

ASSOCIATION OF PUBLIC HEALTH LABORATORIES



L-SIP Update Fall 2010

This email contains an abbreviated version of the L-SIP Update. For the full version, click [here](#).

Welcome to the Association of Public Health Laboratories (APHL) Laboratory System Improvement Program (L-SIP) Update. This newsletter is designed to provide information to states interested in improving performance of their state public health laboratory systems. You are encouraged to share this update with your system partners and to share with us any new resources, experiences or activities related to system improvement.

Report from the 2010 APHL Annual Meeting

The L-SIP process was highlighted at the 2010 APHL Annual Meeting by a roundtable session, facilitated by Anne Weber from the Montana State Public Health Laboratory. Approximately 35 people attended the early morning session. Anne began the discussion by sharing her experiences during Montana's L-SIP process and encouraged others in the room who had participated in an assessment to share their experiences.

For the first time, the Laboratory Systems and Standards program sponsored a preconference workshop titled "Creating a Laboratory System Quality Improvement Plan." It was facilitated by Casey and Tom Milne of Milne & Associates, LLC. Twenty-three people, a mix of state/local and federal representatives that have and have not conducted an L-SIP assessment, attended the session. The workshop objectives focused on priority setting and improvement plan development. There was also a panel discussion where the speakers shared examples of their quality improvement activities, lessons learned and resources.

Oregon L-SIP Experience

Oregon was the most recent state and the 23rd to conduct an L-SIP assessment. This occurred on June 30, 2010. Miki Van Houten (Quality Management and Safety Officer, Oregon State Public Health Laboratories) summarized the L-SIP experience below.

The Oregon State Public Health Laboratory (OSPHL) hosted 47 partners from a wide variety of organizations to assess the strengths and gaps in the statewide laboratory system that supports public health. Participants compared Oregon's laboratory system with national performance standards, using a tool developed by APHL as part of L-SIP.

Oregon's L-SIP event was highly successful in terms of participation, engagement, and results. Attendees appreciated the opportunity to participate, and they felt the event was an excellent first step toward building a stronger statewide laboratory system to support public health. The day was also an opportunity for networking, relationship building and becoming aware of system partner activities. There was a strong commitment to take the process forward and to address the gaps that were identified. A review of the next steps for each essential service reveals several common themes: Communication, Partnership, Expansion of Services, and Workforce. Before any improvements in these areas can be made, the statewide laboratory system that supports public health in Oregon must be characterized to define its overarching mission, roles and responsibilities.

Update of Previous States and Progress to Date

As a result of convening an L-SIP assessment, the Delaware, Michigan, and Montana state public health laboratories and partners identified strengths and areas for improvement within their respective state public health laboratory systems. Plans of action have been established to address any system gaps that were brought to light during the assessment.

Delaware: Building on the success of the November 2009 Laboratory Technical Working Group meeting, the first Environmental Laboratory Preparedness Advisory Committee, or E-LPAC, met on April 13, 2010 at the Smyrna Readiness Center hosted by the members of the 31st Civil Support Team (CST) of the Delaware National Guard. This session provided the opportunity for members of the laboratory system to meet and discuss opportunities for better integration of laboratory services and provide updates on the current and recent events in the various organizations represented.

Michigan: The Michigan Laboratory System Advisory Group (LSAG) was formed as a direct result of the L-SIP assessment. The intent of the LSAG was to provide a forum where laboratory system partners can meet, discuss issues affecting system partners and participate in workgroups by interest and need to solve common problems. Michigan is planning to hold its second face-to-face LSAG meeting post- L-SIP assessment on September 15. The group also had a teleconference between the two face-to-face meetings. During a previous brainstorming session, the LSAG created a list of areas where system partners felt there was a need for improvement. Michigan currently has four workgroups working on different areas that were voted by members as a high priority:

- Communicating policies/decisions in a timely manner
- Determining the scope of testing services within the system
- Improving the visibility of the laboratory system to the general public
- Determining lab training needs

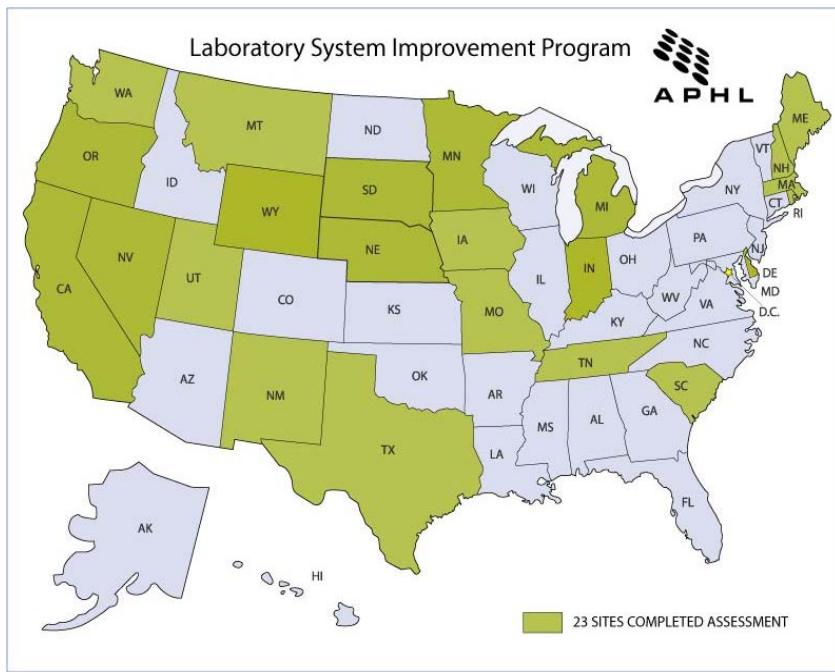
A Google Groups page has also been created to allow LSAG members to share documents and use as an email list.

Montana: Montana conducted their L-SIP assessment in Spring 2008, and the Montana Laboratory Forum was created as a result of the L-SIP assessment. Workgroups within the Forum were formed to address gaps identified during the L-SIP assessment.

The Montana Laboratory Forum met for its second face-to-face meeting on August 24, 2010 to continue work on laboratory system improvement. Approximately 30 system partners participated in breakout groups to identify specific aims to work on for the coming year. Emphasis this year will be placed on further defining the roles, responsibilities, and capabilities of the various system partners, identifying and addressing workforce needs, developing a communication notification plan specifically for rabies, and gathering data on information technology capacity and capabilities in order to facilitate electronic data exchange. Use of the Montana Laboratory Forum listserv was encouraged as a means of communication and a customized version of the APHL Web Communicator was unveiled. The Montana Laboratory Forum plans to use these tools to post pertinent information and to track progress of the various workgroups.

Updated Map

As of the end of June 2010, 23 states have completed a state public health laboratory system assessment.



Online Resource Center

The APHL Online Resource Center (ORC) houses resources to improve the quality of state public health laboratory systems. State partners can benefit from access to a single repository of resources related to the national Laboratory System Improvement Program. To access the ORC, please visit www.aphl.org/orc.

Funding Support and Deadline

APHL provides funding to SPHLs or their partners to participate in the L-SIP process, these funds can be used for costs associated with the actual assessment, including purchasing refreshments/food, renting a facility, paying for facilitators, supplies, etc. For states interested in conducting a reassessment, funding can be applied for. Proposals will be considered on a first come, first served basis. Grantees are expected to conduct the state assessment process and begin a performance improvement action plan. Applications for the Fall 2010 cohort must be received by **COB Monday, September 20, 2010.**

Schedule of Fall 2010 Cohort L-SIP Technical Assistance Calls

APHL sponsors technical assistance to prepare for conducting an L-SIP assessment via multimedia trainings and conference calls. These calls offer the states planning an L-SIP assessment a chance to learn more about the assessment and the logistics of planning for one. They are also an opportunity for the assessment coordinators, facilitators, and theme takers to ask any questions they have about their roles and responsibilities. Technical assistance calls for the Fall 2010 cohort will be held on the following dates/times.

- Thursday, September 16, 2010, 11:00 AM Eastern
- Thursday, September 30, 2010, 11:30 AM Eastern
- Tuesday, October 12, 2010, 11:30 AM Eastern

Upcoming L-SIP Practical Applications Calls

Formerly called the Improvement technical assistance calls, the L-SIP Practical Applications calls will allow previous L-SIP states share their post-L-SIP assessment experiences, lessons learned and quality improvement resources with interested states. There will be two of these calls scheduled for late Fall, exact dates to be announced.

For More Information

Please visit: aphl.org/lsip

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