

Michigan
Laboratory System Advisory
Improvement Plan

Purpose:

The Michigan Laboratory System Improvement Plan represents ideas and action items stemming from the Michigan Laboratory System Improvement Program (LSIP) meeting held in March 2009 and the Michigan Laboratory Advisory Group (LSAG) meeting held in November 2009. Its purpose is to guide the LSAG going forward by providing detailed action items that emerged in these two initial meetings.

Background:

The intent of the LSIP assessment was to determine the strengths and weakness of the Michigan public health laboratory system and identify opportunities for improvements. The outcome of this assessment included recommendations for Lab System improvements including the formation of the LSAG. The complete LSIP assessment can be found at http://www.michigan.gov/documents/mdch/LSIP_final_report_286025_7.doc

The LSAG was formed as a direct result of the LSIP assessment. The intent of the LSAG was to provide a forum where Lab System partners can meet, discuss issues affecting system partners, and participate in workgroups by interest and need to solve common problems. During the LSAG, a brainstorming session created a list of areas where System Partners felt there was a need for improvement. The items on this list were prioritized by voting as high, medium, or low priority.

Results:

After the LSAG meeting, MDCH staff reviewed the LSIP recommendations and the LSAG priority item listing and developed the following list of items by priority ranking.

High

- Improve Communications - HIT/Messaging
- Improve Communications - Use IT to reduce redundancy and increase efficiency
- Improve Communications - Identify areas where lab system partners can share information to provide enhanced services
- Improve Communications – Exercise system communication tools
- Improve Communications – Integrate laboratory assets and needs in the health information exchange development
- Improve Communications – Inform stakeholders of policy changes/plans in a timely manner
- Improve Testing Services - Collaborate within the PH System to reduce redundancy and eliminate waste
- Improve Testing Services – Develop surveillance capabilities, i.e., to detect emerging multi- and novel drug resistant organisms
- Improve Testing Services – Develop mechanisms to share best practices between system partners

- Improve Testing Services – Determine the scope of testing services in the laboratory system
- Advocacy – Identify advocates for the Lab System and ways they can assist in the stabilization of funding streams
- Advocacy – Partnership to influence policy
- Advocacy – Improve the visibility of the laboratory system to the general public
- Advocacy – Involve the laboratory system in the national healthcare reform discussion
- Misc. – Determine laboratory training needs
- Misc. – Define the mission of the Laboratory System

Medium

- Improve Communications – Develop a system key contact directory including state and local health and private/commercial labs; keep it updated
- Improve Communications – Develop a “Who Does What” listing for the general public
- Improve Communications – Make after action reports and other information more available for shared learning – develop a feedback mechanism
- Improve Communications – Develop a system to monitor the rates of specimen submission (i.e., what is our denominator?)
- Improve Communications – Develop a formal liaison to communicate with professional societies
- Improve Testing Services – Technical Training for emerging infectious diseases
- Improve Testing Services – Review of the Public Health Code
- Improve Testing Services – Develop written documents outlining system component responsibilities and assets
- Improve Linkages – Identify gaps among local public health agencies in public health preparedness and exercises
- Improve linkage and data sharing with veterinary surveillance systems (from all laboratories doing veterinary testing)
- Research – Establish partnerships with academia and teaching hospitals to identify opportunities/needs and plan research projects – develop methods to evaluate and disseminate outcomes

Low

- Improve Testing Services – Increase DNA fingerprinting at the state lab
- Improve Testing Services – Decrease turn around time at the state lab
- Improve Testing Services – Develop a schedule for exercising radiological sample submission for intentional release scenarios
- Improve Lab Regulations – Reduce redundancy
- Improve Lab Regulations – Investigate the licensure of laboratory professionals

Workgroups:

The items voted to be of high priority, were then expanded into four categories and twelve workgroups. The four categories are a) improve communications; b) improve testing services; c) advocacy; and d) a miscellaneous group. The twelve workgroups are listed below under their respective categories.

Improve Communications - Identify areas where lab system partners can share information to provide enhanced services.

1. HIT/messaging – identify ways to promote and lead standardized messaging of systems’ data exchanges.
 - a. LSIP – develop a written plan to integrate public health laboratory partners into health information exchanges using standard messaging.
 - b. Define the state lab’s role in developing and maintaining IT.
 - c. Integrate laboratory assets and needs in HIE development.
2. Use IT to reduce redundancy and increase efficiency – identify ways to use IT, i.e., conference calls, listservs, to improve communication between lab system members.
 - a. LSIP – perform an initial communication asset inventory and needs analysis for distribution to system partners.
3. Communicate policies/decisions in a timely manner – identify areas where lab system partners can share information to provide enhanced services to citizens of the state.
 - a. LSIP – convene a focus group meeting with chronic disease programs and environmental laboratories in the state and produce a listing of items needed to improve data sharing between agencies.
 - i. Assess and determine polices to gather environmental health testing results from non-governmental labs for use by public programs
 - ii. Determine how PH lab system can support and enhance chronic disease programs
4. Exercise system communication tools.

Improve Testing Services

5. Collaborate within the Public Health System to reduce redundancy and eliminate waste. Determine the scope of testing services within the laboratory system.
6. Develop surveillance capabilities, i.e., to detect emerging multi-and novel drug resistant organisms.
7. Develop mechanisms to share best practices between system partners.

Advocacy

8. Identify advocates for the Laboratory System and ways they can assist in the stabilization of funding streams.
9. Partnership to influence policy. Involve the laboratory system in the national healthcare reform discussion.

10. Improve the visibility of the laboratory system to the general public.

Miscellaneous

11. Determine laboratory training needs.
12. Define the mission of the Laboratory System.

Initial Workgroups

- Communicate policies/decisions in a timely manner
- Determine the scope of testing services within the system
- Improve the visibility of the Lab System to the general public
- Determine lab training needs

Next Steps:

Workgroups are tasked to work on their priority item and report back at each quarterly LSAG meeting on progress, roadblocks, or ask for input from other system partners. Once a workgroup has deemed they have completed the priority item, the workgroup will dissolve and members will be free to join other workgroups as their schedules permit. Items of lower priority can be moved to a higher priority by vote of LSAG members or by a workgroup volunteering for that item.

Future Activities:

LSAG will meet quarterly – once per year in person and three times via conference call. Workgroups will report progress at each meeting. Items can be added to the Priority List at any meeting and the list can be reprioritized at the will of the members. LSAG members should actively seek out additional participants from other system partners and invite them to consider becoming active members.