

## **New Laboratory Information Management System (LIMS) at MDCH BOL**

In October 2005, the MDCH Bureau of Laboratories and seven of its Regional Laboratory affiliates began working toward replacing their existing laboratory information management system (LIMS) with a new LIMS, named StarLims.

MDCH Bureau of Laboratories is replacing their LIMS due to federally mandated interoperability functionality that is not present in the current LIMS. StarLims complies with the guidelines and regulations required by Centers for Disease Control (CDC), Public Health Information Network (PHIN), Association of Public Health Laboratories (APHL), National Electronic Disease Surveillance System (NEDSS), Clinical Laboratory Improvement Amendments (CLIA), Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and Clinical and Laboratories Standards Institute (CLSI). “These guidelines, regulations and requirements have been federally mandated to insure that public health laboratories can respond and can exchange health information with other public health partners at the local, state and federal level to protect citizens during a public health crisis brought about by outbreaks and/or Bioterrorism. The new LIMS will be utilized by eight state wide laboratories to provide real time reporting of laboratory reports to hospital, local, state and federal health officials in order to prevent illness, disease and deaths.”

The key feature of StarLims is that it allows for interoperability between computer systems. This functionality will provide “real time, secure electronic transfers of data via intranet and/or internet to other public health departments and/or agencies. Disease surveillance systems, like the Michigan Disease Surveillance System (MDSS) and CDC, will receive data from the LIMS and report laboratory results to public health officials almost immediately. The LIMS will receive data from medical laboratories, local health and hospitals to provide demographic and related data, which will be matched with incoming specimens without excessive manual data entry. The LIMS will export laboratory reports in real time, via fax and secure networks to submitters using PHIN compliant methods and technologies.”

It is difficult to determine the anticipated time line for the StarLims implementation. The current project plan states late summer 2007, but the time line will be extended due to a delay in procuring the necessary hardware.