

## FACT SHEET

### **LIMS Project: Public Health Laboratories Options and Logical Design Document**

**What is the LIMS project?** The goal of the LIMS project is to meet the critical needs of the nation's public health laboratories (PHLs) for efficient electronic laboratory information management systems (LIMS).

**Who are the partners in the LIMS project?** The Association of Public Health Laboratories (APHL), the Public Health Informatics Institute, and state and local PHLs collaborate in this project. APHL has represented the interests of PHLs and the communities they serve for the last 50 years. The association shapes public health policy and provides training and technical assistance to support PHLs in a new and challenging environment. The Public Health Informatics Institute is a non-profit entity whose mission is to advance public health practitioners' ability to strategically manage and apply information systems. The Institute fosters effective health information systems through collaboration, innovation, and action.

**Which PHLs are participating in this phase of the project?** The 23 state and local PHLs collaborating in the final phase of the project are: Alaska; Arizona; Arkansas; Colorado; Hawaii; Iowa; Kansas; Louisiana; Maine; Maryland; Massachusetts; Minnesota; Missouri; New York; New York City; Erie County, Buffalo, New York; Canton, Ohio; Oregon, Vermont, Virginia, Washington, Wisconsin, and Wyoming.

**What are the objectives of this phase of the project?** 1) To provide PHLs with the information they need to develop their long-term strategies for LIMS, and to provide APHL with the information needed to meet its strategic goal of moving PHLs to the cutting edge in the capture, processing, and communication of laboratory information vital to public health. 2) To complete the collaborative development of LIMS logical design specifications for the less critical LIMS business processes.

**What has the LIMS project produced?** In 2003, 16 PHLs, the Public Health Informatics Institute, and APHL collaboratively produced a requirements document that delineates 16 LIMS business processes and over 500 requirements for full support of PHL

activities. Earlier this year, 25 PHLs collaboratively produced logical design specifications for the business processes common to all PHLs.

**What will be produced in this phase?** This phase of the LIMS project will produce a document that provides a detailed analysis of the LIMS market, including forecasted costs, growth, and demand for LIMS, and the strengths and weaknesses of different approaches to LIMS development and purchase. This phase also will produce a document that describes the logical design specifications for LIMS businesses processes that are less commonly used by all PHLs. Both documents will be published and provided to all PHLs by APHL.

**What is the timeframe for this phase?** The LIMS options document will be completed in December 2004. The logical design specifications document will be completed in January 2005.

**How will these products benefit PHLs?** The analysis of LIMS options will empower PHLs to make informed choices about the options available to them: Buy, build, or collaboratively develop LIMS with other PHLs. The logical design specifications document will provide PHLs with a complete set of logical design specifications that will inform any of the options they choose. The design specifications will ensure that PHLs have a high degree of interoperability, which will enable better data flow among PHLs and to federal agencies and improve PHLs' capacity for mutual assistance in a crisis situation, including responding to a bioterrorism threat. The shared design document also will enable PHLs to have one voice in negotiating with LIMS vendors. It is anticipated that public health laboratories will realize savings from the project equal to many times its cost.

**What is the estimated cost of the entire LIMS project? This phase?** The total cost for all phases of the project is approximately \$1.5 million. This phase is estimated to cost \$500,000. More than half of the project is funded by The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, which supports collaborative, innovative projects of the Public Health Informatics Institute.

**Who will own the logical design document?** The logical design document, like the requirements document, is the general property of APHL, and it will be made available to all PHLs.

**Who will manage the project?** The APHL MIS committee will oversee the project. Doug Drabkowski, APHL Director of Strategic Initiatives and Research, will provide overall project direction, and Patina Zarcone, APHL LIMS project manager, will manage the project on behalf of APHL. Institute staff includes Dave Ross, director of the Institute; Anita Renahan-White, LIMS project manager; and other Institute staff and consultants.