May 4–7, 2026

Baltimore, MD

APHL® 2026

where laboratory science and public health meet

Preliminary Program

#APHL

May 4–7, 2026 Baltimore, MD

APHL™ 2026

where laboratory science and public health meet

The APHL Annual Conference is a trademark event for the public health laboratory community, bringing together more than 1,000 leaders, scientists, influencers and partners to share issues, trends and best practices driving laboratory science and public health today.

Session topics explore public health laboratory issues, trends and technologies relative to emerging infectious diseases, environmental health, emergency preparedness, quality systems and safety, informatics, food safety, newborn screening, global health, workforce and more.

Attendees in Baltimore will enjoy live sessions and roundtables, networking opportunities, receptions and events such as the Dr. Katherine Kelley Distinguished Lecture and the Annual Awards Ceremony, and 200+ scientific posters and 70+ exhibitors as we commemorate the 75th anniversary of APHL!

Attendee Benefits

- 40+ sessions
- 70+ exhibitors
- 200+ scientific posters
- Networking opportunities
- Receptions and events
- P.A.C.E.® and CPH CEUs
- Prize raffle and other special giveaways
- Seeing friends and colleagues
- All the fun of Baltimore!

Who Attends?

- State, county and city public health laboratory directors and personnel
- Environmental and agricultural laboratory directors and scientists
- Fellows and students interested in public health laboratory science and practice
- Healthcare professionals and clinicians from public health agencies
- Federal agencies and state and local public health officials
- Clinical and academic laboratory managers and staff
- Others interested in laboratory issues

Why Attend?

- Learn more about contemporary issues in laboratory science
- Network with partners and friends
- Explore new ways to manage your laboratory
- Contribute to multiple discussions
- Visit 70+ exhibitors to see the latest in laboratory technology, supplies and services
- View 200+ posters from all branches or disciplines in public health laboratory science and practice

Registration

Advanced registration through APHL is required. Visit www.aphl.org/AC. For questions, contact **conferences@aphl.org**.

APHL Member	$750
Non-member	$895
Student	$200
Fellow	$550

A student is someone who pays the registration fee out of pocket without reimbursement. A fellow is someone who receives a stipend to pay the registration fee.

Consent to Use Photographic Images

Registration and attendance at or participation in APHL conferences and other activities constitutes an agreement by the registrant to APHL's use and distribution (both now and in the future) of the registrant's or attendee's image or voice, without compensation, in photographs, video and audio recordings, and electronic reproductions of such events and activities.

Meeting Location and Hotel Information

APHL has secured group blocks at hotels in close proximity to the Baltimore Convention Center. Please secure your reservation early as these blocks may fill up quickly. NOTE: These are the only official APHL hotels for the conference. Please be diligent in ignoring any contact from third parties asking you to make hotel reservations — these are typically scams and they damage APHL's ability to plan, fulfill and manage our event's hotel blocks.

Current hotel and reservation details are available at www.aphl.org/AC.

Baltimore Convention Center
One West Pratt Street | Baltimore, MD 21201
410.649.7000

Hyatt Regency Baltimore (Limited Availability)
300 Light Street | Baltimore, MD 21202
410.528.1234
$250 group rate
Prevailing Government Per Diem Rate
Cutoff date: April 1, 2026

Royal Sonesta Harbor Court Baltimore
(Limited Availability)
550 Light Street | Baltimore, MD 21202
410.234.0550
$245 group rate
Prevailing Government Per Diem Rate
Cutoff date: April 3, 2026

Baltimore Marriott Inner Harbor at Camden Yards
110 South Eutaw Street | Baltimore, MD 21201
410.962.0202
$229 group rate
Prevailing Government Per Diem Rate
Cutoff date: April 3, 2026

Continuing Education Credits

APHL is an approved provider of continuing education programs in the clinical laboratory sciences through the American Society of Clinical Laboratory Science (ASCLS) P.A.C.E.® program. Attendees have the opportunity to earn contact hours by attending in person, and/or viewing online, all available sessions, both live and recorded.

APHL is an approved provider of Certified in Public Health (CPH) Recertification Credits through the National Board of Public Health Examiners (NBPHE). Attendees have the opportunity to earn contact hours by attending in person, and/or viewing online, all available sessions, both live and recorded.

Preconference Workshops

Make the most of your time in Baltimore — consider a preconference workshop before the conference kicks off! Enhance a skill, explore something new or emerging, and dive deeper into one these topics. Details may be found in the following agenda and on the conference website.

Sunday, May 3, 1:00–5:00 pm

Making a Difference: A Workshop for Prospective APHL Global Health Consultants (FREE)

Monday, May 4, 8:00–11:00 am

The following four workshops are an additional $149. P.A.C.E.® and CPH continuing education credit will be offered.

From Point A to Point B: Mastering Courier Logistics

From A to E: Viral Hepatitis Testing and Elimination

Next Generation Sequencing in the Adolescent Years

Artificial Intelligence in Public Health Laboratories — From Fundamentals to Future Frontiers

Regulatory Science Track

RS

The Regulatory Science Track brings specific content relevant to scientists and their partners who improve public health and safety by generating defensible data that informs regulatory decision making. *The sessions below are designated with the RS symbol in the following agenda.*

- Opening Keynote: Dr. Katherine Kelley Distinguished Lecture, featuring Joshua Sharfstein, MD, Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health
- Celebrating 75 years of the Emergence and Importance of Environmental Laboratory Testing
- Contamination Chronicles 3.0
- Got Raw Milk? Navigating Challenges in Raw Dairy Product Regulation
- Lessons of an Unexpected Crisis: A State and Federal Panel Discusses Infant Botulism Linked to Powdered Infant Formula
- Drugs, Data, Demographics: Combating Nonfatal Overdoses with a National Overdose Biosurveillance System
- Building Human Biomonitoring Programs for Empowerment and Impact
- Navigating CIDT False Positives: A Tale of Two Laboratories
- Prevalence of *Cronobacter sakazakii* in Infant Formula and Innovative Mitigation Strategies
- Think Like a Regulator: Using the QSE Crosswalk to Stay Ahead
- Digital by Design: Smarter Quality Systems for Public Health Laboratories

PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

Dr. Katherine Kelley Distinguished Lecture

Monday, May 4, 2:30 pm – 3:30 pm

featuring **Joshua Sharfstein, MD**
Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health
Vice Dean for Public Health Practice and Community Engagement

Dr. Joshua M. Sharfstein is Bloomberg Distinguished Professor of the Practice of American Health in Health Policy and Management at the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health, where he also serves as Vice Dean for Public Health Practice and Community Engagement and as Director of the Bloomberg American Health Initiative. A pediatrician by training, he is a former health commissioner of Baltimore, Principal Deputy Commissioner of the U.S. Food and Drug Administration, and Secretary of the Maryland Department of Health and Mental Hygiene. He is an elected member of the National Academy of Medicine and the National Academy of Public Administration.

Beyond the Microscope: Henrietta Lacks — The Immortal Cells and Their Human Story

Tuesday, May 5, 3:00 pm – 4:00 pm

Enhance your conference experience by exploring this landmark, Baltimore-based story at the intersection of public health, medical research and ethics.
A conversation you won't want to miss!

APHL is honored to welcome family members of Henrietta Lacks who will speak candidly and poignantly about the Lacks family's experiences and the matriarch whose cancerous cell tissue has become, since her death in 1951, one of the most important medical research tools ever discovered.

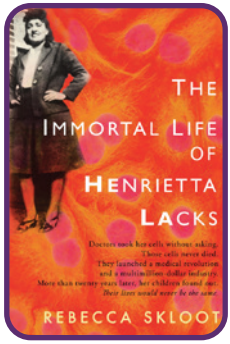
You'll hear about Henrietta Lacks' involuntary contributions to society from her family's perspective and learn the key contributions of HeLa cells to medical and laboratory science, with particular emphasis on consent, transparency in medical research and trust in the healthcare system.

Following the session, join us for the

Lacks Family Book Signing and APHL Book Club Discussion

Tuesday, May 5, 4:00 pm – 4:30 pm

Read the book before the event and bring your copy to be signed by Lacks family members!



Join us for a special APHL Book Club discussion after the session.

APHL Turns 75 Years in 2026!

Celebrating 75 years of analysis, answers and action

This year marks a special milestone for APHL — help us celebrate in person at APHL 2026! Unique to this year, several conference sessions, events and featured areas will include elements and themes as part of the special anniversary celebration. You won't want to miss it!

APHL Spirit Day: Wednesday, May 6

In honor of our 75th anniversary, Wednesday is designated as APHL Spirit Day! Join the celebration and plan to wear your APHL gear or sport our brand colors (teal or burgundy). *We can't wait to see everyone repping APHL in style!*

APHL Merchandise — buy by March 29!

Need APHL gear? Order from our **online store** through Monday, March 29 to avoid shipping costs and pick up your item(s) onsite in Baltimore. Starting April 1, ordered items will be shipped directly to the purchaser; however, buyers will be responsible for shipping and handling fees. Limited items for purchase will be available onsite.

Public Health Laboratory Fellows and Interns in Attendance

We are excited to welcome 200 Public Health Laboratory Fellows and Interns to APHL 2026. These early career scientists and students, currently placed within public health laboratories across the country, will participate in person in Baltimore. These first-time attendees will take in sessions dedicated to the Career Pathways in Public Health Laboratory Science program and will participate in Annual Conference sessions and exhibits.

EXHIBITORS

Network with industry peers and experts! Visit with exhibitors to chat and learn of the latest products and services. Contact information for these exhibitors can be found at **www.aphl.org/AC**. *As of March 19, 2026.*

Abbott Laboratories

Air Sea USA

altona Diagnostics USA

American Proficiency Institute

American Public Health Association

APHL

Arlington Scientific

BGA Soft, Inc.

BioFire Defense

Biolog

bioMerieux, Inc.

Bio-Rad Laboratories

Bruker Scientific LLC

BugSeq Bioinformatics Inc.

Cedarlane Laboratories USA Inc.

Cepheid

Ceres Nanosciences, Inc.

Clear Labs, Inc.

Clinisys

CURIS System

Diasorin

Elemental Scientific

Fort Worth Diagnostics

GeneReach Biotechnology Corporation

Genial Compliance Ltd

Gold Standard Diagnostics

Gold Standard Diagnostics Horsham

Government Scientific Source

GT Molecular

H2O Molecular

Hamilton Company

HDR

HOK

Hologic

iConnect Consulting

Illumina, Inc.

INTEGRA Biosciences

International Responder Systems

J Michael Consulting

Longhorn Vaccines and Diagnostics

Lord Aeck Sargent

McKesson Medical-Surgical Government Solutions

Merrick & Company

Nova Biomedical

Omega Bio-tek

OpenELIS

Oxford Nanopore Technologies

PacBio

PRI Bio (Progressive Recovery, Inc.)

Primary.Health

Promega Corporation

QIAGEN

Quantabio

Quest Diagnostics

Redbud Labs, Inc.

Remi, a PartsSource Company

Randox

Revvity

Roche Diagnostics

Ruvos LLC

SCC Soft Computer

SCIEX

Standard BioTools

STARLIMS

STAT Courier Service Inc.

Streck

Tecan Genomics

Theiagen Consulting LLC

The Lab People

Thermo Fisher Scientific

TubeWriter

University of South Florida

VeriCor Medical Systems

Waters Corporation

Working Buildings

World BioHazTec

Z-Spec, Inc.

Zymo Research Corp.

AGENDA AT A GLANCE

Sunday, May 3

7:00 am – 6:00 pm	**Registration Open**

Monday, May 4

7:00 am – 6:00 pm	**Registration Open**
3:30 pm – 6:30 pm	**Exhibit Hall and Posters Open**
8:00 am – 11:00 am	**Preconference Workshops**
11:00 am – 12:00 pm	**Lab Directors Brunch** *(by invitation only)*
12:00 pm – 1:30 pm	**Innovate! Sessions**
1:45 pm – 2:30 pm	**Welcome to Baltimore Opening Session**
2:30 pm – 3:30 pm	**Dr. Katherine Kelley Distinguished Lecture: Dr. Joshua Sharfstein**
3:30 pm – 4:00 pm	**Rapid Poster Presentations**
3:30 pm – 4:15 pm	**Break in the Exhibit Hall**
4:15 pm – 5:15 pm	**Concurrent Sessions**
5:30 pm – 6:30 pm	**Welcome Reception**

Tuesday, May 5

6:30 am – 7:30 am	**Morning Yoga**
7:00 am – 5:30 pm	**Registration Open**
10:00 am – 6:30 pm	**Exhibit Hall and Posters Open**
8:00 am – 8:30 am	**Innovate! Sessions** *(concurrent)*
8:30 am – 9:00 am	**Meet the Experts:** CDC Epidemiology and Laboratory Capacity (ELC) Cooperative Agreement
9:00 am – 10:00 am	**Plenary Session:** Celebrating 75 years of the Emergence and Importance of Environmental Laboratory Testing
10:00 am – 10:30 am	**Rapid Poster Presentations**
10:00 am – 10:45 am	**Break in the Exhibit Hall**
10:45 am – 11:45 am	**Plenary Session:** Riding the Hype Curve: AI Integration in Public Health Laboratories
11:45 am – 1:30 pm	**Lunch in the Exhibit Hall**
11:45 am – 1:15 pm	**Innovate! Sessions**
1:00 pm – 2:00 pm	**AIMS Member Listening Session**
1:30 pm – 2:30 pm	**Concurrent Sessions**
2:00 pm – 3:00 pm	**Meet the Experts:** CDC Epidemiology and Laboratory Capacity (ELC) Cooperative Agreement
2:30 pm – 3:00 pm	**Break in the Exhibit Hall**

AGENDA AT A GLANCE

Tuesday, May 5 (continued)

3:00 pm – 4:00 pm	**Plenary Session:** Beyond the Microscope: Henrietta Lacks — The Immortal Cells and Their Human Story
4:00 pm – 4:30 pm	**APHL Book Club and Book Signing Event:** *The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks*
4:30 pm – 5:30 pm	**Concurrent Sessions**
5:30 pm – 6:30 pm	**Networking Poster Reception in Exhibit Hall**

Wednesday, May 6

6:00 am – 7:00 am	**Sunrise Walk**
7:00 am – 5:00 pm	**Registration Open**
10:00 am – 3:30 pm	**Exhibit Hall and Posters Open**
7:30 am – 8:00 am	**Innovate! Sessions** *(concurrent)*
8:15 am – 9:45 am	**APHL Awards Ceremony and Breakfast**
10:00 am – 11:00 am	**Roundtable Sessions**
10:00 am – 12:30 pm	**Optional Tour:** Maryland Public Health Laboratory
11:15 am – 12:15 pm	**Concurrent Sessions**
12:15 pm – 1:45 pm	**Lunch in the Exhibit Hall**
12:15 pm – 1:45 pm	**Innovate! Sessions**
2:00 pm – 3:00 pm	**Plenary Session:** Stretching Every Dollar: Smart Strategies to Overcome Funding Gaps
3:10 pm – 3:25 pm	**Break and Scavenger Hunt Prize Drawings**
3:30 pm – 4:30 pm	**Concurrent Sessions**
4:45 pm – 5:45 pm	**APHL Member Assembly**

Thursday, May 7

7:00 am – 12:00 pm	**Registration Open**
7:30 am – 8:30 am	**Roundtable Sessions**
8:30 am – 9:00 am	**Break**
9:00 am – 10:00 am	**Concurrent Sessions**
10:15 am – 11:15 am	**Plenary Session:** The Great Debate: Emerging Chemical Contaminants vs. Emerging Pathogens — What's the Bigger Public Health Threat
11:15 am – 11:45 am	**Closing Session and Adjournment**
1:30 pm – 4:00 pm	**Optional Tour:** Maryland Public Health Laboratory

Session Topics

APHL solicits session proposals from its standing committees and the general membership, which results in many excellent proposals. To assist you in determining the general area of interest, we have given each session a letter symbol that corresponds with the topic that it represents. This guide is listed below.

- FSS — Food Safety and Security
- QRC — Quality & Regulatory Compliance
- PRBB — Preparedness, Response, Biosafety, & Biosecurity
- LOA — Laboratory Operations & Administration
- EHOS — Environmental Health & Overdose Surveillance
- INF — Informatics
- WFD — Workforce Development
- NBS — Newborn Screening and Genetics
- CC — Cross Cutting
- AMD — Advanced Molecular Detection and Bioinformatics
- ID — Infectious Diseases

Competencies

The US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the Association of Public Health Laboratories (APHL) published the **Competency Guidelines for Public Health Laboratory Professionals** in a Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report (MMWR) supplement. These guidelines were developed with a focus on public health laboratory practice and are intended to form the foundation of competency-based approaches to strengthen that practice, including integration into workforce development initiatives such as training and education programs.

In support of efforts to further the adoption and implementation of guidelines, each session in the APHL 2026 Annual Conference program will include one or more symbols corresponding to the related competency domain(s) that the session addresses. This guide is listed below.

- QMS — Quality Management Systems
- ETH — Ethics
- MLD — Management and Leadership
- COM — Communication
- SEC — Security
- WFT — Workforce Training
- EMR — Emergency Management and Response
- GEN — General Laboratory Practices
- SHC — Safety: Hazard Control
- SRV — Surveillance
- INF — Informatics
- MCB — Microbiology
- CHM — Chemistry
- BIO — Bioinformatics
- RES — Research

AGENDA OF EVENTS

Sunday, May 3

7:00 am – 6:00 pm **Registration**

1:00 am – 5:00 pm **Preconference Workshops**

- **Making a Difference: A Workshop for Prospective APHL Global Health Consultants**

Monday, May 4

7:00 am – 6:00 pm **Registration**

8:00 am – 11:00 am **Preconference Workshops** ($149 per person)

- **From Point A to Point B: Mastering Courier Logistics**
- **From A to E: Viral Hepatitis Testing and Elimination**
- **Next Generation Sequencing in the Adolescent Years**
- **Artificial Intelligence in Public Health Laboratories—From Fundamentals to Future Frontiers**

11:00 am – 12:00 pm **Lab Directors Brunch** (Invitation Only)

12:00 pm – 12:30 pm **Innovate! Session 1** (details on page 12 ▶)
iConnect Consulting

12:30 pm – 1:00 pm **Innovate! Session 2** (details on page 12 ▶)
Thermo Fisher Scientific

1:00 pm – 1:30 pm **Innovate! Session 3** (details on page 12 ▶)
Oxford Nanopore Technologies

1:45 pm – 2:30 pm **Welcome to Baltimore Opening Session**

INNOVATE! SESSIONS

Monday, May 4

12:00 pm – 12:30 pm

iConnect Consulting

From Orders to Insights: ETOR and Data Science for the Modern Public Health Laboratory

- Andrew Sinyaver, iConnect Consulting
- Ksenia Koroskina, MS, iConnect Consulting

12:30 pm – 1:00 pm

Thermo Fisher Scientific

1:00 pm – 1:30 pm

Oxford Nanopore Technologies

Building Long-Read Capacity In Public Health Laboratories Through Collaborative Training With Oxford Nanopore

- Anna Maria Niewiadomska, Market Segment Manager, Public Health, Oxford Nanopore Technologies
- William Glover, PhD, D(ABMM), Assistant Laboratory Director, North Carolina State Laboratory of Public Health
- Logan Fink, MS, Lead Scientist, Division of Consolidated Laboratory Services, Virginia

2:30 pm – 3:30 pm **Dr. Katherine Kelley Distinguished Lecture** RS

Dr. Joshua Sharfstein, Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health

3:30 pm – 4:00 pm **Rapid Poster Presentations (Fellows)**

3:30 pm – 6:30 pm **Exhibit Hall and Posters Open**

4:15 pm – 5:15 pm **Concurrent Sessions**

Amerithrax Attacks: 25 Years of Reflection and Beyond

PRBB EMR SEC SRV

588-801-26 | P.A.C.E.® Contact Hours: 1.0

The 2001 Amerithrax attacks transformed public health preparedness and laboratory response. Twenty-five years later, public health laboratories continue to advance biosafety, biosecurity and biothreat detection. This session reflects on lessons learned from the anthrax letters, tracing the "life of a letter" from detection to response and examining long-term impacts on laboratory operations and interagency coordination. Presenters will discuss progress in sustaining expertise, integrating new technologies and strengthening readiness for evolving threats. Looking ahead, the session will explore the future of threat-agnostic approaches, enhanced biosurveillance and global collaborationab to ensure laboratories remain prepared for the next 25 years.

After completing this session, the participant will be able to:

- Describe how the 2001 Amerithrax attacks shaped the evolution of public health laboratory preparedness, including advancements in biosafety, biosecurity and interagency coordination
- Identify opportunities to enhance biosurveillance and laboratory collaboration through improved data sharing, interoperability and partnerships at the local, national and international levels
- Identify lessons learned that continue to inform current biothreat response practices from sample receipt through confirmatory testing

Moderator: Christina Egan, PhD, Chief, Biodefense and Mycology Laboratories, New York State Department of Health, Wadsworth Center

Speakers::

- Philip Lee, Microbiologist, Florida Bureau of Public Health Laboratories, Jacksonville
- Grace Kubin, PhD, Laboratory Director, Texas Department of State Health Services
- Victoria Ruiz, PhD, Chief of Biothreat Response, Microbiology, New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene

Contamination Chronicles 3.0 FS QRC GEN MCB CHM SRV RS

588-802-26 | P.A.C.E.® Contact Hours: 1.0

This session will bring together real-world case studies from public health professionals, highlighting the complexities involved in food safety and outbreak investigations. The speakers will explore details of public health and regulatory investigations, including insights from investigations into unknown adulterants where non-targeted screening was utilized for suspected animal poisoning cases. Additionally, the speakers will discuss a case of lead poisoning where daily egg consumption made a farming couple ill. The session aims to provide best practices for managing complex investigations in today's dynamic food safety landscape.

After completing this session, the participant will be able to:

- Identify key factors that contribute to complex outbreaks, including social dynamics, pathogen diversity and laboratory testing protocols
- Discuss how surveillance, testing and communication strategies play a role in resolving food safety cases involving intentional and accidental contamination
- Outline the complexities of product contamination
- Explain how product contamination could impact the parties involved
- Evaluate the potential for zoonotic transmission and other unconventional sources of food contamination

Moderator: Carrie Crabtree, PhD, Laboratory Division Director, Georgia Department of Agriculture

Speakers:

- Erik Pearson, Laboratory Administrator, Nebraska Department of Agriculture
- Kelly F. Oakeson, PhD, Chief Scientist: Next-Generation Sequencing & Bioinformatics, Utah Health Department
- Amanda Woods, MS, Lead Scientist, Virginia Division of Consolidated Laboratory Services

The Power of Advocacy: Shaping the Future of Public Health Funding Domestically and Globally LOA GEN MLD

588-803-26 | P.A.C.E.® Contact Hours: 1.0

This session will highlight the importance of advocating to increase funding across state and federal agencies to strengthen national laboratory systems within the US and around the world. It will explore how sustained investments have supported the Global Health Security initiative by enhancing national laboratory systems to better detect, respond to and prevent public health threats worldwide. Additionally, the session will highlight how advocacy for US state public health laboratories is deeply interconnected with global health security efforts. Although supported through distinct funding

mechanisms, both domestic and international public health systems play a pivotal role in maintaining global readiness and resilience against infectious disease threats.

After completing this session, the participant will be able to:

- Advocate for promoting sustainable public health laboratory funding
- Develop advocacy materials at the State and Federal levels

Moderator: Lucy Maryogo-Robinson, Director, Global Health, APHL

Speakers:

- Sherrie Staley, MPH, Deputy Director, Global Health, APHL
- Peter Kyriacopoulos, Chief Policy Officer, APHL
- Sameer Sakallah, PhD, Bureau Chief, Director of Laboratories, Kansas Department of Health and Environment

Microplastics Are Big Problems: Considerations for Bringing on Testing for Microplastics EHOS GEN EMR

588-825-26 | P.A.C.E.® Contact Hours: 1.0

This session will explore testing methods, health impacts and laboratory issues around microplastics. States are being asked to develop methods to analyze microplastics in the environment and this session will prepare laboratories to respond. To address public health concerns for exposure to microplastics, an interdisciplinary working group was formed by CDC's National Center of Environmental Health and the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry. People are exposed to microplastics in air, water and food. Speakers will present what is known - and what is being researched - about the impacts of microplastics on human health. As researchers follow the path of microplastics into the ecosystem and into people, they are beginning to learn the hazards these chemical particles present to living tissue.

After completing this session, the participant will be able to:

- Explain microplastics' significance to health
- Define laboratory considerations for initiating microplastic testing Identify and compare testing methods for microplastics to aid in method selection
- Describe work in defining human health risks regarding exposure to and toxicity from microplastics underway at CDC's National Center for Environmental Health (NCEH) and Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ATSDR)

Moderator: Anthony Tran, DrPH, MPH, D(ABMM), Director, State Public Health Laboratory, Deputy Director, Center for Laboratory Sciences, California Department of Public Health

Speakers:

- Aaron Bernstein, MD, Director, National Center for Environmental Health and the Agency for Toxic Substance and Disease Registry (NCEH/ATSDR)
- Megan Wolff, PhD, MPH, Executive Director, Physician and Scientist Network Addressing Plastics and Health

5:30 pm – 6:30 pm Welcome Reception

Tuesday, May 5

6:30 am – 7:30 am **Morning Yoga**

7:00 am – 5:30 pm **Registration**

8:00 am – 8:30 am **Concurrent Innovate! Sessions #4–7**
(details on page 19 ▶)

Bio-Rad Laboratories | Clear Labs | Illumina
Promega Corporation

8:30 am – 9:00 am **Meet the Experts**

CDC Epidemiology and Laboratory Capacity (ELC) Cooperative Agreement

Experts from CDC's ELC Program Office will be on site to answer your questions in an informal office hours session. Attendees are encouraged to stop by for all or part of the session to ask questions or share concerns about current ELC activities, budgeting practices and reporting requirements.

Speakers:

- Tricia Aden, Lead, ELCIB Science and Informatics Team, US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
- Kristine Kines, MPH, PhD, Laboratory Leadership Service Fellow, US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
- Angelica O'Connor, MPH, Deputy Branch Chief, US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
- Justine Pompey, PhD, Laboratory Leadership Service Fellow, US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

9:00 am – 10:00 am **Plenary Session**

Celebrating 75 years of the Emergence and Importance of Environmental Laboratory Testing EHOS QRC GEN MCB SRV RS

588-805-26 | P.A.C.E.® Contact Hours: 1.0

As APHL has grown over the past 75 years, environmental laboratory capacity has needed to expand to combat environmental contamination in support of public health. Environmental laboratories have consistently stood on the forefront of producing accurate data to ensure clean water, soil and air, which are all essential for protecting public health and the ecosystems that sustain it. These laboratories have evolved alongside the nation's most pressing challenges: from monitoring drinking water, air pollutants and industrial waste discharges to rapidly responding to environmental emergencies and emerging threats such as PFAS, harmful algal blooms and wildfires. This session will highlight the breadth, impact and challenges of the critical work

performed by environmental laboratories, whose expertise and dedication have played a vital role in advancing environmental and public health for all.

After completing this session, the participant will be able to:

- Explain the chronology of environmental testing
- Describe the impact of chronology of environmental testing on public health
- Describe recent examples where environmental testing has been the critical factor in preventing the spread of disease and limiting exposure to harmful contaminants
- Describe challenges that environmental laboratories are facing that impact their testing capabilities

Moderator: Enoma Omoregie, PhD, Associate Director, Environmental Sciences Public Health Laboratory, NYC Department of Health and Mental Hygiene

Speakers:

- Pam J. Higgins, PhD, Bureau Director, Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection
- Anita Keese, Environmental Chemistry Unit Director, Texas Department of State Health Services Laboratory
- Jeff Wagner, PhD, Branch Chief, California Department of Public Health

10:00 am – 10:30 am Rapid Poster Presentations

10:00 am – 6:30 pm Exhibit Hall and Posters Open

10:45 am – 11:45 am Plenary Session

Riding the Hype Curve: AI Integration in Public Health Laboratories

INF LOA GEN INF

588-806-26 | P.A.C.E.® Contact Hours: 1.0

As artificial intelligence (AI) tools become embedded in modern laboratory information management system (LIMS) platforms and laboratory workflows, public health laboratories face both unprecedented opportunities and complex challenges. This session moves beyond theoretical discussions to provide practical, evidence-based guidance on implementing AI tools within the realities of public health laboratory operations. This session will address the critical gap between AI's promise and its practical application by featuring real-world case studies from laboratories that have successfully navigated implementation challenges.

After completing this session, the participant will be able to:

- Evaluate AI tools currently available and their applications
- Apply lessons learned from successful implementations in assay development, SOP creation and operational efficiency

- Develop actionable strategies for AI adoption that align with limited resources and "doing more with less"

Moderator: Sean Hannigan, Specialist, Informatics, APHL

Speakers:

- Luke C. Short, PhD, HCLD(ABB), Laboratory Director, Dallas County Health and Human Services
- Justin Nucci, MS, Data Systems Manager, Colorado Public Health Lab
- Elizabeth White, CPHIMS, LIMS Administrator, Wyoming Public Health Laboratory

11:45 am – 1:30 pm **Lunch in the Exhibit Hall: Visit Exhibits and Posters**

11:45 am – 12:15 pm **Innovate! Session 8** (details on page 20 ▶)
Abbott Laboratories

12:15 pm – 12:45 pm **Innovate! Session 9** (details on page 20 ▶)
Bruker Scientific, LLC.

12:45 pm – 1:15 pm **Innovate! Session 10** (details on page 20 ▶)
Roche Diagnostics

1:00 pm – 2:00 pm **AIMS: Member Listening Session**

1:30 pm – 2:30 pm **Concurrent Sessions**

Choose Your Adventure: Navigating Career Pathways in Public Health Laboratories WD WFT MLD

588-807-26 | P.A.C.E.® Contact Hours: 1.0

As public health laboratory technology evolves, career opportunities continue to grow. There is no single path to success, so exploring multiple professional development approaches is key. This interactive session invites attendees to explore how choices at different stages of a career can influence engagement, advancement and long-term success. Participants will collectively guide a laboratory professional through key moments and dilemmas in navigating a career path: Which certification should they pursue? Should they join a committee or take on a leadership role? When is it time to say "yes," and when is it best to say, "not yet"? Attendees will gain insights and practical strategies for navigating their own career pathways, whether they're just entering the field or they're already leading teams. Supervisors and managers will learn approaches to support and mentor staff in their professional growth. Through shared discussion and decision-making, participants will uncover the many routes to building a fulfilling and impactful career in the public health laboratory community. Every decision shapes the journey—where will your career adventure lead?

INNOVATE! SESSIONS

Tuesday, May 5

8:00 am – 8:30 am

Illumina

Advancements of Illumina Solutions for Public Health

- Jason Smith, Infectious Disease and Microbiology Specialist, Illumina
- Shannon Matzinger, PhD, Genomic Surveillance Program Manager

Promega Corporation

Maxwell® Automated Extraction Platform: From Wastewater to Animal to Clinical Diagnostics—A One Health Approach

- Dr. Malik Keshwani, PhD, Promega Corporation

Bio-Rad Laboratories

Opus In Action: Real-time PCR Answers for Infectious Disease

- Eric Johnson, PhD, Bio-Rad Field Application Scientist Regional Manager

Clear Labs

Building Resilient Public Health Systems Through Genomic Automation

- Ramin Khaksar, CSO & COO, Clear Labs
- Kyle Rhoden, Director Product Management, Clear Labs
- Christopher Benton, CLIA Director/Virology Program Manager, NH Department of Health & Human Services

INNOVATE! SESSIONS

Tuesday, May 5

11:45 am – 12:15 pm

Abbott Laboratories

The Public Health Value of Trichomonas Testing: Outcomes and Economic Insights

- Patricia Kissinger, BSN, MPH, PhD, Professor of Epidemiology and Associate Dean of Faculty Affairs and Development, Tulane University School of Public Health and Tropical Medicine

12:15 pm – 12:45 pm

Bruker Scientific, LLC.

12:45 pm – 1:15 pm

Roche Diagnostics

Enhancing Influenza Surveillance in San Francisco: Validation of Roche's UC-TIB-FluA-GT Assay (Influenza A virus subtyping) on Roche cobasÆ 5800 Utility Channel

- Lina Castro, PHM, MPH, M(ASCP)cm, TS(ABB), San Francisco Public Health Laboratory

After completing this session, the participant will be able to:

- Identify diverse career pathways and advancement opportunities available within the public health laboratory
- Navigate professional development opportunities, such as certifications, committee involvement and leadership roles, to support individual career advancement and workforce sustainability
- Assemble a pathway containing meaningful engagements and mentorship opportunities that can lead to long-term professional fulfillment in the public health laboratory community

Moderator: Anna K. Strain, PhD, Manager, Infectious Disease Lab, Minnesota Department of Health

Speakers:

- Adam Perkins, Laboratory Director, Missouri State Public Health Laboratory
- Aubrey Galusha, PhD, Program Director, Community. Advancement. Recruitment. Engagement., New York State Department of Health, Wadsworth Center
- Deborah K. Severson, MLS (ASCP), Director, Laboratory Services, Fairfax County Health Department

Driving Infectious Emergency Response Through Disease and Resource Demand Forecasting PRBB INF GEN MLD EMR

588-808-26 | P.A.C.E.® Contact Hours: 1.0

Disease surveillance, resource management and emergency response are core to the public health laboratory mission. However, forecasting lab-specific needs—like testing capacity, supplies and personnel—remains challenging. While outbreak models focus on cases and hospitalizations, laboratory readiness is equally vital. To address this, International Responder Systems developed the Security Orchestration, Automation and Response (SOAR) platform, integrating outbreak monitoring with public health laboratory resource management and emergency response. This session will demonstrate how to build a virtual public health network using the SOAR platform, part of the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC's) Insight Net Program. The discussion focuses on operational areas such as facilities, personnel, equipment and supply levels, enabling users to answer key questions such as, "Do we have enough laboratory resources?" and "What is the overall laboratory status?" Attendees will also learn to generate response plans and visualize capacity and incident locations, which are critical for proactive public health action and effective emergency response.

After completing this session, the participant will be able to:

- Use infectious disease forecasts to anticipate public health laboratory resource demands, including testing capacity, personnel and critical supplies
- Configure a virtual public health network using the SOAR platform, including facilities, laboratories, storage and resource demand models
- Explain the relationship between disease surge and resource impacts

Moderator: Paul Kimsey, PhD, Public Health Professional, International Responder Systems

Speakers:

- Youssef Ziouani, MS, Chief Technology Officer, International Responder Systems
- Mark Routson, MS, MBA, SOAR Technical Lead, International Responder Systems
- Ryan Avery, PhD, SOAR Epidemiologist, International Responder Systems

Got Raw Milk? Navigating Challenges in Raw Dairy Product Regulation

QRC FSS MCB GEN RS

588-809-26 | P.A.C.E.® Contact Hours: 1.0

Market demand for wholesome and natural foods is increasingly popular, though from a foodborne illness perspective these products are not necessarily safer than conventional options. This is especially evident when considering the consumption of raw dairy products. Unpasteurized dairy can harbor pathogens including *Campylobacter* and Shiga-toxin producing *Escherichia coli* (STEC) along with more novel pathogens, such as the recent detection of highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI). The complexity of laws governing the availability of raw milk in the United States and difficulties of laboratory analysis of raw milk products create significant challenges in establishing effective regulatory frameworks.

Examples of recent foodborne disease investigations in raw dairy will be presented and the complexities of associated regulatory activity will be explored. Emerging risks in raw dairy products, including aged raw milk cheese, will be discussed. Opportunities to collaborate with non-traditional partners to achieve effective outbreak management and outcomes will be highlighted.

After completing this session, the participant will be able to:

- List challenges in regulation of raw milk products in the United States
- Discuss risks correlated with raw milk consumption
- Describe practical steps to implementing collaboration with partners to achieve effective response to foodborne illness associated with exposure to raw dairy products

Moderator: Alyssa W. Dickey, PhD, Food Laboratory Scientist/Biosafety Officer, NYS Department of Agriculture and Markets

Speakers:

- Anthony Tran, DrPH, MPH, D(ABMM), Director, State Public Health Laboratory Deputy Director, Center for Laboratory Sciences, California Department of Public Health
- Diego Diel, DVM, MS, PhD, Associate Professor, Department of Population Medicine and Diagnostic Sciences, Cornell University College of Veterinary Medicine
- Joshua Geltz, PhD, Laboratory Director, Illinois Department of Public Health

From Data to Decisions: Advancing Newborn Screening Through Integrated Case Management and Follow-up NBS INF MLD GEN

588-823-26 | P.A.C.E.® Contact Hours: 1.0

Newborn screening (NBS) programs play a critical role in early detection and intervention for life-threatening conditions, yet case management and follow-up activities often rely on fragmented systems and manual workflows, putting public health laboratories at risk. This session highlights the development and implementation of the nation's first advanced Newborn Screening Case Management and Follow-up System, a collaborative effort to modernize how programs track, manage and respond to screening outcomes. By integrating clinical, laboratory and public health data into a single platform, the system supports timely follow-up, improves communication between stakeholders and enhances outcomes for infants and families—all while ensuring NBS programs are fulfilling their mission while protecting privacy and enhancing data security. Presenters will discuss lessons learned, user-centered design strategies and the importance of interoperability in strengthening and protecting the future of newborn screening programs.

After completing this session, the participant will be able to:

- Describe how integrated case management platforms improve coordination and follow-up efficiency within newborn screening programs
- Explain how interoperability and user-centered design principles enhance data accuracy, accessibility and communication among laboratories, providers and public health programs
- Identify key strategies and lessons learned from implementing a statewide, interoperable newborn screening case management and follow-up system

Moderator: Guisou Zarbalian, MS, MPH, Senior Manager — Newborn Screening and Genetics, APHL

Speakers:

- Jack Hysell, Director, Solutions Engineering, Primary.Health

2:00 pm – 3:00 pm Meet the Experts

CDC Epidemiology and Laboratory Capacity (ELC) Cooperative Agreement

Experts from CDC's ELC Program Office will be on site to answer your questions in an informal office hours session. Attendees are encouraged to stop by for all or part of the session to ask questions or share concerns about current ELC activities, budgeting practices and reporting requirements.

Speakers:

- Tricia Aden, Lead, ELCIB Science and Informatics Team, US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
- Kristine Kines, MPH, PhD, Laboratory Leadership Service Fellow, US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
- Angelica O'Connor, MPH, Deputy Branch Chief, US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
- Justine Pompey, PhD, Laboratory Leadership Service Fellow, US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

2:30 pm – 3:00 pm Break in the Exhibit Hall

3:00 pm – 4:00 pm Plenary Session

Beyond the Microscope: Henrietta Lacks — The Immortal Cells and Their Human Story CC GEN MLD

588-810-26 | P.A.C.E.® Contact Hours: 1.0

After completing this session, the participant will be able to:

- Describe Henrietta Lacks' involuntary contributions to society from her family's perspective
- Identify the key contributions of HeLa cells to medical and laboratory science, with particular emphasis on consent, transparency in medical research and trust in the healthcare system
- Explain the contributions to laboratory science resulting from the mass production of HeLa cells at Tuskegee Institute

Moderator: Ninecia Scott, PhD, Quality Assurance and Safety Group Manager, Virginia Division of Consolidated Laboratory Services

Speakers:

- David Lacks, Jr. (Grandson of Henrietta Lacks)
- Veronica Spencer (Great-Granddaughter of Henrietta Lacks)
- Sharon Massingale, PhD, HCLD/CC(ABB), Laboratory Director, Alabama Department of Public Health, Bureau of Clinical Laboratories

4:00 pm – 4:30 pm APHL Book Club and Book Signing Event: *The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks*

4:30 pm – 5:30 pm Concurrent Sessions

Leading the Way: How Effective Leadership Shapes Biorisk Management

PRBB MLD GEN EMR

588-835-26 | P.A.C.E.® Contact Hours: 1.0

APHL, in collaboration with the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), have developed a strategy to guide public health laboratories in establishing biorisk management programs through the implementation of the ISO 35001: 2019 standard framework. This initiative was piloted in four public health laboratories and consisted of:

1. An initial on-site visit utilizing the APHL/CDC Gap Analysis Checklist to identify areas for improvement in each institution's biorisk management program
2. Virtual meetings to provide targeted technical assistance
3. A final site visit at the close of the project to review each pilots implementation progress, challenges and successes

In this session, there will be an overview of biorisk management concepts and their importance to laboratory resilience and common gaps identified during the pilot program, followed by perspectives from pilot laboratories. The session will highlight lessons learned, time and resource considerations and the benefits of implementing a biorisk management system.

After completing this session, the participant will be able to:

- Describe the components of an effective biorisk management system
- Identify key strategies towards the successful implementation of a biorisk management system
- Recognize how public health laboratories have applied these concepts to strengthen biosafety culture and enhance program resilience

Moderator: Michael Marsico, MS, Program Manager, Public Health Preparedness and Response, APHL

Speakers:

- Julianne L. Baron, PhD, CPH, RBP, President, Science and Safety Consulting, LLC
- Michael Stevenson, PhD, Microbiologist V and Deputy Director, New Hampshire Public Health Laboratories
- Michael A. Pentella, PhD, D(ABMM), Director, State Hygienic Laboratory at the University of Iowa

Education from Afar: Impacts and Lessons Learned From Establishing a Radiochemistry Graduate Certificate Program EHOS WFT MLD

588-812-26 | P.A.C.E.® Contact Hours: 1.0

The field of radiochemistry is highly specialized and formal educational programs are limited and often inaccessible due to location. Combined with these challenges, brain-drain within the field due to retirement and lack of trained replacements has put the nation's ability to respond to radiological emergencies at serious risk. From the perspective of instructors, students and managers, this session will highlight a first-of-its-kind graduate certificate program, developed in collaboration by APHL and the University of Iowa (and supported by the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)), to address this workforce challenge by providing formal training in radiochemistry that combines online coursework with in-person training in a manner that is flexible, rigorous and practical for working laboratory professionals.

After completing this session, the participant will be able to:

- Explain the impact of the radiochemistry certificate program on the nation's capacity to respond to radiological emergencies and provide critical testing services
- Describe how this type of program could be utilized as a model for similar, critical instruction in other scientific disciplines
- Discuss the impacts that this type of program could have on thelaboratory

Moderator: Julianne Nassif, MS, Director, Environmental Health, APHL

Speakers:

- Dustin May, PhD, Associate Director, Environmental Health Division, State Hygienic Laboratory at the University of Iowa
- Hosea Mak, MPH, MS, Chemist 2, New Jersey Department of Health
- Bud Taylor, Supervisor, Environmental and Radiation Chemistry Group, Washington State Department of Health

From Shadows to Signals: Metagenomics and the New Age of Public Health Surveillance AMD ID BIO SRV EMR

588-813-26 | P.A.C.E.® Contact Hours: 1.0

This session will showcase the transformative role of pathogen-agnostic metagenomics in public health diagnostics, surveillance and outbreak response. Presenters will provide key updates on the implementation of the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC's) Undetermined Etiology Outbreaks (UnO) project and explore diverse, accessible bioinformatics pipelines currently being utilized by leading state and federal laboratories to analyze sequencing data for novel and emerging threats.

After completing this session, the participant will be able to:

- Distinguish the advantages of pathogen-agnostic metagenomics pipelines over traditional targeted methods for public health surveillance

- Explain the current functionality and implementation roadmap of the CDC's UnO project for state and local laboratories
- Identify two available, scalable pathogen-agnostic bioinformatics tools being utilized by APHL member laboratories

Moderator: Christopher Benton, PhD, MB (ASCP) CM, PHLD (ABB), CLIA Director/ Virology Program Chief, New Hampshire Public Health Laboratory

Speakers:

- Lauren S. Turner, PhD, Lead Scientist, Virginia Division of Consolidated Laboratory Services
- Andrew D. Huang, PhD, Undetermined Outbreaks Lead Scientist, US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
- Matthew Mauldin, US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

When Systems Fail: Actionable Continuity Plans for Laboratory Informatics Operations INF LOA INF MLD GEN

588-814-26 | P.A.C.E.® Contact Hours: 1.0

Network outages, cyberattacks and natural disasters can cripple laboratory operations within seconds. While many public health laboratories have theoretical continuity of operations (COOP) frameworks, few have battle-tested plans specifically addressing informatics infrastructure failures. This session transforms lessons learned from real-world disasters into practical tools and templates for maintaining laboratory informatics continuity when systems go silent.

Building on APHL's successful "No Signal, No Problem" Interoperability Forum, this session expands critical discussions into actionable planning frameworks. Attendees will learn from laboratories that have successfully navigated catastrophic system failures, including Tennessee's response to the 2020 AT&T bombing that eliminated network communications across the region. The session provides concrete guidance on cloud hosting strategies, backup system implementation and surge capacity partnerships that ensure operational resilience.

After completing this session, the participant will be able to:

- Apply provided templates and checklists to develop or strengthen existing informatics COOP documentation
- Establish interjurisdictional partnerships and mutual aid agreements for surge capacity and emergency testing support
- Implement comprehensive COOP plans, including redundancy strategies and emergency testing support

Moderator: Sean Hannigan, Specialist, Informatics, APHL

Speakers:

- Hugh Peeples, MLS (ASCP), Clinical App Coordinator, Newborn Screening Laboratory, Tennessee Public Health Laboratory
- Christina Egan, PhD, Chief, Biodefense and Mycology Laboratories, New York State Department of Health, Wadsworth Center

5:30 pm – 6:30 pm **Networking and Poster Reception in Exhibit Hall**

Wednesday, May 6

6:00 am – 7:00 am **Sunrise Walk**

7:00 am – 5:00 pm **Registration**

7:30 am – 8:00 am **Concurrent Innovate! Sessions 11 and 12**
(details on page 36 ▶)

BioFire Defense | J Michael Consulting

8:15 am – 9:45 am **APHL Awards Ceremony and Breakfast**

10:00 am – 3:30 pm **Exhibit Hall and Posters Open**

10:00 am – 11:00 am **Roundtable Discussions**

Applying the "More with Less" Mindset to the Next Generation Sequencing Laboratory AMD CHM GEN BIO

588-815-26 | P.A.C.E.® Contact Hours: 1.0

Public health laboratories are increasingly challenged by funding uncertainty to maintain strides made in the implementation, continued utilization and expansion of next generation sequencing (NGS) technologies. Opportunities to prioritize testing, streamline workflows and introduce cost-reduction practices will help laboratories sustain genomic technologies that are critical to public health infectious disease surveillance, diagnosis and outbreak response. In this session, speakers will share their strategies to balance NGS resource and infrastructure demands with operational and cost efficiencies.

After completing this session, the participant will be able to:

- Identify strategies that public health laboratories are using to prioritize testing and define their NGS testing menus
- Describe opportunities for laboratory efficiencies that reduce workforce demand
- Discuss NGS testing cost reduction strategies

Moderator: Lauren S. Turner, PhD, Lead Scientist, Virginia Division of Consolidated Laboratory Services

Speakers:

- Kelly F. Oakeson, PhD, Chief Scientist: Next-Generation Sequencing & Bioinformatics, Utah Health Department
- Kimberlee Musser, PhD, Chief of Bacterial Disease, Wadsworth Center
- Shannon R. Matzinger, PhD, Genomic Surveillance Program Manager, Colorado Laboratory Services Division

Let's Start to Manage Up by Leading from All Positions in a Public Health Laboratory CC WFD MLD WFT COM

588-816-26 | P.A.C.E.® Contact Hours: 1.0

This session will highlight the outcomes of the Emerging Leader Program Cohorts 18 and 19 (Hybrid Modality) project, "Managing Up – Lead from Any Position in a Public Health Laboratory," which was piloted during the 2025 APHL Annual Conference. This session will share how feedback utilized from the pilot produced a practical tool to help staff strengthen the skill of managing up, a skill rarely included in scientific professional development. Developed from survey data collected from multiple levels of laboratory leadership across the nation, as well as leading research and expertise in the field, the tool addresses key elements such as communication, feedback, anticipation and alignment of laboratory goals. Participants will explore the finalized tool in small groups, discussing its benefits and strategies for implementation within their own public health laboratories.

After completing this session, the participant will be able to:

- Describe the key principles of "managing up"
- Explain the importance of "managing up"
- Identify and use practical tools developed by APHL's Emerging Leader Program Cohorts 18 and 19 (Hybrid Modality) to strengthen communication and "manage up"
- Apply the "managing up" tool in their own public health laboratory

Moderator: Bernard Wolff, MS, Microbiologist, US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

Speakers:

- Garima Verma, PhD, Developmental Scientist II, Maryland Department of Health Laboratories
- Anumita Bajpai, MPH, Senior Specialist, Global Health, APHL
- Ashley Aurand-Cravens, MS, BS, Public Health Laboratory Scientist Supervisor, Environmental Microbiology, Kentucky Department for Public Health, Division of Laboratory Services
- Rachel Cruise, MPH, M(ASCP), Public Health Scientist III, Microbiology, Vermont Department of Health Public Health Laboratory

Readiness for Special Pathogens and Select Agents: Practical Tools, Lessons and Challenges PRBB EMR MCB COM WFT

588-817-26 | P.A.C.E.® Contact Hours: 1.0

Emerging pathogens like Ebola, Marburg and Lassa fever demand rapid, coordinated responses that test even experienced public health laboratories. This roundtable will provide a forum to share strategies, tools and lessons learned in preparing for and responding to high-consequence pathogens and select agents. Discussion will cover readiness checklists, onboarding through programs such as GFSPP and planning for unpredictable events. Case examples, including a suspected Lassa virus later identified as *Plasmodium falciparum*,will highlight diagnostic complexities and communication needs. The session will also explore decisions around maintaining select agent registration and the balance between preparedness, cost and compliance. Participants will leave with shared practices to strengthen readiness for rare but high-stakes biological threats.

After completing this session, the participant will be able to:

- Describe key strategies and tools laboratories can use to enhance preparedness for high-consequence pathogens and select agents
- Discuss decision-making processes for evaluating high-risk specimens and maintaining or discontinuing select agent registration
- Identify approaches to improve workforce readiness, communication and cross-jurisdiction collaboration during rare but high-stakes events

Moderator: Michael Perry, DrPH, MS Ed, Director, Biodefense Laboratory, New York State Department of Health, Wadsworth Center

Speakers:

- Michael A. Pentella, PhD, D(ABMM), Director, State Hygienic Laboratory at the University of Iowa
- Dee M. Pettit, PhD, HCLD(ABB), Assistant Director for Science and Technology, North Carolina State Public Health Laboratory

Think Like a Regulator: Using the Quality Systems Essentials Crosswalk to Stay Ahead QRC QMS MLD GEN RS

588-818-26 | P.A.C.E.® Contact Hours: 1.0

This interactive roundtable will explore how laboratories can utilize the Quality System Essentials (QSE) Crosswalk guidance document to assess quality system processes in real-time. Through peer discussion and practical examples, participants will learn how to identify regulatory overlaps and gaps, align with the most stringent requirements across multiple accrediting bodies and apply QSE principles to streamline operations and improve audit readiness.

After completing this session, the participant will be able to:

- Use the QSE Crosswalk to identify applicable regulations across multiple standards
- Apply the QSE Crosswalk to assess and improve a specific QSE area in their own laboratory
- Facilitate team discussions using the crosswalk to support compliance and continual improvement

Moderator: Kathryn Wangsness, MHA, Deputy Bureau Chief, Arizona State Public Health Laboratory

Speakers:

- Susan M. Orton, PhD, D(ABMLI), Assistant Director, Quality and Regulatory Compliance, North Carolina State Laboratory of Public Health
- Crystal Barrett, MLS, MAED/T, Laboratory Systems Improvement and Training Manager, Virginia Division of Consolidated Laboratory Services

What's Next for Newborn Screening Programs and the Recommended Uniform Screening Panel Without Federal Oversight or a Centralized Evidence Review Process? NBS CHM GEN

588-819-26 | P.A.C.E.® Contact Hours: 1.0

Newborn screening (NBS) programs generally follow the Recommended Uniform Screening Panel (RUSP) to determine the conditions they screen for in their state. This recommended list was developed and maintained by the NBS subject matter experts and partners who comprise the Advisory Committee on Heritable Disorders in Newborns and Children (ACHDNC). The Public Health Service Act (42 U.S.C, ch. 6, section 217a and 300b-10) both established and delineated eight duties of the ACHDNC, including but not limited to making systematic evidence-based and peer-reviewed recommendations of the disorders to be screened; developing a model decision-matrix for NBS expansion, including an evaluation of the potential public health impact; and considering ways to ensure that all states/territories attain the capacity to screen for the disorders. This session will provide an overview of the role of the ACHDNC, discuss the impacts of the termination of the ACHDNC on state/territorial NBS programs and how or where NBS programs may fill the need for the resources and services once provided by the committee.

After completing this session, the participant will be able to:

- Describe the importance of federal guidance and oversight of newborn screening (NBS) practices and systems
- List three duties of the ACHDNC when it was active
- Outline some of the possible outcomes that could result from the absence of an evidence review process for adding conditions to NBS panels

Moderator: Guisou Zarbalian, MS, MPH, Senior Manager — Newborn Screening and Genetics, Association of Public Health Laboratories

Speaker:

- Scott M. Shone, PhD, HCLD(ABB), Laboratory Director, Division of Public Health, NC State Laboratory of Public Health, NC Department of Health and Human Services

10:00 am – 12:30 pm Optional Tour: Maryland Public Health Laboratory

11:15 am – 12:15 pm Concurrent Sessions

Building Human Biomonitoring Programs for Empowerment and Impact

EHOS QRC EMR GEN MLD RS

588-820-26 | P.A.C.E.® Contact Hours: 1.0

This session will highlight successful strategies of biomonitoring programs that empower communities to reduce chemical exposures. Wisconsin's biomonitoring program tracks exposures across the state and within specific subpopulations. The identification of exposure patterns has supported dissemination of education, risk mitigation and the focus of future research studies. Building long-standing trusted community partnerships and hiring staff from within affected communities has led to success in retaining hard-to-reach groups (i.e., very remote, lacking insurance, limited mobility). Healthy Kids Minnesota assesses environmental exposures in preschool children across the state; urine samples are tested for six chemical categories. Follow-up with families of children with unusually high exposures has empowered families, partners and communities to take action to reduce exposures to inorganic arsenic via rice consumption and polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbon exposure via incense use.

After completing this session, the participant will be able to:

- List examples of how biomonitoring programs have reduced environmental exposures in vulnerable populations
- Describe community engagement strategies used by biomonitoring programs
- Explain how biomonitoring data informs action, such as policy, removal of products from market and conversations with federal partners

Moderator: Kristin Dortch, Associate Director for Policy and Communications, National Center for Environmental Health, US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)

Speakers:

- Patrick Breysse, PhD, MHS, Professor Emeritus, (former Director, NCEH/ATSDR, CDC), Johns Hopkins University
- Carin Huset, PhD, Research Scientist, Minnesota Department of Health Public Health Laboratory
- Amy Schultz, PhD, MS, Senior Scientist, Department of Population Health Sciences, School of Medicine and Public Health, University of Wisconsin-Madison

Building Sustainable Informatics Teams: Strategies for Recruitment, Retention and Resilience INF INF GEN WFT MLD

588-821-26 | P.A.C.E.® Contact Hours: 1.0

Public health laboratories face a critical workforce crisis, with nearly 50% of employees tleaving between 2017-2021 and informatics positions paying 30-47% below private sector rates. This session presents actionable solutions derived from the APHL Informatics Committee's comprehensive Team Rightsizing research, featuring real-world implementation strategies from laboratories that have successfully navigated these challenges.

Drawing from systematic analysis of 11 public health laboratories and evidence-based research, this session provides practical tools for building sustainable informatics teams despite funding constraints and competitive labor markets. Attendees will receive frameworks for defining the 10 critical informatics roles, transitioning grant-funded positions to permanent status and implementing retention strategies that address the root causes of turnover.

After completing this session, the participant will be able to:

- Assess current workforce gaps
- Define critical informatics roles
- Create knowledge transfer systems that maintain operational continuity through staff transitions
- Implement evidence-based retention strategies for critical informatics staff

Moderator: Sean Hannigan, Specialist, Informatics, APHL

Speakers:

- Victor Amadi, PhD, Laboratory Information System Coordinator, Dallas County Health and Human Services
- Neelima Vundela, MS -Senior Programmer Analyst, Alabama Public Health Laboratory
- Dené Hall, MSHS, MLT(ASCP), Chief, Informatics Unit, Missouri Public Health Laboratory

Exposure Files: Solving Biosafety Mysteries! LOA COM MLD GEN

588-822-26 | P.A.C.E.® Contact Hours: 1.0

It is common knowledge that people often learn best from hearing and remembering actual stories. This interactive session will examine published papers concerning laboratory-associated infections and exposures to determine what can be learned from the files to prevent future events. The speakers will lead the attendees in conducting a thorough root cause analysis process on published articles using a tool that can be used to identify gaps and solve biosafety mysteries. This information, along with a review of biosafety concepts, will then be utilized to determine possible

prevention strategies that can mitigate risk and prevent future biosafety events. Presenters will engage and encourage audience participation through the use of cell phone polling and active discussion. Presenters will also review useful tools available on the APHL website with attendees. Attendees will be able to apply the lessons learned during this session to strengthen their own laboratory biosafety programs, reinforce a culture of safety and enhance training and mentorship for colleagues.

After completing this session, the participant will be able to:

- Analyze actual laboratory incidents to determine the root cause and the steps necessary to mitigate future incidents
- Use APHL biosafety tools to assess real-life laboratory incidents for potential exposures and prophylaxis, if indicated

Moderator: Shoolah H. Escott, MS, MLS(ASCP), Lead, ABSA International Public Health Outreach Shared Interest Group, Consultant

Speakers:

- Michael Perry, DrPH, MS Ed, Director, Biodefense Laboratory, New York State Department of Health, Wadsworth Center
- Erin Bowles, MLS(ASCP), Biosafety Consultant, Wisconsin State Laboratory of Hygiene (emeritus)
- Michael A. Pentella, PhD, D(ABMM), Director, State Hygienic Laboratory at the University of Iowa

Lessons of an Unexpected Crisis: A State and Federal Panel Discusses Infant Botulism Linked to Powdered Infant Formula RS PHPR QMS EMR SRV MCB RES RS

588-839-26 | P.A.C.E.® Contact Hours: 1.0

Starting in November 2025, a multistate outbreak of infant botulism linked to ByHeart powdered infant formula grew to 51 cases across 19 states and prompted the manufacturer to recall all lots of formula (cans and single-serve sticks) ever produced by their company. This session will be a conversation among the players involved in investigating this unexpected hazard in a critical food commodity. California representatives will describe the outstanding accomplishment of identifying an association between infant botulism cases and consumption of ByHeart formula and the challenging laboratory effort that informed decision making, including DOH's first laboratory-led ICS activation. A CDC panelist will detail the epidemiologic investigation that led to the broadening of the outbreak's case definition to any infant with botulism exposed to ByHeart formula since the product's release in March 2022. An FDA representative will discuss laboratory testing challenges and solutions as well as the investigative strategy into the contamination source, including product testing plans and WGS analysis. A scientist from one of the activated LFFM Food Defense laboratories will describe efforts to stand up testing and coordinate with colleagues around the country in the middle of a public health crisis.

Moderator: Anthony Tran, DrPH, MPH, D(ABMM), Director, State Public Health Laboratory Deputy Director, Center for Laboratory Sciences, California Department of Public Health

Speakers:

- Jessica M Khouri, MD, Senior Medical Officer, Infant Botulism Treatment and Prevention Program, California Department of Public Health
- Carolina Luquez, PhD, National Botulism Reference Laboratory, US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
- CAPT Kari Irvin, MS, CORE+EP Deputy Director, US Food and Drug Administration
- Sinisa Urban, PhD, Division Chief, Division of Environmental Sciences, Maryland Department of Health

At the conclusion of this session, the participant will be able to:

- Describe how California's Infant Botulism Treatment and Prevention Program identified the association between infant botulism cases and ByHeart powdered infant formula.
- Explain CDC's response approach, including how and why the case definition was expanded to capture all potentially exposed infants.
- Summarize FDA's investigative strategy to determine the contamination source, including the role of FDA's Laboratory Flexible Funding Model in this response
- Describe what the scientific community learned about C bot in PIF from analysis of investigative data

12:15 pm – 1:45 pm **Lunch in the Exhibit Hall: Visit Exhibits and Posters**

12:15 pm – 12:45 pm **Innovate! Session 13** (details on page 36 ▶)
Hologic

12:45 pm – 1:15 pm **Innovate! Session 14** (details on page 36 ▶)
Primary.Health

1:15 pm – 1:45 pm **Innovate! Session 15** (details on page 36 ▶)
QIAGEN LLC

INNOVATE! SESSIONS

Wednesday, May 6

7:30 am – 8:00 am

BioFire Defense

Clinical Value of the Global Fever Special Pathogens Test

- Amanda L. Roth, Clincial Microbiologist and Federal Acquisition Professional

J Michael Consulting

12:15 pm – 12:45 pm

Hologic

Resistance-guided Therapy for *Neisseria gonorrhoeae* infections: Molecular Detection of Ciprofloxacin Resistance and Evaluation of Novel Analyte Specific Reagents

- Olusegun O. Soge, PhD, Associate Professor, Global Health & Medicine (Infectious Diseases), Director, Chlamydia Lab & Neisseria Reference Lab, University of Washington

12:45 pm – 1:15 pm

Primary.Health

From Interoperability to Impact: Making Lab Connectivity Work in Everyday Operations

- Jack Hysell, Director Solutions Engineering, Primary.Health

1:15 pm – 1:45 pm

QIAGEN LLC

From Buzz to Flow: Advancing Public Health Surveillance with Digital PCR

- Shireen Flores, PhD, QIAGEN
- Zachary Bement, Tennessee Department of Health
- Nina Sherman, Tennessee Department of Health

2:00 pm – 3:00 pm Plenary Session

Stretching Every Dollar: Smart Strategies to Overcome Funding Gaps

CC LOA GEN MLD QMS

588-824-26 | P.A.C.E.® Contact Hours: 1.0

Governmental laboratories continue to face tightening budgets and rising operational costs, often being asked to do more with less without compromising quality or public health impact. In this session, a panel of scientists representing a range of laboratory settings will share creative, practical strategies to streamline workflows, reduce costs and assess core public health functions. While many examples will focus on food safety testing, the approaches discussed will be broadly applicable across multiple program areas. Participants will also have the opportunity to exchange jurisdiction-specific challenges and solutions, fostering a rich discussion of actionable ideas for all attendees. There will also be a Q&A discussion at the end of the session to encourage further dialogue and exploration of key topics.

After completing this session, the participant will be able to:

- List creative solutions to address funding gaps within a variety of jurisdictions
- Identify ways to streamline workflows to increase operational efficiency
- Evaluate which services are critical to maintain and which services can be outsourced

Moderator: Drew Francis, M(ASCP), Chief, Office of Microbiology and Molecular Diagnostics, Arizona State Public Health Laboratory

Speakers:

- Eric Vaughn, DrPH, MPH, Next Generation Sequencing Core Supervisor, District of Columbia Department of Forensic Sciences Public Health Laboratory Division
- Patrick J. Parsons, PhD, Director, Division of Environmental Health Sciences, New York State Department of Health, Wadsworth Center
- Karim E. Morey, MS, M(ASCP), Microbiologist III, Oregon Public Health Laboratory
- Bryanne Bindert, Laboratory Services, Minnesota Department of Agriculture

3:10 pm – 3:25 pm Scavenger Hunt Prize Drawings!

3:30 pm – 4:30 pm Concurrent Sessions

The State of Wastewater Surveillance Science: Where We Are and What the Future Holds

ID EHOS MCB SRV GEN

588-804-26 | P.A.C.E.® Contact Hours: 1.0

Outside of its success during the COVID-19 pandemic, wastewater surveillance continues to prove itself as a valuable public health tool by offering a healthcare-agnostic and pre-clinical case picture of disease presence in a community. In the years since the pandemic, this testing has effectively supplemented clinical data for targets beyond SARS-CoV-2, including the 2022 mpox outbreak and 2025 H5N1 avian influenza and measles outbreaks. As funding pressures rise and public health priorities shift, the

demand for innovative infectious disease surveillance techniques like wastewater surveillance may be greater than ever. This session will explore how wastewater surveillance has the potential to meet that demand by answering common laboratory questions about pathogen prioritization, target onboarding, method validation and verification and sequencing opportunities and challenges for this matrix.

After completing this session, the participant will be able to:

- Explain how an arbovirus method validation process could be applied to other target assays
- Describe how the 2025 Texas measles outbreak demonstrated that wastewater data could effectively detect community transmission prior to clinical patient confirmation
- Distinguish if sequencing is the future of wastewater surveillance
- Explain how wastewater surveillance sequencing data can be used in public health decision making

Moderator: Erin Morin, MHS, Specialist, Environmental Health, APHL

Speakers:

- Yan Sun, PhD, Manager, Advanced Molecular Detection Group, Texas Department of State Health Services
- Kelly F. Oakeson, PhD, Chief Scientist: Next-Generation Sequencing & Bioinformatics, Utah Health Department
- Drew Francis, M(ASCP), Chief, Office of Microbiology and Molecular Diagnostics, Arizona State Public Health Laboratory

Navigating CIDT False Positives: A Tale of Two Laboratories

FSS QRC MCB GEN RS

588-826-26 | P.A.C.E.® Contact Hours: 1.0

This session will follow the steps taken by two laboratories, one clinical and one public health, in investigating Norovirus and Campylobacter false positive results from an enteric Culture-Independent Diagnostic Test (CIDT) panel, sharing data and experiences from the beginning of noticing these false positives to implementing changes in their respective laboratories. Participants will explore strategies for tracking confirmation rates, improving communication between partner laboratories and determining where responsibility lies for ensuring the accuracy of these tests.

After completing this session, the participant will be able to:

- Clarify the roles and responsibilities of CIDT quality and performance monitoring for public health laboratories, clinical partners and manufacturers
- Identify practical strategies for monitoring and improving CIDT results and accuracy in public health laboratories and for communicating with clinical partners
- Discuss key successes and challenges faced by public health laboratories from CIDT usage

Moderator: David Boxrud, MS, Microbiologist, US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

Speakers:

- Allen Bateman, PhD, MPH, Director, Communicable Disease Division, Wisconsin State Laboratory of Hygiene
- Emily Snavely, PhD, Associate Director, Clinical Microbiology and Assistant Professor of Pathology, UVA Health
- Lucas Schulz, Pharm.D., Medical Science Liaison, Cepheid

Weird Science: Solving Public Health Puzzles ID MCB GEN CHM

588-827-26 | P.A.C.E.® Contact Hours: 1.0

The public health laboratory is often the laboratory of last resort for diagnosis of unusual cases, detection of emerging infectious and environmental threats and identifying the unexpected. In the Infectious Diseases Committee's ninth year coordinating this popular quiz-based session, we are bringing back the audience participation focused format and adding an environmental health twist! Our co-hosts will present a series of unusual infectious disease and environmental cases and will challenge the audience to answer the questions through an interactive format. Will the audience be able to solve the public health laboratories' most challenging puzzles?

After completing this session, the participant will be able to:

- Discuss strategies in the public health laboratory to build the capability and capacity to respond to unusual and emerging threats
- Describe unusual and challenging cases related to emerging infectious diseases and outbreaks of public health importance
- Recognize standard microbiological and chemical techniques used to detect rare infectious diseases or toxins

Moderator: Kelly Wroblewski, MPH, Senior Director, Infectious Diseases, APHL

Speakers:

- Anthony Tran, DrPH, MPH, D(ABMM), Director, State Public Health Laboratory Deputy Director, Center for Laboratory Sciences, CA Department of Public Health
- Marie Claire Rowlinson, PhD, D(ABMM)
- Meshel Lange, MS, Chemical Threats Coordinator, Wisconsin State Laboratory of Hygiene

From Dashboards to Decisions: Practical Tools to Retain and Strengthen the Public Health Laboratory Workforce LOA WFD QMS MLD GEN WFT

588-834-26 | P.A.C.E.® Contact Hours: 1.0

The APHL Knowledge Management Committee, in partnership with the Workforce Development Committee, sponsored two ongoing surveys to have a heightened awareness of the workforce dynamics across the country: the Public Health Laboratory

Workforce Profiles survey and Training Needs Assessments. This session will explore trends and key findings from survey data and newly published dashboards, focusing on how public health laboratories can utilize this data to develop strategies that support the rapidly evolving workforce and address ongoing workforce turnover.

After completing this session, the participant will be able to:

- Describe workforce trends using APHL survey data and dashboards
- Describe three practices that support knowledge retention and staff engagement
- Apply workforce insights to strengthen recruitment and retention strategies in public health laboratories

Moderator: Lorelei Kurimski, MS, Senior Director, Quality Systems and Analytics, APHL

Speakers:

- Kara Mitchell, PhD, Director, General Bacteriology, New York State Department of Health, Wadsworth Center
- Jennifer Fesler, Technical Laboratories Director, Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection
- Rachel Zinner, MS, Assistant Director, Kentucky Division of Laboratory Services

4:45 pm – 5:45 pm APHL Member Assembly

Thursday, May 7

7:00 am – 12:00 pm Registration

7:30 am – 8:30 am Roundtable Discussions

Digital by Design: Smarter Quality Systems for Public Health Laboratories

QRC QMS MLD GEN INF RS

588-829-26 | P.A.C.E.® Contact Hours: 1.0

This session explores how public health laboratories are modernizing operations by transitioning from paper-based systems to electronic platforms. Panelists will share real-world examples of implementing electronic document control, inventory management, environmental monitoring and digital logs, highlighting improvements in efficiency, sustainability and regulatory readiness

After completing this session, the participant will be able to:

- Identify laboratory processes that can benefit from transitioning to electronic systems
- Describe how electronic tools improve compliance, traceability and audit readiness
- Demonstrate how paperless workflows support cost savings, remote access and operational sustainability

Moderator: Michael Stevenson, PhD, Microbiologist V and Deputy Laboratory Director, New Hampshire Public Health Laboratories

Speakers:

- Susan M. Orton, PhD, D(ABMLI), Assistant Director, Quality and Regulatory Compliance, North Carolina State Laboratory of Public Health
- LeAnne Burns, Chemistry, Laboratory Quality Improvement Manager, Georgia Public Health Laboratory
- Kathryn Wangsness, MHA, Deputy Bureau Chief, Arizona State Public Health Laboratory

Discovering Your Lab's Unique Value CC MLD GEN WFT

588-830-26 | P.A.C.E.® Contact Hours: 1.0

Recruiting and retaining top-quality staff is challenging for all laboratories and geography can impact this success. A laboratory's physical location can create barriers that seem impossible to overcome, such as rural areas, long commutes or high living expenses. You can't relocate your laboratory, but you can embrace its unique local charm. In this session, participants will learn how to identify what makes their laboratory and community attractive and how to highlight those valued qualities to attract and retain excellent laboratory talent.

After completing this session, the participant will be able to:

- Identify the unique value of each laboratory example
- Discuss traits to attract and keep employees
- Discover the unique values of the session participants' home laboratories

Moderator: Samantha Hallis, PhD, TS/HCLD(ABB), SM(ASCP)CM, Assistant Laboratory Director, San Diego County Public Health Laboratory

Speakers:

- Samantha A. Hallis, PhD, HCLD/TS(ABB), SM(ASCP)CM, Assistant Public Health Laboratory Director, County of San Diego Public Health Laboratory
- Anita Keese, MPP, Environmental Chemistry Unit Director, Texas Department of State Health Services Laboratory
- Bernadette V. Matthis, MSBA, MLS (ASCP)CM, Laboratory Division Director, Philadelphia Department of Public Health Bureau of Laboratories

From Bow Ties to Hoodies: Exploring the Opportunities and Challenges of Expanding Point-of-Care STI Testing in Public Health ID MCB GEN

588-831-26 | P.A.C.E.® Contact Hours: 1.0

Ready to shake up diagnostics? This session dives into how point-of-care testing (POCT) is transforming access and testing practices for diagnosis and management of Sexually Transmitted Infections (STI)s. Join laboratory leaders and public health colleagues in

a lively discussion surrounding the integration and implementation of POCTs for STIs, Hepatitis and HIV in diverse public health settings. Help us unpack how POCT can fit into existing test algorithms, tackle the regulatory twists and turns and spotlight the role of public health laboratories in training, quality assurance and biosafety.

After completing this session, the participant will be able to:

- Explain how point-of-care testing (POCT) can improve access and management of STIs, Hepatitis and HIV
- Describe how to integrate POCTs into existing STI, Hepatitis and HIV laboratory testing algorithms
- Discuss the role of public health laboratories in supporting use of POCT in different public health settings

Moderator: Megan M. Crumpler, PhD, HCLD(ABB), Laboratory Director, Orange County Public Health Laboratory

Speakers:

- Randal C. Fowler, PhD, D (ABMM), Deputy Laboratory Director, Tennessee Department of Health Division of Laboratory Services
- Joey J. Stringer, General Laboratory Supervisor and Responsible Official, Dallas County Health and Human Services
- Tim Southern, MS, PhD, D(ABMM), Laboratory Director, Nevada Public Health Laboratory

Safety Talk: What's Working (and What's Not) in Biosafety

PRBB SHC GEN QMS

588-832-26 | P.A.C.E.® Contact Hours: 1.0

This interactive roundtable will foster open discussions around biosafety practices and challenges across public health laboratories. Recognizing that each laboratory approaches testing, incident reporting and document control differently, participants will explore what's working and what's not working at their current institutions. This session will combine live polling and guided discussion to highlight common themes and perspectives from attendees. Speakers will share key resources from their "resource toolbox," then invite participants to exchange additional resources, tools and best practices.

After completing this session, the participant will be able to:

- Compare approaches used by public health laboratories to manage biosafety practices such as incident reporting, testing workflows and document control
- Identify common challenges and practical solutions that can strengthen safety culture
- Apply shared tools and resources contributed by peers to enhance biosafety practices within their laboratories

Moderator: Drew C. Fayram, MS, RBP(ABSA), CBSP(ABSA), RBSO(CABS), Senior Scientist, Biosafety and Biosecurity, Merrick & Company

Speakers:

- David Hill, MEM, CIH, Director, Safety and Security, New York State Department of Health, Wadsworth Center
- Julie Viruez, MLS(ASCP), Safety Officer and Responsible Official, Tennessee Department of Health

Workforce Wisdom: Leveraging Tools for Impact

LOA WFD QMS WFT MLD

588-833-26 | P.A.C.E.® Contact Hours: 1.0

The APHL Knowledge Management Committee (KMC) will highlight its comprehensive suite of workforce tools, including the latest edition of the Knowledge Retention Toolkit, the new Workforce Retention Scorecard, new best practices publications, interactive dashboards, the Member Resource Center and CoILABorate platforms. KMC members will demonstrate how public health laboratories can apply these resources to address turnover, preserve institutional knowledge and strengthen recruitment and retention strategies.

After completing this session, the participant will be able to:

- Describe workforce trends from the 2024 Workforce Profile survey data
- List three factors that influence knowledge and workforce retention
- Apply one tool to implement an area of improvement in their Public Health Laboratory

Moderator: Lorelei Kurimski, MS, Senior Director, Quality Systems and Analytics, APHL

Speakers:

- Emma Levings, PBT(ASCP)MB, Public Health Laboratory Supervisor, Fairfax County Health Department Laboratory
- Ryan K. Bernard, MBA, Bureau Manager, Product Integrity, Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services
- Rachel Zinner, MS, Assistant Director, Kentucky Division of Laboratory Services

9:00 am – 10:00 am Concurrent Sessions

You've Got A Friend in Me! The Impact of Outreach to First Responders

PRBB EMR MLD GEN COM WFT

588-828-26 | P.A.C.E.® Contact Hours: 1.0

All public health laboratory programs are strengthened by partnerships. This session will explore the value of the partnerships developed by the Laboratory Response Network for Chemical Threats (LRN-C) program outreach efforts. LRN-C laboratories conduct ongoing outreach to first responders like HazMat and Weapons of Mass Destruction Civil Support Teams (WMD CST) so that when emergencies occur,

partners know who the laboratory is and how to engage them. Impacts of outreach efforts include partnering to develop joint training and exercises. Success stories of collaborations (big and small) will be shared, with an emphasis on the importance of establishing strong relationships for emergency response. Learn who key partners are and what each partner's role is in an emergency. Training models such as tabletop exercises will be presented, with the understanding that there is no "one size fits all" solution and that each jurisdiction is unique. Strategies for success with partners, such as communication efforts, will be shared to demonstrate the value of outreach as an ongoing part of preparedness.

After completing this session, the participant will be able to:

- Describe benefits of outreach, including the benefit of the laboratory being seen as a valued partner in the community
- Identify emergency response partners
- Explain how to initiate communications with emergency response partners to build valuable partnerships
- Identify avenues for sustaining collaborations with a variety of partners

Moderator: Amy Watson-Hardnett, PhD, LRN-C Technical Program Coordinator, US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

Speakers:

- Meshel Lange, MS, Chemical Threats Coordinator, Wisconsin State Laboratory of Hygiene
- Jocelyn Hover, MPH, Chemical Threats Coordinator, Texas Department of State Health Services, Central Campus
- Michael Thurow, Fire Captain and Director, Milwaukee Fire Department

Drugs, Data, Demographics: Combating Nonfatal Overdoses with a National Overdose Biosurveillance System EHOS QRC EMR CHM GEN SRV RS

588-811-26 | P.A.C.E.® Contact Hours: 1.0

With 73,690 drug overdose deaths occurring between April 2024 and April 2025, an unknown number of nonfatal overdoses, enduring trends of polysubstance use and overdose and perpetual introduction of novel substances posing significant health threats into the drug supply, the overdose crisis in the United States continues to be a major public health concern. Simultaneously, the overdose biosurveillance system has continued to expand and produce data that fills national nonfatal drug overdose surveillance gaps. This session will describe the overall overdose biosurveillance system, provide a first look at national data trends across 20 jurisdictions, describe the data pipeline leveraged and infrastructure created to support this national surveillance system, outline the numerous collaborative relationships required to generate actionable data, and highlight successes of biosurveillance programs in two jurisdictions.

After completing this session, the participant will be able to:

- Identify the utility of overdose biosurveillance data in public health practice for understanding non-fatal overdoses at the national and jurisdictional level
- Describe the value of leveraging an existing data pipeline and strong data infrastructure for a successful national surveillance system for non-fatal overdoses
- List collaborative partnerships vital for overdose biosurveillance, including internal and external partnerships

Moderator: Jill S. Warrington, MD, PhD, Laboratory Director, Vermont Department of Health Public Health Laboratory

Speakers:

- Kurunthachalam Kannan, PhD, Deputy Director, Division of Environmental Health Sciences, New York State Department of Health, Wadsworth Center
- Amy Miles, Forensic Toxicology, Wisconsin State Laboratory of Hygiene
- Nathan Plocharczyk, MS, Unit Coordinator, Organic Chemistry and Toxicology, Vermont Department of Health Public Health Laboratory
- Kelsey Wieland, MSFS, Chemical Threat Coordinator/Director of Emergency Preparedness, Iowa State Hygienic Laboratory

Off to the Races: Transforming Laboratory-developed Tests into the Next Generation of Diagnostics ID MCB GEN INF

588-836-26 | P.A.C.E.® Contact Hours: 1.0

Technological developments over the last 10 years, including open channel systems on high throughput diagnostic platforms and next generation sequencing, have opened the doors to new kinds of laboratory developed tests (LDTs). While the introduction of the Food and Drug Administration (FDA)'s Final Rule on LDTs temporarily paused some of these developments, the rule's recent vacatur has reopened those opportunities. Speakers will provide examples of how their laboratories have validated and utilize LDTs developed using three different emergent technologies to improve throughput, data and timeliness for the detection and characterization of nontuberculous mycobacteria, influenza and vector-borne diseases.

After completing this session, the participant will be able to:

- Identify key areas in the laboratory developed test (LDT) development and implementation workflow where automation adds value
- Assess how automation affects validation, risk management, quality assurance and documentation for LDTs
- Describe how automation has been used to improve Public Health Laboratory's ability to dectect and characterize pathogens in three key areas

Moderator: Kimberlee Musser, PhD, Chief of Bacterial Disease, New York State Department of Health, Wadsworth Center

Speakers:

- William A. Glover, PhD, D(ABMM), MLS(ASCP), Assistant Director, Infectious Diseases, North Carolina State Laboratory of Public Health
- Jeffery L. Benfer, MS, MB(ASCP), Clinical Laboratory Supervisor, State Hygienic Laboratory at the University of Iowa
- Krithivasan Sankaranarayanan, PhD, Research Scientist, New York State Department of Health, Wadsworth Center

Cronobacter sakazakii in Infant Formula: Prevalence, Innovative Mitigation Strategies, and Effective Risk Communication FSS QRC MCB GEN RS

588-837-26 | P.A.C.E.® Contact Hours: 1.0

Cronobacter sakazakii is a rare but life-threatening pathogen linked to severe infections in infants, including meningitis, sepsis and necrotizing enterocolitis. Although the incidence of this pathogen is low, the case-fatality rate is high in premature and immunocompromised infants. Outbreaks associated with contaminated powdered infant formula (PIF) have raised global public health concerns. Despite advances in food safety systems, critical gaps remain in surveillance, detection and preventive measures. This session will provide an interdisciplinary platform to discuss the prevalence, detection and control of *C. sakazakii* while exploring novel and practical mitigation strategies.

After completing this session, the participant will be able to:

- Describe the global prevalence and epidemiological patterns of *C. sakazakii* in infant formula and related environments
- Discuss the innovative technologies and strategies for controlling *C. sakazakii* in production, storage and handling of infant formula
- Explain the risks associated with *Cronobacter sakazakii* and apply effective strategies to educate caregivers on safe infant formula preparation and storage practices.

Moderators:

- Oluwatosin Ijabadeniyi, PhD, Honorary Research Professor, Department of Biotechnology and Food Science, Durban University of Technology, South Africa
- Joshua Gurtler, PhD, Lead Scientist, Agricultural Research Services, US Department of Agriculture

Speakers:

- Elisabetta Lambertini, PhD, Senior Scientist, Global Alliance for Improved Nutrition
- Ryan Blaustein, PhD, MS, Assistant Professor, Nutrition and Food Science, College of Agriculture and Natural Resources, University of Maryland
- Shauna Henley, PhD, Senior Agent and Affiliate Agent, Nutrition and Food Science, College of Agriculture and Natural Resources, University of Maryland

10:15 am – 11:15 am Plenary Session

The Great Debate: Emerging Chemical Contaminants vs. Emerging Pathogens — What's the Bigger Public Health Threat CC CHM GEN EMR

588-838-26 | P.A.C.E.® Contact Hours: 1.0

Grab your popcorn and your pipettes — it's time for The Great Debate!

In this lively and thought-provoking session, two teams of passionate public health professionals will face off to argue one of the most pressing issues in modern public health: What poses the bigger threat: emerging chemical contaminants or emerging pathogens?

On one side: the infectious disease experts, who argue that infectious agents—whether novel viruses, drug-resistant bacteria or vector-borne surprises—will always be our greatest challenge. On the other: the chemistry connoisseurs who warn that PFAS, microplastics, pharmaceuticals and other environmental contaminants are the silent, slow-moving catastrophe of our time.

Expect spirited arguments, audience participation and a few laughs along the way as both teams battle it out for the title of "Biggest Public Health Threat." You'll leave with a deeper appreciation for both sides of this complex issue and maybe a few new strategies for tackling them in your own work.

At the conclusion of this session, the participants will be able to:

- Compare the current and emerging risks associated with infectious diseases and environmental contaminants
- Evaluate how surveillance, prevention and response strategies differ for biological and chemical threats
- Engage in critical discussion and advocacy for integrated approaches to emerging threats

Moderator: Sara Vetter, PhD, Laboratory Director, Minnesota Public Health Laboratory

Speakers:

- Carin Huset, PhD, Research Scientist, Minnesota Department of Health Public Health Laboratory
- Lori Pillsbury, Laboratory and Environmental Assessment Division Administrator, Oregon Department of Environmental Quality
- Kimberlee Musser, PhD, Chief, Bacterial Disease, New York State Department of Health, Wadsworth Center
- Randal C. Fowler, PhD, D (ABMM), Deputy Laboratory Director, Tennessee Department of Health, Division of Laboratory Services

11:15 am – 11:45 am Closing Session

1:30 pm – 4:00 pm Optional Tour: Maryland Public Health Laboratory