

ABSTRACT: 2016 ELAM Institutional Action Project Symposium

FellProject Title: Evaluation of Alignment of Laboratory Services between the RI Dept of Public Health and the Lifespan Academic Medical Center

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Collaborators: Nicole Alexander-Scott, MD, MPH (RI DOH), Peter Iwen MS, PhD and Steven Hinrichs, MD, (NMC and Nebraska DHHS)

Background, Challenge or Opportunity: A single RI Dept. of Health laboratory and Lifespan, the largest academic medical center for Brown SOM, exist in Providence, RI. Between the 2 sites, 95% of all infectious disease testing is performed. Limited resources at both sites, close geographic location, increasing costs of diagnostics, and a respected working relationship, afforded the opportunity to consider a possible alignment of services that would benefit DOH, Lifespan/Brown, and patients in RI. Including: enhancement of testing services and epidemiological surveying, cost savings by elimination of duplicate costly and low volume testing, and enhancement of collaborative research efforts and funding opportunities.

Purpose/Objectives: Explore and identify opportunities and challenges in this cross-organizational alignment (not-for profit, ACO and a state, federally - funded DPH) for laboratory services without compromising either institution's core missions.

Methods/Approach: The initial template is modeled after a cooperative partnership between the U of Nebraska Medical Center and the Nebraska DOH in 1997

- Identifying and interviewing stakeholders about concept and gaining feedback
- Gathering basic initial financial and operational data for both sites
- On-going rounds of discussions and adjustment of SWOC between DOH Director of labs and Lifespan Director of Microbiology
- Weekly NE DHHS and UNMC mentor dialog on meetings with feedback on strategy
- Identifying potential collaborations to open the door

Outcomes and Evaluation Strategy: The project is ongoing. Outcomes to date are increasingly satisfactory and positive for continuation of the process.

- Tallying of responses from stakeholders in multiple interviews at both institutions. Key participants included: DPH: Director DOH, Chief of DOH laboratory services, medical consultants for community services and epidemiology, laboratory supervisor. Brown: Dean SOPH. Lifespan: Chair of Pathology, Director of labs, Vice chair of Medicine, VP of lab operations, managers of the laboratories, providers in infectious diseases and community health programs (STIs/HV, Epidemiology, TB), Exec VP of Strategic Planning
- Identification of major challenges: Clarifying the vision and objectives to other stakeholders, funding sources for operations, personnel, physical facilities, and contractual lab pricing for DOH clients, need for microbiology lab consultant at DOH
- Getting to yes: Currently have in progress:
 - Submission of a joint EBL CDC grant for epidemiology in respiratory viruses in sentinel sites
 - Identification of testing trade-off in mycobacterium /TB identification; one component at DOH, one component at Lifespan
 - Potential new testing expansion for at risk populations (Dept of Corrections) for Hepatitis C. Testing. Contracted by DOH, but currently does not perform Hepatitis C testing, can Lifespan Labs?
- Identify steps for continuing forward movement



Evaluation of Alignment of Laboratory Services between the RI Dept of Public Health and the Lifespan Academic Medical Center

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Collaborators: Steve Hinrichs MD, Peter Iwen PhD, Nebraska Medical Center and NE Dept. of Health; Ewa King PhD, RI DOH



Background, Challenge or Opportunity

A single RI Dept. of Health (DOH) laboratory and Lifespan, the largest academic medical center for Brown SOM, exist in Providence, RI. Between the 2 sites, 85% of all infectious disease testing is performed for RI. Limited resources at both sites, close geographic location, increasing costs of diagnostics, and a respectful working relationship afforded the opportunity to consider a possible alignment of services that would benefit DOH, Lifespan/Brown, and patients in RI. The alignment would include enhanced testing services and epidemiological surveying, cost savings by elimination of duplicative, costly, and low volume testing, and enhancement of collaborative research efforts and funding opportunities.

Purpose/Objectives

Explore and identify opportunities and challenges in this cross-organizational alignment (not-for profit, ACO and a state, federally - funded DPH) for laboratory services without compromising either institution's core missions.

Methods/Approach

- The initial template is modeled after a cooperative partnership between the U of Nebraska Medical Center and the Nebraska DOH in 1997
- Identify and interview stakeholders about concept and gaining feedback
 - Continue on-going discussions and fine-tuning of SWOC between DOH Director of labs and Lifespan Director of Microbiology
 - Gather basic initial financial and operational data for both sites
 - Hold weekly NE DHHS and UNMC mentor dialog on meetings with feedback on strategy
 - Identify potential joint projects to open the door for collaborations



Presented at the 2016 ELAM® Leaders Forum

Outcomes and Evaluation Strategy

The project is ongoing

- Feedback from key stakeholders - all positive for continuation
- Participants
 - DPH: DOH Director, Chief of DOH laboratory services, medical consultants for community services and epidemiology (STIs, HIV, TB), laboratory supervisor.
 - Brown: Dean of School of Public Health
 - Lifespan: Chair of Pathology, Director of labs, Vice chair of Medicine, VP of lab operations, micro lab manager, assoc. director, infectious disease providers, Exec VP of External Affairs
- Identification of major challenges:
 - Presenting and clarifying the vision and objectives between collaborating stakeholders
 - Understanding DOH missions and funding sources
 - Identifying current test menus and gaps at both institutions (equipment, expertise, etc.)

Getting to yes - Currently in progress:

- Sharing epidemiology data on respiratory viruses from Lifespan with DOH for inclusion in weekly FLU update to providers
- Submission of a joint expanded lab capacity CDC grant for epidemiology of respiratory pathogens in sentinel sites
- Identification of testing trade-off in mycobacterium /TB identification with components at both DOH and Lifespan
- Potential expansion of testing at risk populations (Dept. of Corrections) for Hepatitis C. DOH holds contract but does not perform Hepatitis C testing. Can Lifespan Labs?

Identify steps for continuing forward movement



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