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L-SIP Assessment Report 2023

Georgia Public Health Laboratory



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	 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS
	The Association of Public Health Laboratories (APHL) provided funding, resources, and training to support coordination of the event. The Arizona Department of Public Health provided a facilitator to assist with the breakout groups. Facilitator also lead the Essential Service #2. The Indiana Department of Health Laboratory provided a facilitator to assist with the breakout groups. The Kentucky Department of Public Health provided a facilitator to assist with the breakout groups. The Public Health Laboratory Baton Rouge provided a shadow to observe the event and provide familization to conduct the first L-SIP assessment in Louisiana. The Georgia Public Health Laboratory provided theme takers, coordinators and volunteers to ensure the efficiency of the day's assessment activities. Facilities were provided by the Richardson Health Center through the Internal Services department of the DeKalb County Board of Health. Meals were provided by Panera Bread.

	INTRODUCTION
	MISSION The mission of the Georgia Department of Public Health is: To prevent disease, injury and disability; promote health and well being; and prepare for and respond to disasters. The Georgia Public Health Laboratory (GPHL) is a part of the State Public Health Laboratory System (SPH Laboratory System), which includes both the laboratory and its partners responsible for initiating testing, using the test results and/or following policies established by the laboratory. WHAT IS L-SIP? The Laboratory System Improvement Program (L-SIP) was introduced by the collaborative effort of two national partners, the Association of Public Health Laboratories (APHL) and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), Laboratory Science, Policy, and Practice Program Office. L-SIP was developed to assess the State's Public Health System's performance, plan for improvements, implement improvement strategies, evaluate effects of strategies, and re-assess system performance. This assessment is based on the identified strengths and weaknesses identified during the breakout session discussions. The L-SIP measurement tool is based on the 11 core functions and capabilities of Public Health Laboratories and designed within the framework of the 10 Essential Public Health Services (APHL, 2022). This assessment uses the steps laid out by the L-SIP tools developed by the American Public Health Laboratory Association (APHL) and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Invitations to attend the L-SIP were sent to participants who represented various aspects of public health system partners. On March 9, 2003, the GPHL convened at the Richardson Health Center in Decatur, GA for its first L-SIP Assessment with approximately 35 partners. This report documents the planning process, activities of the event, and summary of findings from the assessment day.

Planning Activities

PRE-ASSESSMENT

The Georgia Public Health Laboratory L-SIP Assessment process began with identification of the coordinator and internal L-SIP coordinating team members. GPHL was selected as a host laboratory for the APHL-CDC Quality Management Fellowship Program after applying with the intent to use the fellow as the lead coordinator for the assessment. The coordinating team, consisting of the fellow and the two quality improvement team members met weekly to plan the details of the assessment day beginning in September 2022. The next task of the 6-month planning process was to select a date to conduct the assessment and a location to be used. The persistence of the fellow secured the Richardson Health Center at no cost through several in-person visits and phone calls to the Manager of Internal Affairs after reaching out to multiple state facilities to no avail.

Identifying facilitators, theme takers, and laboratory partners came next. The GPHL Quality Improvement Manager was able to secure facilitators through connections made within the APHL community. Kentucky and Louisiana were invited as facilitator and shadow, respectively to inspire their states to host their first L-SIP assessments. An internal interest email was sent to GPHL staff members and volunteers were used as theme takers. The coordinating team obtained planning recommendations from the Indiana Department of Health, which assisted with identifying different groups of laboratory partners to invite. GPHL department managers, directors, and deputy directors assisted with providing contacts to invite. The DPH Communications Department added the L-SIP User Guide templates into the Constant Contact website, which was used to send invitations to the state partners.

The final steps were to select a caterer, food/drinks, and order supplies. The L-SIP User guide was a great resource as it included templates for invitations and other communications, an assessment agenda, a timeline for assessment preparations, and so much more vital information. The coordinating team relied heavily on the user guide for clarity throughout the process. A series of technical calls were held throughout the process by the APHL Quality Systems Manager to guide the coordinators through the planning process, assist and supply all the assessment related documents for the event.

Assessment Day

L-SIP

On March 9th, 2023, the Georgia Department of Public Health Laboratory held its first L-SIP Assessment. Approximately 35 partners attended the assessment at the Richardson Health Center facility in Decatur, Georgia.

As participants arrived and checked in, they received a folder of assessment materials and during breakfast. Welcome visuals were on display along with signage to direct attendees to the appropriate areas. The Lab Director began the plenary session with opening remarks and a facilitator reviewed the Assessment Overview for the day. Essential Service #2 was completed with the entire group of attendees, which served as a practice for the breakout sessions that followed.

The assignment of facilitators, theme takers and participants for each breakout group was pre-determined by the coordinating team and indicated to attendees by three different color folders of assessment materials handed out at check-in. Following the agenda, each breakout group dispersed into separate rooms to proceed with the remaining essential service discussions after the plenary session.

The nine remaining essential services were assessed, three for each breakout group, and scored based on the strengths and weaknesses of the public health laboratory system in Georgia. The findings from the assessment serve as a baseline for the identification and implementation of process improvement opportunities.

L-SIP ASSESSMENT RESULTS

Overall Essential Service Result Summary

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Optimal										
Significant	X					X	X			
Moderate		X		X				X	X	
Minimal			X		X					X
No Activity										

KEY

Score	Percentage of Compliance
Optimal	>75%
Significant	51-75%
Moderate	26-50%
Minimal	1-25%
No Activity	0%

	ESSENTIAL SERVICE # 1
	KEY IDEA 1.1.1: The System identifies infectious disease and environmental sentinel events, monitors trends, and participates in state and federal surveillance systems.
	STRENGTHS • State Epidemiologists receive electronic laboratory reporting from SENDSS and report notifiable infectious diseases for surveillance or to find potential outbreaks. There is some ongoing networking with the hospitals to coordinate submission of specimens to the Public Health Laboratory. The Notifiable Disease Reporting requirements are to be updated and there is active surveillance with the hospitals. • There is sufficient collaboration among local and state (agricultural and environmental) epidemiologists and the lab with regards to disease outbreaks (foodborne or enteric diseases). • Utilizing Pulse Net to report results to the CDC system for salmonella, shigella, campy, shigella. • Newborn Screening program council meets twice a year with concerns and discuss problems with false positive and false negative rates. • Chemical threat, biological threat, and BioWatch program perform surveillance. OPPORTUNITIES FOR IMPROVEMENT • Translating data/data modernization. • Partner engagement ITEMS REQUIRING ADDITIONAL DISCUSSION • Translating data/data modernization, i.e., AMD front (advanced molecular detection) into useful information about outbreak detection or surveillance. • Engaging partners

ACTION ITEMS

- Work to increase program budget.
- Translate data/data modernization (AMD).

	ESSENTIAL SERVICE # 1
	KEY IDEA 1.1.2: The System monitors congenital, inherited, and metabolic diseases of newborns and participates in state and Federal surveillance systems.
	STRENGTHS • UPS and courier services transport Newborn Screening (NBS) blood spots in a timely manner to the laboratory. • GPHL uses the nationally recommended test panels. OPPORTUNITIES FOR IMPROVEMENT • More work is needed with Perkin Elmer to get a LIMS to work with the hospitals facilitate electronic ordering and sending data out. ITEMS REQUIRING ADDITIONAL DISCUSSION • GBI fatality screening with Perkin Elmer to transfer data to the laboratory to help with false negatives or false positives. ACTION ITEMS • Acquire new electronic ordering system for NBS to integrate Electronic Health systems with Perkin Elmer LIMS.

	ESSENTIAL SERVICE # 1
	KEY IDEA 1.1.3: The System has a secure, accountable, and integrated information management system for data storage, analysis, retrieval, reporting and exchange. Partners collaborate to strengthen electronic surveillance systems.
	STRENGTHS • The System has a secure and integrated information management system for data storage, analysis, retrieval, reporting and exchange. Partners collaborate to strengthen electronic surveillance systems. • Electronic laboratory report (ELR) access via Apollo Web Portal (submitters) and SENDSS (epidemiologists) is very helpful and beneficial. • The transition to electronic vs paper requisitions has decreased turnaround times. OPPORTUNITIES FOR IMPROVEMENT • Increase budget to accommodate the expense of improved technology. ITEMS REQUIRING ADDITIONAL DISCUSSION • Apollo Web Portal should be updated to include more molecular bacteriology in ordering tests. • Better communication between SENDSS and partners. ACTION ITEMS • Data modernization such as linking all systems for centralized information accessibility.

<u>SCORE</u>	
	ESSENTIAL SERVICE 1 MONITOR HEALTH STATUS TO IDENTIFY COMMUNITY HEALTH PROBLEMS
	KEY IDEA 1.1.1
	The System identifies infectious disease and environmental sentinel events, monitors trends, and participates in state and federal surveillance systems.
SIGNIFICANT	KEY IDEA 1.1.2
	The System monitors congenital, inherited, and metabolic diseases of newborns and participates in state and Federal surveillance systems.
SIGNIFICANT	KEY IDEA 1.1.3
	The System has a secure, accountable, and integrated information management system for data storage, analysis, retrieval, reporting and exchange. Partners collaborate to strengthen electronic surveillance systems.
MODERATE	

	ESSENTIAL SERVICE #2
	KEY IDEA 2.1.1 The System assures the effective provision of services at the highest level of quality to assist in the detection, diagnosis and investigation of all significant health problems and hazards.
	STRENGTHS • GPHL teams with CDC adequately to resolve issues. There has been a lot of improvement since 2009. We have developed interfaces such as Apollo, added relationships, and testing capacity. • GPHL has responded well to major health events. OPPORTUNITIES FOR IMPROVEMENT • More work to bridge the communication gap with academic partners /investigators is needed. Partners should be engaged as to improve scientific research for new methodology. • More sustainable funding options are needed. Information communication should be formalized to improve knowledge retention and transfer with turnover and in the absence of seasoned staff members. • Forging a relationship with radioactivity laboratories in Georgia. CDC is the only known testing laboratory for clinical specimens. Radiation planning, including a documented procedure for outsourcing the work is needed. • Attracting and retaining skilled staff. ITEMS REQUIRING ADDITIONAL DISCUSSION • There should be more discussion on Augusta Nuclear plant (Radiology). ACTION ITEMS • Work to increase program budget. • Translate data/data modernization (AMD)

	ESSENTIAL SERVICE #2
	KEY IDEA 2.1.2 The System has the necessary capacity and authority in place to rapidly respond to public health events.
	STRENGTHS - Recent local and global events have strengthened the system and allowed for more focus on process improvement. - There is an established response network capable of getting needed testing performed. OPPORTUNITIES FOR IMPROVEMENT - Many system partners are not aware of national network messaging. - Members should have easy access to the appropriate contact person during emergency situations. - SOPs should be documented and readily available for all and used by those in charge. - Identify and include all sectors of partners in communications. - Use surveys to obtain feedback on improvements and how to implement them. ITEMS REQUIRING ADDITIONAL DISCUSSION - None ACTION ITEMS - Establish a COOP - (Continuity of Operation Plan). - Formalize and document information for everyone in the system to access.

<u>SCORE</u>	
	ESSENTIAL SERVICE 2 DIAGNOSE AND INVESTIGATE HEALTH PROBLEMS AND HEALTH HAZARDS IN THE COMMUNITY
	KEY IDEA 2.1.1
	The System assures the effective provision of services at the highest level of quality to assist in the detection, diagnosis and investigation of all significant health problems and hazards.
MODERATE	
	KEY IDEA 2.1.2
MODERATE	The System has the necessary capacity and authority in place to rapidly respond to public health events.

	ESSENTIAL SERVICE # 3
	KEY IDEA 3.1.1 The System develops and disseminates accurate and consistent information to community partners about relevant health issues associated with laboratory services.
	STRENGTHS • Instructional guidance is being disseminated throughout the system when needed. • GPHA organization brings networks together. Annual conferences are held to foster improvements. • GPHL communicates well with system partners. • Support Services has direct communication with all the districts and partners throughout the state with the LIMS training (Web Portal). • There is communication of emerging information or issues during major health events (Covid / Monkeypox) and Epidemiology communicates with healthcare partners to ensure specimens are acceptable for testing. • Communication from the lab goes through the Department of Public Health. OPPORTUNITIES FOR IMPROVEMENT • NBS program experiencing delays due to program restructuring. • No established program for education and staff training. ITEMS REQUIRING ADDITIONAL DISCUSSION • There should be an outreach liaison between partners and sentinel labs. • There is inadequate communication for the NBS program. There needs to be improvement in surveillance vs clinical testing and mitigation in the gap with providers for easy access to epidemiological updates. ACTION ITEMS • Increase outreach and communication efforts within the system. • Centralize the location and transfer of information.

	ESSENTIAL SERVICE # 3
	KEY IDEA 3.1.2 The System creates and provides educational opportunities to community partners.
	STRENGTHS • The Georgia Public Health Association (GPHA) has representation from public health officials and District partners and lobbyists that focus on public health issues. • There are outreach events, conferences (emergency preparedness), and safety training events that provide educational opportunities to partners. • NBS advisory council advises and educates members/ partners, as well as agencies (March of Dimes). • The Department of Public Health (DPH) handles its legislator information and issues. OPPORTUNITIES FOR IMPROVEMENT • NBS program is experiencing delays due to program restructuring. • No established program for education and staff training. ITEMS REQUIRING ADDITIONAL DISCUSSION • Updating the GPHL website. • Establish more connection between media and communications. ACTION ITEMS • None

	<u>SCORE</u>	ESSENTIAL SERVICE 3 COMMUNICATE EFFECTIVELY TO INFORM AND EDUCATE PEOPLE ABOUT HEALTH, FACTORS THAT INFLUENCE IT, AND HOW TO IMPROVE IT
	MINIMAL	KEY IDEA 3.1.1 The System develops and disseminates accurate and consistent information to community partners about relevant health issues associated with laboratory services.
	MINIMAL	KEY IDEA 3.1.2 The System creates and provides educational opportunities to community partners.

	ESSENTIAL SERVICE #4
	KEY IDEA 4.1.1 Partners in the System develop and maintain relationships to formalize and sustain an effective system.
	STRENGTHS - There is partnership between epidemiology department and the laboratory, where GPLH is invited in EIP monthly meetings. There is also collaboration between clinical partners, APHL and CMS. OPPORTUNITIES FOR IMPROVEMENT - There should be a formal meeting scheduled between partner entities. Roles and responsibilities should be established between partners and documented formally. - Communication gap should be narrowed or nonexistent by formalizing written documentation and centralizing its location. ITEMS REQUIRING ADDITIONAL DISCUSSION - Implementation of ways to maximize utilization of available tools. - Exploration of the reasons behind the underutilization, such as the lack of adequate knowledge. - Eliminate gaps in communication. ACTION ITEMS - None

	ESSENTIAL SERVICE #4
	KEY IDEA 4.1.2 System members communicate in regular, timely, and effective ways to support collaboration.
	STRENGTHS - Established communication channels exist between partners and external agencies such as the CDC. OPPORTUNITIES FOR IMPROVEMENT - Need an efficient process for knowledge transfer between employees and a way to minimize redundancy of communications while capturing maximum amounts of information for submitters. - A feedback mechanism with partners is desired, i.e., customer service and submitter surveys, open house events, emails, social media, or verbal communication. - Develop a means of passing information to the communications department, especially behind the scenes with additional training as needed. ITEMS REQUIRING ADDITIONAL DISCUSSION - None ACTION ITEMS - None

	ESSENTIAL SERVICE # 4
	KEY IDEA 4.1.3 The PH Laboratory System works together to share existing resources and identify new resources to address health issues.
	STRENGTHS • There is a relationship within the public health laboratory system where existing resources are shared. OPPORTUNITIES FOR IMPROVEMENT • Available resources need to be formalized with visibility, i.e., creating a centralized/standard system for housing resources. • Funding is needed to replace old equipment, maintenance, increasing employee salaries and developing training to retain staff. ITEMS REQUIRING ADDITIONAL DISCUSSION • None ACTION ITEMS • Work to obtain more funding/resources such as training on grant writing.

<u>SCORE</u>	
	ESSENTIAL SERVICE 4 STRENGTHEN, SUPPORT, AND MOBILIZE COMMUNITIES AND PARTNERSHIPS TO IMPROVE HEALTH
MODERATE	KEY IDEA 4.1.1 Partners in the System develop and maintain relationships to formalize and sustain an effective system.
	KEY IDEA 4.1.2 System members communicate in regular, timely, and effective ways to support collaboration.
SIGNIFICANT	KEY IDEA 4.1.3 The PH Laboratory System works together to share existing resources and identify new resources to address health issues.

	ESSENTIAL SERVICE # 5
	KEY IDEA 5.1.1 The System obtains input from diverse partners to develop new policies, plans and laws and modify existing ones, using scientific evidence to inform and influence policy.
	STRENGTHS - Ethics drives a lot of policy making discussion. OPPORTUNITIES FOR IMPROVEMENT - Identify best management practices and formalize them into written records. Record workforce knowledge of partners/policies. Create an easy way to identify partners in different organizations and make their roles clear. - Set up succession plans for smooth transition when key employees leave organizations. ITEMS REQUIRING ADDITIONAL DISCUSSION - Sharing partner specific succession knowledge transfer with other partners. ACTION ITEMS - Identify programs that are at optimal levels and connecting them with programs that can benefit from knowledge exchange. - Implement Advisory committees across the System and make the members and their roles known. - Increase effort on recruitment and retention of employees.

SCORE MINIMAL	
	ESSENTIAL SERVICE 5 CREATE, CHAMPION, AND IMPLEMENT POLICIES, PLANS, AND LAWS THAT IMPACT HEALTH
	KEY IDEA 5.1.1
	The System obtains input from diverse partners to develop new policies, plans and laws and modify existing ones, using scientific evidence to inform and influence policy.

	ESSENTIAL SERVICE # 6
	KEY IDEA 6.1.1 The System is actively engaged in the review and revision of laws and regulations pertaining to laboratory practice.
	STRENGTHS - Through auditing/inspections by CLIA, CAP etc., the system meets the rules and regulation requirements assigned. The System is aware and follows rules and regulations, such as PPE and mask policy. Additional meetings are coordinated, and policies are developed when necessary. OPPORTUNITIES FOR IMPROVEMENT - None ITEMS REQUIRING ADDITIONAL DISCUSSION - None ACTION ITEMS - None

	ESSENTIAL SERVICE # 6
	KEY IDEA 6.1.2 The System promotes compliance by all laboratories regarding applicable laws and regulations.
	STRENGTHS • The system promotes compliance. Laboratories participate in compliance and PT testing programs. • Educational opportunities are available and there are alerts from management on important issues. OPPORTUNITIES FOR IMPROVEMENT • Develop mechanisms to pass information to all members of the system in a timely manner. On the federal level, critical updates may need additional, immediate notification besides updating the website since other members may not have prior knowledge of the new critical update. ITEMS REQUIRING ADDITIONAL DISCUSSION • None ACTION ITEMS • Develop a critical update information system and protocol.

<u>SCORE</u>	
	ESSENTIAL SERVICE 6 UTILIZE LEGAL AND REGULATORY ACTIONS DESIGNED TO IMPROVE AND PROTECT THE PUBLIC'S HEALTH
	SIGNIFICANT KEY IDEA 6.1.1 The System is actively engaged in the review and revision of laws and regulations pertaining to laboratory practice.
	SIGNIFICANT KEY IDEA 6.1.2 The System promotes compliance by all laboratories regarding applicable laws and regulations.

	ESSENTIAL SERVICE # 7
	KEY IDEA 7.1.1 The System identifies laboratory service needs and collaborates to fill gaps.
	STRENGTHS • After-hours protocol is in place, including courier system, UPS services and weekend on-call services. • NBS program coordinates with other partners to fill gaps. • Quality Assurance (QA) department helps with timeliness from receipt of specimens to reporting of results. • The new courier service has decreased the rate of specimen rejection and turn-around time. • Packaging and shipping training is offered to the system by the laboratory. OPPORTUNITIES FOR IMPROVEMENT • Increase budgets and grant-funding. ITEMS REQUIRING ADDITIONAL DISCUSSION • Expand testing for NBS on Saturdays for newborns born on Friday or Saturday. • Formalize reciprocal agreements with other state laboratories so there is no delay in testing or resulting. ACTION ITEMS • Improve communication for outbreaks. • Discuss the logistics for scaling emergency situations. • Determine if expanded Newborn screening services are needed on the weekends. • Routine / back-up to prevent a delay in testing or resulting like the RVP delay and then the flood (formalize reciprocal agreements).

	ESSENTIAL SERVICE # 7
	KEY IDEA 7.1.2 The System provides timely and accessible quality services.
	STRENGTHS • The System provides timely and accessible quality services. • The QA department is actively working on updating GPHL policies and procedures for quality services. • Emergency preparedness worked successfully to handle the pandemic within the system and is prepared for any future pandemics. • The laboratory shares information with partners, such as the districts and district health departments which then provide the information to the public / patients (great communication). • All health departments in Georgia have access to services done at the lab. OPPORTUNITIES FOR IMPROVEMENT • The GPHL website needs regular updates. ITEMS REQUIRING ADDITIONAL DISCUSSION • None ACTION ITEMS • Update the GPHL website. • Eliminate redundancy in testing, especially for the critical tests. • Continue networking and working with Districts and Health Departments to provide excellent services.

	ESSENTIAL SERVICE # 8
	KEY IDEA 8.1.1 The System maintains an environment to attract and retain diverse and highly qualified staff.
	STRENGTHS • There are established training checkpoints within the system for all employees. • Pre-analytical, analytical, and post-analytical job descriptions are in place to meet regulatory requirements. OPPORTUNITIES FOR IMPROVEMENT • Improve recruiting efforts as well as onboarding and offboarding strategies. • Work to increase staff retention rates. ITEMS REQUIRING ADDITIONAL DISCUSSION • Minimizing the number of travel technologists and increasing number of full- time employees. • Place efforts on recruitment of students during Molecular rotations. • With the removal of the requirement for certification (ASCP/AMT) in 2021, current employees with certifications must be encouraged or compensated to maintain their certification (ASCP/AMT CEUs). ACTION ITEMS • Increase work incentives to increase staff retention rates. • Recruit more qualified staff.

	ESSENTIAL SERVICE # 8
	KEY IDEA 8.1.2 The System works to assure a competent workforce by encouraging and supporting staff development through training, education, coaching and mentoring.
	STRENGTHS • Flexible training methods are implemented to new employees. • The system offers continuing education to all level staff. OPPORTUNITIES FOR IMPROVEMENT • Cross-train current employees to diversify current workforce. ITEMS REQUIRING ADDITIONAL DISCUSSION • None ACTION ITEMS • Provide leadership training for those transitioning from bench work to supervisory positions. • Offer mentorship opportunities.

	ESSENTIAL SERVICE # 8
	KEY IDEA 8.1.3 The System identifies and addresses current and future workforce shortage issues.
	STRENGTHS - Human Resources monitors workforce trends. - HOSA (Health Occupation Students of America) club is active in high schools and organizes annual conferences. Its purpose is to minimize future workforce shortage. OPPORTUNITIES FOR IMPROVEMENT - Seek for ways to encourage and direct high schoolers into the field of Medical Laboratory science. - Organize volunteer programs, job fairs and career forums to promote lab science jobs. - Implement a compensation reward program. ITEMS REQUIRING ADDITIONAL DISCUSSION - None ACTION ITEMS - Increase system wide outreach to attract skilled talent.

<u>SCORE</u>	
	ESSENTIAL SERVICE 8
	BUILD AND SUPPORT A DIVERSE AND SKILLED PUBLIC HEALTH WORKFORCE
	KEY IDEA 8.1.1
	The System maintains an environment to attract and retain diverse and highly qualified staff.
	KEY IDEA 8.1.2
	The System works to assure a competent workforce by encouraging and supporting staff development through training, education, coaching and mentoring.
MODERATE	
SIGNIFICANT	
MINIMAL	KEY IDEA 8.1.3
	The System identifies and addresses current and future workforce shortage issues.

	ESSENTIAL SERVICE # 9
	KEY IDEA 9.1.1 The effectiveness, accessibility and quality of the individual- and population-based laboratory services provided throughout the state is regularly evaluated.
	STRENGTHS - Metrics are captured per the laboratory quality manual to measure operational success. There is regulatory auditing and proficiency testing to help assess performance. External audits, such as CLIA, are completed for compliance with regulations. OPPORTUNITIES FOR IMPROVEMENT - Obtain feedback from partners so they can share opinions on effectiveness, accessibility, and quality of laboratory services. - Some system partners need refresher training on outbreak policies. - There should be clear communication initiatives on how to handle immediate issues /new diseases. - Funding for creating connections and research purposes. ITEMS REQUIRING ADDITIONAL DISCUSSION - None ACTION ITEMS - Seek support for innovation initiatives.

	ESSENTIAL SERVICE # 9
	KEY IDEA 9.1.2 The System has adequate expertise and capacity to plan research and innovation activities.
	STRENGTHS • There are existing partnerships that are working on projects and research. • Fellows and students have helped foster relationships with research academics. OPPORTUNITIES FOR IMPROVEMENT • Provision of adequate funding and resources to support innovations and day-to-day initiatives. • There is inadequate infrastructure in facilities to handle new research and projects to support the workforce. • Communications need to be clearer and more concise when making requests. ITEMS REQUIRING ADDITIONAL DISCUSSION • None ACTION ITEMS • Update facilities to support innovation efforts.

	ESSENTIAL SERVICE #9
	KEY IDEA 9.1.3 The System promotes research and innovative solutions.
	STRENGTHS • There are fellowship programs and Wastewater contractual agreements with Emory. Collaborations with UGA and Emory draw on diverse perspectives and expertise. OPPORTUNITIES FOR IMPROVEMENT • Improve on outreach communication to all partners. • Evaluate the Annual Salary review process. • Capture institutional knowledge/succession planning and develop administrative SOPs. • Contact lists need to be well maintained. • There needs to be constant communication making sure everyone can find information and follow up with users to make sure the protocols are working for them. • Effective use of technology on websites would be beneficial in ensuring ADA compatibility. ITEMS REQUIRING ADDITIONAL DISCUSSION • None ACTION ITEMS • Develop KPI for the Communications division. • Create strategic funding plans to ensure better use of grants and funding.

<u>SCORE</u>	
	ESSENTIAL SERVICE 9
	IMPROVE AND INNOVATE PUBLIC HEALTH FUNCTIONS THROUGH ONGOING EVALUATION, RESEARCH, AND CONTINUOUS QUALITY IMPROVEMENT
	KEY IDEA 9.1.1
	The effectiveness, accessibility and quality of the individual- and population-based laboratory services provided throughout the state is regularly evaluated.
MODERATE	KEY IDEA 9.1.1
	The effectiveness, accessibility and quality of the individual- and population-based laboratory services provided throughout the state is regularly evaluated.
MINIMAL	KEY IDEA 9.1.2
	The System has adequate expertise and capacity to plan research and innovation activities.
MODERATE	KEY IDEA 9.1.3
	The System promotes research and innovative solutions.

	ESSENTIAL SERVICE #10
	KEY IDEA 10.1.1 The System is composed of different entities that work together effectively on public health activities and are transparent and accountable to the community it serves.
	STRENGTHS • Some system partners use recorded training to share communications. • Newborn Screening has an advisory committee meeting that is open to the public. Parents can come in with their questions. This provides transparency to the public. • There are collaborations with UGA with rabies specimen. OPPORTUNITIES FOR IMPROVEMENT • Expand the use of recorded training across the system. • Increase proactive partner communications before problems arise. • Information needs to be readily available and there should be spontaneous sharing of this information. ITEMS REQUIRING ADDITIONAL DISCUSSION • A feedback mechanism is needed to drive strategic planning, and these should be reviewed regularly. • Assessment survey may be needed. ACTION ITEMS • Establish a means to obtain partner feedback and make corrections. • Modernize training efforts.

	ESSENTIAL SERVICE #10
	KEY IDEA 10.1.2 The System's leadership acts ethically and strategically and communicates proactively to the public through different mechanisms.
	STRENGTHS • Members of the system work ethically, some programs are required to obtain IRB approval. • Information is released timely and made available to the public. The testing data is visible online via the DPH website. • There are systems in place for everyone to get a fair opportunity to participate as contractors within the system. • Inclusive leadership is more important than getting agreement from Subject Matter Experts (SMEs). OPPORTUNITIES FOR IMPROVEMENT • Collaboratively strategize resource allocation and utilization with system partners. ITEMS REQUIRING ADDITIONAL DISCUSSION • None ACTION ITEMS • Increase strategic decision-making tactics within the laboratory system.

	ESSENTIAL SERVICE #10
	KEY IDEA 10.1.3 The System has the necessary resources (e.g., financial, technological, physical (facilities), human) to perform and sustain public health activities.
	STRENGTHS • Efforts are being made to review successful practices within the system and partners are looking to other states for learning opportunities. OPPORTUNITIES FOR IMPROVEMENT ACTION ITEMS • More attention needs to be placed on laboratory activities. This will help to ensure that it keeps up with the changes in the world of testing. This means that resource issues across the system need to be addressed, identify what is an actual need and what is the active surveillance. • Minimize knowledge assumptions via effective communication. • Utilize a needs assessment survey. • Involve partners in solution planning for problems identified. ITEMS REQUIRING ADDITIONAL DISCUSSION • Technology meets minimum guidelines and improvements are limited by funding. • Ensuring allocation and utilization of resources are available. Partnerships with hospitals (etc.) encounter making strategic decisions using technology to create sustainable impact. • Review funding allocations to keep up with changing needs and updates to testing. • Update the process of sending out results via a new LIMS. • Identify ways to overcome knowledge assumptions. ACTION ITEMS • Seek support for innovation initiative.

	• Learn how other states allocate funds and operational differences in comparison to the current processes for allocation and utilization of resources. • Implement a needs assessment survey among partners. Include partners in strategic planning.
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<u>SCORE</u>	
	ESSENTIAL SERVICE 10
	BUILD AND MAINTAIN A STRONG ORGANIZATIONAL INFRASTRUCTURE FOR PUBLIC HEALTH
	KEY IDEA 10.1.1
	The System is composed of different entities that work together effectively on public health activities and are transparent and accountable to the community it serves.
MODERATE	KEY IDEA 10.1.2
	The System's leadership acts ethically and strategically and communicates proactively to the public through different mechanisms.
MINIMAL	KEY IDEA 10.1.3
	The System has the necessary resources (e.g., financial, technological, physical (facilities), human) to perform and sustain public health activities.

	CONCLUSION
	GPHL strives to integrate the 10 Essential Public Health Services (ES) with the Georgia DPH laboratory system core functions and capabilities. The laboratory's dedication to the continuous improvement of its laboratory operations includes, but is not limited to weekly management meetings, monthly quality meetings and yearly internal audits. Conducting the first L-SIP assessment provided GPHL the unique opportunity to assess not only the laboratory's performance internally but also within Georgia DPH laboratory system to identify strengths and gaps. The outcome of the L-SIP assessment depicts how all system partners assembled in one place perceived the Georgia DPH laboratory system, which proved invaluable. Significant discussion occurred throughout the event and some major themes emerged. The first theme was communication. There was an expressed need in every breakout group to standardize and centralize communication to all system partners regarding various topics such as adding new assays, changes in protocol, outbreaks, results, etc. Secondly, modernizing training efforts to cover different learning styles such as video or webinars for visual learners and mentoring for hands-on learners was frequently discussed. The third theme was funding and centered around the Georgia DPH laboratory system collaborating to increase the program budget based on successful programs and creating a strategic funding plan to ensure better use of grants and funding when received. Finally, all partners had a significant interest in recruitment and retention of highly qualified personnel. With several technical institutions retiring or leaving public health, the need for the system to utilize a knowledge retention tool and provide networking, mentorship, leadership training and grant writing opportunities has significantly increased. These themes coincide with the work already begun by the Quality Services department of GPHL to modernize the laboratory website serving as the centralized hub for storing newly standardized laboratory documents and create a more usable service manual. Themes pertaining to the workforce and funding are also topics of discussion at the recent APHL conference. Continued work on these themes will be prioritized, committees will be formed as needed to work on the initiatives for improvement over the next five to seven years. Root Causes of any issues and complaints recorded will be explored, and improvement plans will be implemented with regular monitoring and report of progress.

	We hope that by implementing these strategies, we will increase confidence in the value of the assessment, as well as the standard of services offered by the Georgia DPH laboratory system.
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	REFERENCES
	APHL Laboratory System Improvement Program User Guide, January 2023. Division of Consolidated Laboratory Services Laboratory System Improvement Program (L-SIP) Assessment Report, April 19, 2018. City of Milwaukee Health Department Laboratory System Improvement Program Assessment Report, May 10, 2018.

APPENDIX A

Participant Feedback Form Results

Utility of the Meeting	Poor		Good		Superb
	1	2	3	4	5
Stated objectives of meeting were met				8	22
Dialogue was useful				4	28
I support the effort being made			1	3	28
Next steps are clear			4	11	17
Meeting was a good use of my time		1	1	4	26
Meeting Arrangements	Poor		Good		Superb
	1	2	3	4	5
Advance notice of the meeting		1	2	6	23
Meeting room accommodations				5	27
Advance materials for meeting were useful		2	7	4	17
Advance materials were received with time to review	1	3	6	3	18
Flow of Meeting	Poor		Good		Superb
	1	2	3	4	5
Started on time	1		2	12	17
Clear objectives for the meeting				7	25
Agenda followed or appropriately amended			1	5	26
The "right" people were at the meeting			5	4	23
Final Thoughts	Poor		Good		Superb
	1	2	3	4	5
The facilitators were knowledgeable about the materials, kept the dialogue on target, and were sensitive to group dynamics.				7	25
Participation in the assessment was appropriate for someone in my position			2	6	24
				Yes	No
Would you participate in this process again?				31	1
Do you see this as a helpful tool and process?				32	
What worked? See select responses below					
What could be improved? See select responses below					
Is there anything else you would like to add? See select responses below					

APPENDIX A-CONTINUED

What worked?

- Areas of weakness were identified, and action plans have been put in place.
- Interactive communication
- Everyone's comments are valued and appreciated.
- Collaboration of professionals within the public health field
- Small group sessions very informative and helpful
- The mix of people was great to bring varied perspectives and experiences. Small groups were nice to facilitate more streamlined sessions.

What could be improved?

- Some key stakeholder groups were missing (understandable!), feedback on who was missing may be best to collect in real time.
- Small groups were great and necessary for time but meant some people with key info for the discussion were in other sessions.
- HR should have also been at the table as there were some areas that we all could not speak to.
- Consider adding lab briefing to identify current capabilities related to each essential service to set the stage for discussion.
- It would be nice to have best practice examples for each area. The examples were useful, but a few more specific examples would be useful.
- We should include more sentinel lab partners and other programs such as HR, opioid program, DHR, Labs, Vet labs etc.

Is there anything else you would like to add?

- Maybe add after actions to see what practices were implemented in 6 months-1 year.
- Really enjoyed this and would love to do this for Epidemiology.
- Thanks for including me, continuous improvement is important and having these candid discussions is relevant to and critical to making necessary improvements. Kudos to the lab and PH for taking these steps!
- I got so much out of this visit. Will definitely attend in the future.



GEORGIA DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH