



2024 Health Officers Association Conference

AGENDA

8:30 - 9:00 AM | Registration & Breakfast Buffet with Vendors

9:00 - 9:20 AM | Welcome – NH Health Officer Association Business Meeting

Wayne Whitford, *President, NH Health Officers Association: HO Newbury*

Brian Lockard, *Vice President, NH Health Officers Association: HO Salem*

9:30 - 10:00 AM | Overview of the New Hampshire Public Health Laboratories Functions and Testing Service

The Public Health Laboratories (PHL) have played a key role in responding to the COVID-19 pandemic and other disease outbreaks, such as the Mpox, influenza, foodborne diseases, and most recently, the measles and Legionnaires' disease outbreaks. The PHL also conduct laboratory surveillance and monitoring of infectious disease pathogens, chemicals, and radiation levels in human, water, food, and other environmental samples. In this presentation, Dr. Gao will discuss the programs and laboratory units of the PHL, the core functions and testing services of the PHL, and collaborations with other partners.

Fengxiang Gao, MD, MPH

10:00 - 10:30 AM | Water Analysis Laboratory (WAL) Overview

Presentation will review WAL capabilities, collaboration with partners and some projects overview, well water testing for homeowners, and opportunities to collaboration with health officers.

Lou Barinelli, Ph.D.

10:30 - 10:50 AM | Coffee with Vendors

10:50 - 11:40 AM | Quit Bugging Me: Arboviral Surveillance at the state of NH Public Laboratories

The state of NH PHL has been conducting mosquito surveillance for West Nile Virus (WNV) and Eastern Equine Encephalitis (EEE) for more than 15 years, as well as providing human clinical testing. The lab recently added James Town Canyon Virus (JCV) to the testing as well. This talk will provide an overall update of the 2024 Arboviral testing season.

Christopher Benton, Ph.D. and Bailee Ahee, M.S.

11:40 - 12:10 PM | Going with the Flow: Wastewater Testing at the NH Public Health Laboratories

The state of NH PHL has been conducting wastewater testing and surveillance for more than two years, initially testing wastewater for COVID-19 surveillance, but eventually expanding to also include testing for Influenza and RSV, with more testing targets planned for the future. The data from this testing is posted on a state run publicly facing [Wastewater Dashboard](#). The disease surveillance achieved through wastewater testing provides valuable information about disease trends, such as seasonality, and can also serve as an early warning sign for potential outbreaks. The NH PHL currently receives wastewater samples from 14 sites throughout the state.

Christopher Benton, Ph.D.

2024 HEALTH OFFICER CONFERENCE

12:10 - 1:10 PM | Lunch & Visit Vendors

1:10 - 1:40 PM | Radiation on the Radar: A State of NH Public Health

Laboratories Radiochemistry Program Overview

This presentation will provide a comprehensive overview of the NH PHL Radiochemistry Program. It will cover laboratory testing capabilities, the extensive environmental surveillance network, and our role in food defense. Additionally, we will discuss our emergency response support activities, highlighting how we ensure public safety and address concerns critical to our local, regional and state health officers.

Melissa Barnett

1:40 - 2:10 PM | Rabies Testing

The presentation will include a synopsis of the rabies virus and why it is important to test for it, including statistics relevant to New Hampshire and national statistics. There will be talking points that can be shared with the public if they have questions about rabies. The Direct Fluorescent Antibody (DFA) rabies test and the Polymerase Chain Reaction (PCR) rabies test will be explained and compared. We will provide instructions on how to properly prepare, package, and submit rabies specimens for testing, including how to euthanize bats. Finally, we will explain the differences between the laboratory and the infectious disease nurses.

Ann Dunn

2:10 - 2:40 PM | Food Micro Testing

The presentation will include detailed information on taking quality food samples so that they are representative, defensible, microbiologically unchanged, and well documented. This includes maintaining their integrity during the sampling and transport process and how to keep the chain of custody intact until drop-off at the laboratory. It includes pictures of our sampling kit and collections reports and an overview of how to use them. Finally, there will be a review of aseptic techniques necessary to prevent cross-contamination, along with a demonstration of how to properly don sterile gloves.

Stephanie Clark, MPH

2:40 - 3:10 PM | Biomonitoring New Hampshire

BiomonitoringNH Program conducts chemical exposure assessments of NH residents through laboratory testing of clinical samples and use of exposure questionnaires. These assessments provide insight about the NH-specific chemicals to which residents are exposed and generates data that can be used broadly to improve the health of NH residents. This presentation will discuss the importance of biomonitoring; past projects and summary findings; and future BiomonitoringNH initiatives.

Madhumita Chatterjee, Ph.D. and Melissa Josefiak, MPH

3:15 PM | Adjourn ~ Thank You! Drive Safe

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