



APHL Position Statement

Strengthening the Laboratory System Improvement Program

A. Statement of Position

APHL supports strengthening of the Laboratory System Improvement Program (L-SIP), which will help fulfill the data requirements for Healthy People 2020 Objective 23-13 “Increase the proportion of tribal and State health agencies that provide or assure comprehensive laboratory services to support essential public health laboratory services.” This vibrant and effective program provides a mechanism to form networks within the state with multiple partners from the laboratory and from providers and users of laboratory data. L-SIP can provide standards for public health laboratory accreditation and measurement tools for the process of continual laboratory improvement. When all 50 states and 6 territories complete an L-SIP assessment, the nation will be in a better position to address public health concerns, such as influenza epidemics and natural disasters.

B. Implementation

1. APHL will encourage all 50 states and 6 territories to complete an L-SIP assessment and to develop networks that engage partners in ongoing meetings and other channels of communication that promote the system mission.
2. APHL will recommend that states complete an L-SIP reassessment every three-four years.

3. APHL will offer funding as available to states to help defray the cost of holding an assessment.

4. APHL will continue to hold conference calls to support systems preparing for an assessment and share quality improvement activities and success stories.

5. The APHL Board of Directors and membership, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and the broad public health community will support L-SIP, a program that enhances other national and state laboratory systems and networks.

C. Background/Data Supporting Position

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, in conjunction with a number of national associations, has developed tools to measure performance of state and local public health systems and local public health governing boards. Each tool uses the 10 Essential Public Health Services as a framework and is focused at the system level. In 2004, APHL launched L-SIP to measure performance of state public health laboratory systems based on the 10 Essential Public Health Services and 11 Core Functions of Public Health Laboratories. Although public health and other laboratories are already subject to state and federal regulations that promote quality assurance in laboratory operation, performance standards relate to scope of services and non-testing contributions to public

health programs. None of the current laboratory regulatory programs measure fulfillment of the 10 Essential Public Health Services, and none examine performance at a larger system level.

L-SIP provides:

- A framework for continual quality improvement of public health laboratory systems
- A basis for considering the work of public health laboratory system performance in the broadest context of public health performance
- A means for improving relationships with public health, private, and other governmental laboratories that comprise the broader laboratory system
- A means to collect data to measure systems improvement and progress toward meeting Healthy People 2020 objectives
- A means to increase the evidence-based foundation for public health practice

Michigan is a good example for how L-SIP has impacted the laboratory system in a positive way. The L-SIP assessment provided Michigan with areas for improvement of the statewide laboratory system. An advisory group was developed with broad representation by system participants. The advisory group is a forum to identify system-wide challenges and opportunities for improvement. Specific activities to strengthen the laboratory system include advocacy training for laboratory system members; presentation on the value of and advice on mentoring; and frequent updates on emerging health issues from the state public health laboratory.

D. References

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