions to get a feel for the nature of the discussions occurring.
  - The benefits were that Dr. Zimmerman could provide some context for discussions occurring throughout the day, leading one evaluator to request that he could “be cloned so he could be everywhere.”
  - Certain “themes” became evident during process.

# Assessment (cont'd)



- The closing session consisted of a presentation sharing the results of all nine breakout sessions and completing a meeting evaluation form.
  - The L-SIP Project Coordinator gathered breakout session notes throughout the day to begin filling in the presentation outline.
  - Participants were asked to complete a hard copy evaluation prior to leaving for the day rather than ask them to complete an evaluation that was emailed after the fact.

# Assessment: Lessons Learned



- Although the registration deadline was set, and many reminders were sent out, there were numerous last minute additions and substitutions.
  - Be sure to have blank name tags available and blank lines on the sign in sheet for those that did not register by deadline.
  - Be sure to overestimate the amount of food needed and number of registration packets needed (we added ten).
- Remind participants that voting cards need to be returned to event organizers and ultimately APHL.
  - We did not get all voting cards returned by participants.

# Assessment: Lessons Learned



- Closing session presentation was a compilation of main ideas captured by the themetakers, but next steps were not clearly identified at times.
  - The Project Coordinator needed more time to prepare the presentation, as a 15 minute break was not enough time.
  - Having multiple means of taking notes benefited the themetakers, but created some difficulties for the Project Coordinator (flip charts, print outs, electronic documents, camera photos of white boards, *etc.*).
  - Fortunately, themetakers walked the Coordinator through the notes to help pull out main ideas, challenges and next steps.

# Assessment: Lessons Learned (cont'd)



- Evaluations were placed in every packet received at registration, however only 63.5% returned completed forms.
  - Some participants could not stay the entire day, so they left without returning their evaluations. It is probably best to mention the evaluation more than once at the end of the day to increase percent completed and returned.
  - It is time-consuming to hand tally written evaluations so this is an important consideration when deciding how to collect meeting evaluation data.

# Post-assessment



- Informal feedback was gathered by speaking with participants, facilitators and themetakers at the end of the day.
- Participants were thanked formally within one week.
- Evaluation results were compiled and summary provided to all participants via NC L-SIP Web Communicator site within one week.
- Preliminary scores were posted to the NC L-SIP website as well, using the APHL Scoring Tool summary tabs.

# Post-Assessment (cont'd)



- **The NC L-SIP Assessment Summary was posted within eight weeks of the assessment to the dedicated website and a link sent out to participants.**
  - The Project Coordinator used the notes provided by the themetakers to organize the strengths and challenges for each essential service.
  - Next steps were also identified from the notes, some of which were quite detailed.
  - The NC L-SIP steering committee held conference calls and communicated electronically as the draft document matured.

# Post-Assessment (cont'd)



- **The Quality Improvement Plan was organized by themes that emerged from the assessment.**
  - Information Technology
  - Financial Considerations
  - Public Health Laboratory System (Structure/Oversight)
  - Relationship Building
  - Enforcement Activities
  - Miscellaneous
- **Priority, Achievability, Leader and Timeframe will be established for each item in order to operationalize the QI Plan.**

# Post-assessment (cont'd)



- The goal is to finalize and post the QI Plan to the NC L-SIP Web Communicator site before the holidays.
  - This will allow stakeholders to see continued progress from the assessment.
  - We plan to engage key stakeholders in the Quality Improvement projects that are chosen as top priorities in early 2015.

# Post-Assessment: Lessons Learned



- **Conduct a formal de-briefing with the L-SIP steering committee soon after the assessment is complete to capture feedback while it is fresh on everyone's mind.**
  - This was not done in NC, but fortunately themetakers had fairly detailed notes and steering committee members had good memories regarding the breakout sessions they attended.
  - Be sure to consult the User Guide for post-assessment recommendations.

# Post-assessment: Lessons Learned



- A follow up meeting within 2-3 months of L-SIP assessment has not been scheduled.
  - The NC L-SIP Assessment Summary required six-eight weeks to complete.
  - The Quality Improvement Plan is in draft form and needs to be finalized prior to sharing with stakeholders.
  - Splitting responsibilities between the two documents may speed the process.

# Summary



- NC considers the L-SIP Assessment a great success, due in large part to a very effective steering committee, themetakers and facilitators, as well as engagement of participants in the process.
- Tina Su was diligent about touching base with us during the planning process, and Karen Breckenridge provided training for facilitators and themetakers.
- APHL resources, as well as information made available by other state and local public health laboratories, serve as an excellent road map.

## Summary (cont'd)



- Using a web link, such as QUIA survey tool, to gather RSVPs, is a great way to simplify tracking of Yes/No responses and any food restrictions or other special accommodations required.
- There are multiple ways to capture information from breakout sessions, from templates to be filled in, to flip charts or to white boards and camera phones. Choose the one(s) that works best for your team.
- Allow a reasonable amount of time to compile information from breakout sessions to present to group at closing session.

# Summary (cont'd)



- A dedicated but part-time project manager is an effective way to assure that tasks are completed on time, and alleviates additional workload on understaffed laboratories (almost 150 hours to date).
- Use Web Communicator tool to create a dedicated state or local L-SIP website. Many participants like this, and it is easy to send a link via email. It is a great way to keep stakeholders informed of progress made since the assessment occurred.

# Summary (cont'd)



- Be sure to debrief with the steering committee or planning team as soon as possible after the assessment to capture ideas while they are fresh.
- Consider dividing the labor between preparing the assessment summary and the quality improvement plan to speed up the process.

# Acknowledgements



- **NC SLPH Steering Committee**

- Dr. Scott Zimmerman
- Dr. Lou Turner
- Mike Kaufman
- Karen Sanderson
- Ann Grush
- Patty Atwood
- Tiffany Perdue
- La’Vonda Benbow
- Joey Johnson

- **NC SLPH Steering Committee (cont’d)**

- Chris Goforth
- William “Tex” Parks
- Denise Givens
- Royden Saah
- Dr. Dee Pettit
- Dr. Leslie Wolf
- **APHL**
  - Tina Su
  - Karen Breckenridge

# Questions?



- **APHL Laboratory System Improvement Program**
  - <http://www.aphl.org/aphlprograms/lss/performance/Pages/default.aspx>
- **For more information about the NC L-SIP assessment, please contact Leslie Wolf at [leslie.wolf@dhhs.nc.gov](mailto:leslie.wolf@dhhs.nc.gov) or [lesliewolf8@gmail.com](mailto:lesliewolf8@gmail.com)**