

Bioterrorism and Emerging Pathogens Unit

North Carolina State
Laboratory of Public
Health

2011-2013 Strategic Plan



Mission

To maintain laboratory capacity for the detection of biological weapons and emerging infectious diseases and to act in a manner that strengthens crisis response within the Division of Public Health.

Preamble

The 2011-2013 Strategic Plan of the Bioterrorism and Emerging Pathogens Unit of the North Carolina State Laboratory of Public Health has been created to provide Sentinel laboratories, participating partners and the citizens of North Carolina with the resources and guidance to understand the processes and provided services of the Unit.

This plan outlines five key areas that are critically important to the Unit in obtaining its long range goals and objectives. Focused cognizance in these areas will drive the Unit to fulfill its purpose and work toward its mission.

This Strategic Plan was also created to implement strategic initiatives that must be achieved. Overcoming unforeseen obstacles and seizing opportunities to improve the preparedness of the Unit, Sentinel Laboratories and external partners will prove to be a focal point. The Unit is committed to following through on this Strategic Plan and reviewing its progress and accomplishments to ensure that it remains focused on its goals.

Sustain readiness through laboratory operations, emergency drills, and 24/7 capacity.

Laboratory Operations

Utilize unit adaptability by employing new assays to enable response to emerging and re-emerging threats. Ensure testing equipment and engineering controls are maintained. Review inventory and assess purchasing mechanisms to ensure efficiency and ability to obtain supplies in emergency situations.

24/7 Capacity

Evaluate laboratory mechanisms that could impact 24/7 capacity such as use of couriers, communication of staff availability, local support plan, surge capacity plans, and contingency plans, all efforts employed to mitigate external threats. Take advantage of leadership depth of the unit in decision making during temporary staff shortages. Multiple facilities in our laboratory system increase our ability to provide 24/7 testing, especially during times of excessive workloads at any particular lab.

Emergency Drills

Conduct drills to avoid complacency due to non-routine testing and emergency events. Staff should witness and participate in drills at other labs within our system to overcome unfamiliarity of non-uniform facilities and to enhance cross-support. Participate in functional exercises to improve coordination with external partners, familiarize relationships with non-uniform partners and promote multi-state collaborations.

Assure that BTEP has the infrastructure and resources to accomplish its mission.

Funding

Obtain financial support to meet the major aspects of the strategic plan.

Staffing

Commit to recruiting and retaining a quality workforce that will enable the laboratory to provide the highest level of services to our customers. Promote a positive work environment where all employees will be motivated, satisfied with their jobs and supported in their leadership aspirations.

Communications

Engage positive communication skills of the team to promote the efficient distribution of information within the team. Reduce fragmentation to alleviate additional burdens on staff.

Threat Reduction

Ensure adequate staff resources to meet the needs of the strategic plan. Engage team adaptability to address current laboratory threats such as IT support, purchasing, and travel restrictions.

Laboratory Information Management System

Improve the efficacy of the LIMS system to speak to BTEP's specific needs i.e. data redundancy, means of results reporting to avoid delayed patient care.

Maintain a technically competent staff through required participation in a structured training program.

Training

Deliver instructional materials to all staff utilizing traditional and novel methods to ensure that all training is consistent and pursuant to personnel technical competence. Employ the structured internal training program to increase technical capabilities. Provide and promote opportunities for staff to participate in conferences and exercises with external partners that will aid to fortify the team's knowledge base.

Proficiency Testing

Participate in an established and regulated proficiency testing program in order to provide measureable results of the team's training. Use of announced and unannounced exercises will act to reinforce the training provided and test technical knowledge.

Meet regulatory compliance by achieving required laboratory certifications.

Compliance

Identify and address gaps that obstruct goal of achieving regulatory compliance. Engage leadership depth of team as well as technical competence to maintain laboratory compliance and certifications for the Clinical Laboratory Improvement Amendments (CLIA), the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) and the National Select Agent Registry.

Strengthen the bond between the Bioterrorism Unit and its partners by exercising and improving upon an established outreach program

Collaboration with Partners

Actively seek out and maintain partnerships with public and private organizations to enhance the Unit's capacity. Work in concert with internal and external partners to provide training, information and materials that will aid to create uniform relationships throughout the state of North Carolina. Expand the current outreach program to include training and consultative services to first responders, PHRST teams and law enforcement.

Customer Service

Provide assistance and consultative services to all partners when requested. Identify information technology issues and seek solutions to enhance turn around time and data entry efficiency. Utilize the Unit's multi-laboratory system to provide regional service that is accurate and timely.