



# LAB REPORTING AT THE SPEED OF Light

## Partnerships Push Progress

### Electronic Laboratory Reporting

Electronic laboratory reporting provides vital information on reportable conditions—like sexually transmitted diseases, hepatitis, foodborne diseases, and lead poisoning—to local and state public health departments. For decades, reporting was a slow, paper-based process from different laboratories of all sizes. Now, it’s an electronic data transmission with a standard process and reporting format that allows faster sharing of critical information.

“A portion of our public health laboratory reporting was manual, making it difficult to comply with state electronic requirements. We welcomed the opportunity to be part of the solution through partnering with APHL, health departments, and other stakeholders.”

— Virginia Sturmfels, Corporate Manager  
Laboratory Regulations & Public Health Reporting  
Quest Diagnostics

### Why It Matters

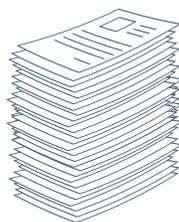
Public health action and medical decisions depend on laboratory results. Fast and accurate laboratory tests and reporting enable communities to track disease trends and identify outbreaks, as well as help diagnose and treat health conditions.

### The Path to Progress

#### Varying reporting streams and formats



State laws and regulations require healthcare providers and laboratories to report events of public health importance for specified diseases to 50+ state and local health departments that often have different lists of reportable diseases and laboratory reporting requirements.



#### Piles of paper and long processing time

Laboratories generate approximately 20 million reports to send to health departments annually. In the past, these were paper reports that were mailed, faxed, or not sent at all—and took days to arrive and many hours to process.



#### Prioritizing speed and standards

Today, through automation, standardization, and partnership, most reports from 11,000 hospital and private and public health laboratories are sent electronically and meet health department requirements.



# Putting Data to Work: Numbers Tell the Story

Electronic transmission improves timeliness, reduces manual data entry errors, and delivers more complete and consistent reports across various data sources to state health departments. It also supports national public health surveillance by improving the timeliness and accuracy of notifiable disease data that states voluntarily share with CDC.

## Electronic laboratory reporting has accelerated CDC's strategy to improve surveillance data



### Newer

A standardized electronic reporting format is being widely adopted by national, regional, reference, and public health laboratories, and by hospital systems. CDC offers technical assistance for implementation.



### Faster

Electronic laboratory reporting prompts faster public health action in outbreaks. Data can be used to identify sources of contamination, notify providers about the disease, and reach those most at risk.



### Smarter

Automated electronic laboratory reporting requires no manual data entry, saving valuable staff time to conduct frontline disease investigation and response using the data.



### Better

Electronic laboratory reporting is pointing the way for the exchange of critical health information between electronic health records (EHRs) and public health agencies.

## Moving the Dial: Faster Reporting, Saving Time

**100**  
Diseases

Nearly 100 reportable diseases and conditions are tracked by state and local health departments using electronic laboratory reporting

**44**  
States

Number of states adopting electronic laboratory reporting for the majority of their reports—up from 9 in 2012

**20**  
Million

Approximate number of laboratory reports received annually at health departments

**80**  
Percent

Percent of laboratory reports received electronically—up from 54% in 2012