



Benefits and Return on Investment for Hospitals Participating in the Laboratory Interoperability Cooperative

The electronic transmission of public health laboratory results has been shown to improve the timeliness of surveillance reporting, reduce data entry errors, and create standardized information. While this secure electronic exchange has been utilized in hospitals, a new program is available to facilitate real-time electronic test reporting between hospitals and public health agencies; improving hospitals' health care quality; increase safety; and reduce the cost of care.

WHAT IS THE LAB INTEROPERABILITY COOPERATIVE (LIC)?

Starting immediately, the Laboratory Interoperability Cooperative (LIC)—a Centers for Disease Control & Prevention (CDC) grant-funded collaboration comprised of the American Hospital Association (AHA), College of American Pathologists (CAP), and Surescripts Network for Clinical Interoperability—is recruiting hospitals to participate in a program that will connect hospital laboratories with their related public health agencies and enable reportable laboratory results to be transmitted electronically.

These stream-lined processes have been promoted as a public health priority for several years and are now included as a Meaningful Use objective for public health. Participation in the program enables hospitals to attain that goal.

WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS OF PARTICIPATING?

Hospitals selected to participate in the pilot will benefit from the resources the LIC will provide. As a result, participants may reach Meaningful Use goals more rapidly, knowing they have met the regulatory requirements for connectivity. Furthermore, participants will be equipped to confidently address future public health and clinical laboratory reporting requirements as Meaningful Use initiatives evolve.

Facility Planning and Deployment

The LIC will provide resources to catalyze the improvement in electronic reporting connections to public health agencies. Hospitals participating now will receive data translation and technical support provided by the LIC for the duration of the grant. Specifically, CAP's STS division (formerly SNOMED Terminology Solutions) will assist in data readiness support, including LOINC encoding. Surescripts will provide project plans, oversight, and verifying certification.

Data Consistency & Standardization

Participating laboratories can expect to see a variety of benefits from this program, including LOINC encoding of laboratory data, which provides semantic interoperability and identification of similar data for all downstream end users, such as doctors and public health entities. Utilizing standardized terminology means data retains its meaning as it is transmitted from computer system to computer system amongst the various offices and agencies that utilize these data. Public health agencies also benefit from standardization of the data as they are transmitted from location to location. Completeness of reported data increases when handwritten postcards and blurry faxes are replaced with electronically transferred data. In these ways, transmitting data electronically allows for laboratories to report tests in real-time to public health agencies, ensuring both facilities operate more efficiently.

Improved Accuracy, Efficiency and Speed

For public health agencies, which receive thousands of lab reports, standardization is critical. Hospitals and public health agencies will see increases in efficiency, accuracy, and patient safety—across the public health community—by electronically transferring laboratory results. Public health surveillance and research activities will be further enhanced by these capabilities. Data reporting discrepancies are minimized due to the common language shared resulting in interoperable computer systems.

Visit LabInteroperabilityCoop.org for additional information.