

State Lab Earns Prestigious Accreditation

College of American Pathologists Honors State Public Health Lab

The State Public Health Laboratory, a division of the Kentucky Department for Public Health (KDPH), was recently accredited by the College of American Pathologists (CAP). CAP accreditation is a prestigious honor awarded to only a handful of public health labs.

The CAP accreditation places KDPH at the forefront of public health labs in the country, only a few of which have met CAP's rigorous accrediting standards. About 6,000 private, hospital-based labs have CAP accreditation, but only approximately five public health labs have achieved accreditation.

In March, Gov. Steve Beshear joined public health officials to celebrate the lab's accomplishment and tour the facility. At the event, he told health officials and staff from the lab that, "This accreditation illustrates the high standards maintained by our state public health lab. Although many may not realize it, Kentuckians rely on the work of our public health lab technicians every day—and for countless reasons. Their role in maintaining the health and well-being of our state is tremendous."

KDPH Lab Director Stephanie Mayfield Gibson was congratulated by CAP for the "excellence of services being provided" at the State Public Health Lab. The lab provides an array of services, including newborn metabolic screening, disease culture testing and bioterrorism preparedness training support and services.

The CAP Laboratory Accreditation Program, begun in the early 1960s, is recognized by the federal government as being equal to or more stringent than the government's own inspection program. During the CAP accreditation process, inspectors examine the laboratory's records and quality control of procedures for the preceding two years. CAP inspectors also examine the entire staff's qualifications, the laboratory's equipment, facilities, safety program and record, as well as the overall management of the laboratory. This stringent inspection program is designed to specifically ensure the highest standard of care for the laboratory's patients.

CAP is a medical society serving nearly 16,000 physician members and the laboratory community throughout the world. It is the world's largest association composed exclusively of pathologists and is widely considered the leader in laboratory quality assurance. CAP is an advocate for high-quality and cost-effective medical care.

- Communications Office staff report, Health and Family Services Cabinet.

Kentucky Public Health Laboratory by the Numbers

3 million

Number of tests conducted each year in the laboratory

55,000

Average number of initial specimens received by the lab to be screened for newborn metabolic disorders. Each specimen undergoes a minimum of 49 tests.

153,000

Number of infectious disease screenings and confirmations, including HIV, chlamydia, syphilis, gonorrhea, and respiratory viruses, such as influenza

2,000

Number of rabies tests

7,800

Number of tests conducted for other diseases such as viruses and various bacterial infections

8,000

Number of environmental tests conducted at the lab, including bioterrorism and chemical terrorism, milk, food, inorganic and organic materials and water. These tests are performed by various methods such as chromatographic techniques and molecular pulse field gel electrophoresis for fingerprinting environmental and clinical specimens during outbreaks (peanut butter, salmonella, etc.).

52

Number of lab employees, including a pathologist, biochemical geneticist, medical laboratory scientists, chemists, medical technologists, medical laboratory technicians, information technologists, procurement specialist and other support staff

5

Approximate number of independent public health laboratories in the country that currently hold accreditation from the College of American Pathologists

(Numbers are averages per year)