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May Quality Improvement Forum Call: Work Time Units

May 3, 2016

Background

- Topic idea originated from the APHL LSS committee.
- The topics that will be covered:
 - how laboratories are dividing the work amongst the staff, despite workloads and QA/QC requirements
 - how much time laboratories are setting aside for QA/QC/competency assessments relative to routine work.

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Arizona State Public Health Laboratory

Workload and Staffing



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Staffing

- ASPHL Staff
 - 1 Bureau Chief (Non clinical Lab Director)
 - 1 Clinical Lab Director (part time)
 - 2 Assistant Bureau Chiefs, 5 Office Chiefs
 - 19 Supervisors
 - 58 Staff in addition to supervisors (includes contractors/temporary)
 - 30 Scientist, 2 QA, 3 Facilities, 4 Lab Licensure (Env& CLIA)
 - 11 NBS Demographics and Follow Up
 - 5 Receiving/Media/Glassware
 - 3 Program specialists
 - 2 IT LIMS support staff
- New or continuing challenges
 - Customer expectations, emerging issues
 - Interruptions, i.e. STAT testing, meetings or fires to put out.

Staffing

- Staffing levels at the lab have been declining over the years
 - Hiring freezes
 - Head count thresholds
- Turnover and retirements
 - Turnover rates are not especially high, but limited promotion opportunities has impacted
 - Retirements – multiple areas where staff are close to retiring or we have had some retirements
- Loss of administrative staff (mailing, etc)

Work

- Each area deals with the following basics:
 - Primary job
 - Pre-analytical, analytical, or post analytical
 - Quality
 - QC associated with testing/job function
 - QA tasks – tracking, maintenance, reviews, meetings
 - Safety
 - Training and tracking
 - Review of areas, addressing injuries/incidents
 - Disposal/waste management
 - Administrative
 - Ordering, inventory management
 - Personnel (supervisors/management)
 - Contracts (supervisors/management)

Quality Assurance

- Quality Assurance is a system that encompasses all aspects of the lab
 - We are CLIA, EPA, and ISO accredited, so have to ensure meeting the various requirements
 - We have a QA Unit – QA Manager and two QA Officers
 - QA Manager also is manager of Receiving/Shipping and Media Prep/Glassware
 - Provide support for sections and tracking of certain elements
 - Write, review and issue general SOPs (timer/pipet/etc)
 - Provide training on QA topics – documentation, temperature, root cause, etc
 - All QA staff also serve on the Safety Committee

Workload Split

- Area Supervisors
 - Manage budgets, purchases, inventory and staff workloads (25%)
 - Also perform testing on the bench (50%)
 - Work on QA tasks – see previous slide (25%)
 - Many delegate to a staff in the section for inventory and QA tasks
- Staff
 - Perform testing (or other job function) (75%)
 - Perform QC associated with job function (part of 75%)
 - Assist with any QA tasks and other duties as assigned (25%)

Monterey County Public Health Laboratory

Workload and Staffing



Doing More with Less

- PHL Staff
 - 1 Lab Director, 1 Senior PHM, 2 PHMs, 1 Lab Assistant, 1 Lab Helper, 1 Office Admin
 - Loss of PHM and admin staff
 - Hiring freeze
- Increase in number of samples tested last year
- Increased PCR testing has led to new challenges
 - Clients expect faster TATs
 - Starting start PCR run before 4 PM is difficult when there are interruptions, i.e. STAT testing, rabies, meetings or fires to put out.

Doing More Training, Validation, QA

- County-wide mandatory training classes keep increasing
- Lab training on advanced methodologies and automation keep increasing
- Validating lab developed tests takes time
- Our senior microbiologist works on QA/QC (80-100%) and covers the bench when PHMs are absent
- Lab Director works on QA/QC (25%) and on bench when other PHMS are overwhelmed
- We're already doing "LEAN Microbiology"

Work Time Units

- We need more staff!
- Management wants cost-benefit analysis
- We use Procedure Time Values (PTVs) to calculate staffing needs and workload
- PTVs don't account for time to train, validate, perform QA/QC, write SOPs, etc.

Open Discussion Questions

- How do other labs calculate workload?
- What are other labs doing to meet QA/QC requirements?
 - Larger commercial and hospital labs have
 - QA Chiefs
 - QA/QC Compliance Senior Scientists
 - Quality Analysts
 - Have other PHLs changed job descriptions and/or delegation of QA/QC duties?

Open Discussion on Solutions



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Solutions

- (AZ PHL) Temporary staffing
 - In the past we were able to hire temporary service staffs (scientific or otherwise) to assist sections
 - Current temps we are allowed to maintain, but new temps are being scrutinized
- (AZ PHL) Contracting work
 - Recent discussions of what work can be contracted out to a partner instead of us performing the work (e.g. data entry, billing, follow up, other items)

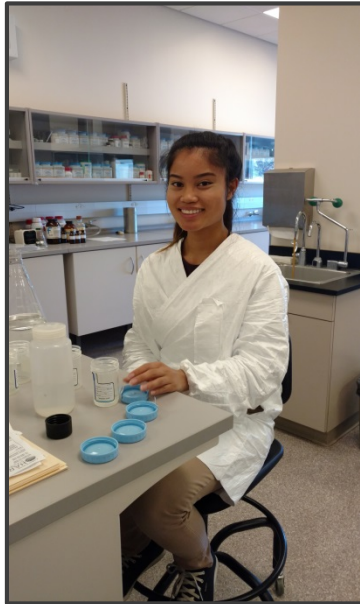
Solutions

- (AZ PHL) Set aside time and location away from job function for supervisors to work on managerial and QA tasks
 - When not distracted by phone or questions able to work more productively and effectively
 - Some even telecommute when working on personnel appraisals or grants
- (AZ PHL) Interns
 - MOUs by state with multiple universities and colleges
 - Unpaid positions, max 20 hours week but don't always get
 - Limited tasks allowed (typically no testing) – assist with pre-analytical and post-analytical work
 - Currently have about 7 interns starting or working at least 12 hours/week (many closer to 20 hrs)

Solutions

- Student Interns
 - Monterey County established a MOU with a local university to recruit students in paid and unpaid intern positions.
 - We have 3 unpaid interns that work 15-20 hours/week
 - Assist in office and laboratory; no testing

MCPHL Interns



Pilar



Jennifer and Jose meet Dr. Karen Smith, Director and State Health Officer for California Department of Public Health

Open Discussion on Ideas for Future Calls



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please visit:**

**[http://www.aphl.org/aphlprograms/lss/perfor
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