

LabLink



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Bureau Vision

The Bureau of Laboratories is a stronger, more diverse team within an integrated public health system. We utilize advanced technology and innovative leadership to provide comprehensive public health services in our dynamic global community.

Bureau Mission

We are dedicated to continuing leadership in providing quality laboratory science for healthier people and communities through partnerships, communication, and technical innovation.

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Editor: Teresa Miller



The Michigan Regional Laboratory System: Past, Present, and Future of Public Health Laboratory System in Michigan

The COVID-19 pandemic highlighted the importance and need of sustained infrastructure ranging from manufacturing capacity to clinical and public health response. The need for testing capacity that was timely, flexible, and capable of providing actionable data for both public health and clinical response was a predominant theme during the pandemic.

Since the 1970s, regional laboratories have been in service within the State of Michigan. This network of laboratories was initially established as crime detection laboratories funded with federal and matching state funds. Over the decade needs changed with the passing of new federal regulations such as the Clinical Laboratory Improvement Act of 1988 (CLIA' 88), which required specific personnel and testing standards. Local Health Departments (LDH) were required to establish testing networks with laboratories meeting the new requirements for local programs such as health screening and family planning. To meet the needs, the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (known as Michigan Department of Community Health at the time) Bureau of Laboratories (BOL) established a Regional Laboratory System in 1990. This allowed for experienced BOL management to direct and serve as technical consultants for regional laboratories to ensure testing networks were regionally available to local health departments that met CLIA' 88 requirements. While laboratory locations have changed over the decades and reorganizations have occurred, the main goal to provide quality, compliant testing has remained to date.

Currently, there are six regional laboratories serving the residents of Michigan. Four reside within the lower peninsula: Kalamazoo County, Oakland County (Pontiac and Southfield), Saginaw County, and Health Department of Northwest Michigan (Gaylord). Two additional laboratories are in the upper peninsula: Western Upper Peninsula Health Department and LMAS (Luce Mackinac Alger Schoolcraft) District Health Department.

While the landscape of Michigan regional laboratories has changed throughout the years along with the location of laboratories, the mission has remained steadfastly the same: *“To provide for the delivery of analytical data which is accurate, timely and relevant to public health, clinical and epidemiological program needs. To continuously strive to improve testing quality and service delivery. To strengthen public health programs throughout Michigan through the voluntary affiliation of public health professionals in the Regional Laboratory System.”*

Looking forward in a post-pandemic world, regional laboratories will play a major role in ensuring robust response and laboratory capacity remains within Michigan. This past June, regional laboratories, health officers, and MDHHS staff met for a two-day strategic planning meeting. From the meeting, timelines with specific action items were developed in order to address issues around funding, testing menus, outreach, and staffing.

To contact your nearest Regional Laboratory partner, please visit their websites:

- [HCS Laboratory - Environmental Health - Health and Community Services - Kalamazoo Michigan County Government Web Site \(kalcounty.com\)](#)
- www.nwhealth.org
- <https://www.oakgov.com/>
- www.saginawpublichealth.org
- <https://www.lmasdhd.org>
- [Western UP Health Department – Leading The Community Toward Better Health \(wupdhd.org\)](#)



***Candida auris* Surveillance Screening Anticipated to Go Live this Fall**

Candida auris has garnered much attention over the past few years as a fungal pathogen linked to healthcare-associated infections. Compared to other yeasts, it is more persistent in the environment and within colonized patients. For laboratorians, identification becomes more challenging as *C. auris* closely resembles other yeast, such as *Candida albicans*, and many commercial identification platforms misidentify *C. auris*. Treatment can be challenging because many *C. auris* isolates are found to be relatively resistant to available anti-fungal agents and many individuals, upon successful treatment, may remain colonized with *C. auris* for an extended period.

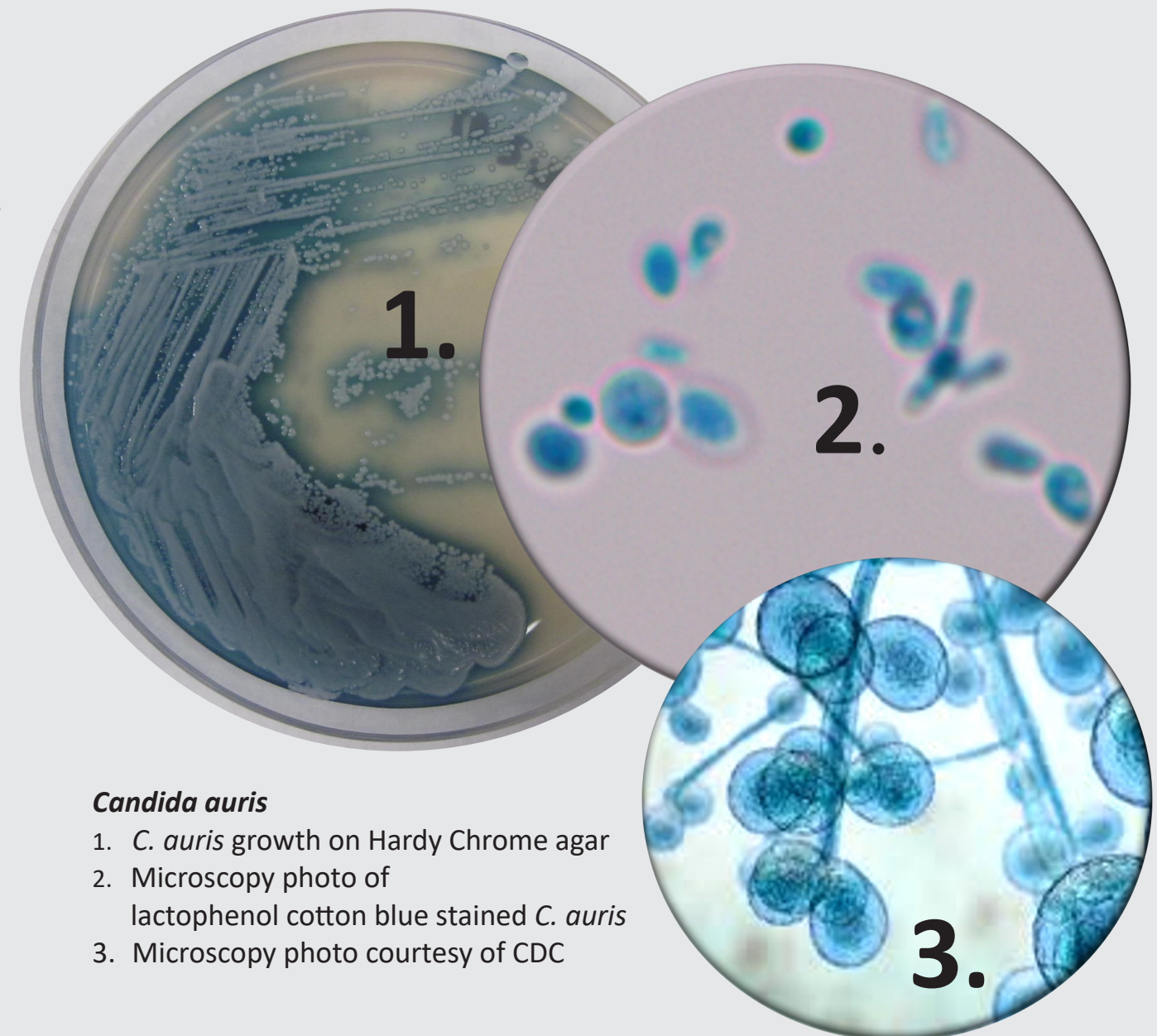
Public health laboratory capacity for *C. auris* surveillance screening, identification, confirmation, and antifungal susceptibility testing has been established through the Antimicrobial Resistance Laboratory Network (AR Lab Network). Due to the increasing prevalence of *C. auris* nationally, it became necessary to expand current capacity to meet the growing need. Thanks to supplemental funding through the American Rescue Plan Act, testing capacity and response infrastructure is being further constructed and supported to assist response efforts.

The Bureau of Laboratories has been able to build additional surveillance screening capacity for Michigan utilizing the additional funding and AR Lab Network pre-established testing methods.

The Microbiology Section has capacity to confirm suspected *C. auris* isolates and will soon be able to perform clinical colonization screens. The colonization screens are comprised of two testing methodologies. First, axilla/groin specimens, collected in coordination and prior approval with the Surveillance for Healthcare-Associated & Resistant Pathogens (SHARP) unit, are tested using a molecular detection method for *C. auris* DNA. The second test method is for swabs testing positive, a 5-to-7-day culture enrichment performed to confirm viable organism is

present and to provide an isolate for further characterization (i.e., whole genome sequencing and antifungal susceptibility test when appropriate). All isolates are forwarded to the regional AR Lab Network, Wisconsin State Laboratory of Hygiene.

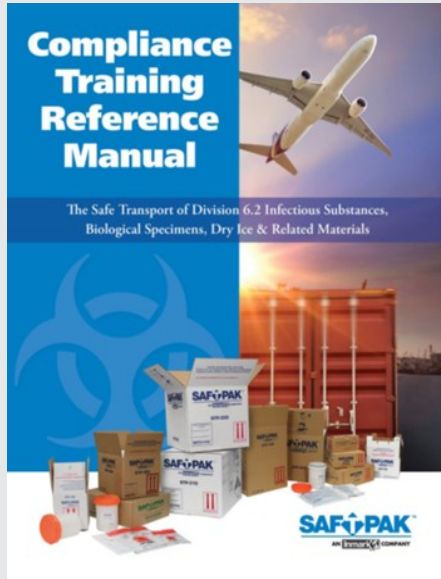
For more information on *Candida auris*, including an updated dash board of Michigan *C. auris* cases, please visit the [MDHHS HAI Candida auris](#) site.



Candida auris

1. *C. auris* growth on Hardy Chrome agar
2. Microscopy photo of lactophenol cotton blue stained *C. auris*
3. Microscopy photo courtesy of CDC

Infectious Substances Transport, Training Opportunities



Are you involved in the transportation of infectious substances? Safe and compliant transport of these materials is essential to ensure public health and safety. The Bureau of Laboratories is pleased to announce a continuing education opportunity featuring the transport of infectious substances. The Association of Public Health Laboratories (APHL) is partnering with “Saf-T-Pak®” to provide free comprehensive training for the safe transport of infectious substances, biological specimens, dry ice, and related materials. Join

APHL and “Saf-T-Pak®” for a comprehensive training program and become an expert in handling infectious substances with confidence. This is a great opportunity for healthcare partners interested in offering staff additional training in infectious substances transport. This full-day virtual seminar is a great way to designate an internal laboratorian or two as experts in shipping regulations.

Please choose from multiple time slots to fit your schedule, eliminating the need for travel and time away from work. See (Figure 1) for available training times. Email Jason Wholehan, wholehanj@michigan.gov to finalize training plans.

But wait, that's not all! We understand that different learners have different preferences. That's why MDHHS BOL continues to offer multiple learning options to cater to your needs. Prefer in-person learning? In-person training is available and can be scheduled at a convenient time to accommodate employee schedules at each facility.

If a live session is not suitable, BOL maintains an asynchronous, self-paced, online module that allows the healthcare professional to view course materials.

The MI-TRAIN course is a recorded lecture of the Packing and Shipping material. Visit [Home - MI-TRAIN](#) and search for course number 1094582 to get started.

Don't miss these opportunities to enhance your skills and contribute to public health and safety. Contact Jason Wholehan, wholehanj@michigan.gov, to get registered now for either the live virtual training or schedule an in-person lecture. Whichever learning mode you choose, BOL has the right the learning format that suits you!

Figure 1:

Day/Date	Time	Registration Deadline Day/Date
Wednesday, November 8, 2023	9AM- 4PM	Wednesday, October 18, 2023
Thursday, November 9, 2023	9AM- 4PM	Thursday, October 19, 2023
Tuesday, December 5, 2023	9AM- 4PM	Tuesday, November 14, 2023
Tuesday, January 9, 2024	9AM- 4PM	Tuesday, December 19, 2023
Thursday, January 11, 2024	9AM- 4PM	Thursday, December 21, 2023
Tuesday, January 16, 2024	9AM- 4PM	Tuesday, December 26, 2023
Thursday, January 25, 2024	9AM- 4PM	Thursday, January 4, 2024
Thursday, February 8, 2024	9AM- 4PM	Thursday, January 18, 2024
Tuesday, March 5, 2024	9AM- 4PM	Tuesday, February 13, 2024
Tuesday, March 12, 2024	9AM- 4PM	Tuesday, February 20, 2024
Thursday, March 14, 2024	9AM- 4PM	Thursday, February 22, 2024
Thursday, March 21, 2024	9AM- 4PM	Thursday, February 29, 2024
Tuesday, April 16, 2024	9AM- 4PM	Tuesday, March 26, 2024
Thursday, April 18, 2024	9AM- 4PM	Thursday, March 28, 2024
Thursday, May 9, 2024	9AM- 4PM	Thursday, April 18, 2024
Thursday, May 16, 2024	9AM- 4PM	Thursday, April 25, 2024

MI-TRAIN

