

The Hidden Infrastructure: Leveraging Established Programs to Respond to Unexpected Environmental Microbiology Outbreaks

Monday, April 13, 2026 | 3:00 — 4:00 pm ET

COURSE # 588-619-26

DESCRIPTION

Environmental outbreaks continue to impact public health with waterborne disease affecting over 7 million people annually in the US at costs exceeding \$3 billion. Recent events, including *Legionella* outbreaks in New York City and water-related norovirus outbreaks at large music festivals, highlight the urgent need for established systems that can respond quickly and effectively as public health funding and testing capacity decline. This webinar will explore the importance of environmental microbiology outbreak response (EMOR), highlighting real-world impacts, cross-disciplinary approaches and One Health connections. Speakers will discuss how they transitioned established testing programs into a response and share insights into how laboratories could use these experiences to build better-prepared EMOR programs for other unexpected future outbreaks.

AUDIENCE

This webinar is intended for state, territorial and local public health, environmental and agricultural laboratories, state, local and territorial governmental agencies and federal partners.

OBJECTIVES

After completing this webinar the participant will be able to:

- Describe how existing microbiology monitoring programs can be leveraged to support rapid response to contamination events in food and water systems
- Design sustainable EMOR programs that integrate cross-sector collaboration and support long-term public health protection

SPEAKERS

Presenters

Ryan Jepson, environmental microbiology manager, State Hygienic Laboratory at University of Iowa

Anna Pickett, supervisor, Enteric Bacteriology, Food & Shellfish Bacteriology, and Parasitology Laboratories, Washington State

ENROLL FOR FREE

Enrollment via the link above is required to access the live webinar. If you need assistance with enrollment, send us an [email](#). To participate in this live webinar, log in to the [APHL Learning Center](#) (ALC) and follow [these instructions](#). If accessing the [APHL Learning Center](#) (ALC) for the first time, [create a free APHL account](#).

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Level of Instruction:

- **BASIC:** Entry level; no prior knowledge of the subject is

Department of Health

Alana Sterkel, PhD, D(ABMM), SM(ASCP)™, associate director, Communicable Diseases, Wisconsin State Laboratory of Hygiene; assistant professor, University of Wisconsin— Madison

Moderator

Eric Vaughn, DrPH, MPH, deputy director, DC Public Health Laboratory

ACCESSIBILITY

In compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, individuals seeking special accommodations must email a request to Sydney Comet (Sydney.Comet@aphl.org) prior to the live webinar. Closed captions will be available with the webinar recording.

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