

Increasing National Access to mpox Testing by Leveraging Reference Laboratory Capacity

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Summary of Case Study Presented:

In this session of the Building Bridges Across the Laboratory Community series, Suzanne Dale, PhD, D(ABMM) presented how Labcorp worked with CDC, FDA and other commercial laboratories to rapidly scale testing to support the 2022 mpox response. This collaborative effort helped to broaden access to testing across the United States by increasing testing capacity and implementing best practices and rapidly applying lessons learned.

Lessons Learned/Best Practices Applied by Faculty:

- 1. Collaborations between governmental agencies and reference laboratories allow for rapid expansion of testing capacity to respond to public health threats.**
Public/private partnerships allow for the rapid mobilization of existing resources to expand access to laboratory testing for emerging public health threats. The ability to scale laboratory capacity by incorporating higher throughput approaches can dramatically increase the number of tests that can be performed in an outbreak response.
- 2. Open communication and data sharing is important to progress quickly in response to public health emergencies.**
Increasing laboratory testing capacity requires an understanding of the barriers that limit testing throughput. Once those barriers are identified, proposed solutions are implemented, followed by validation and verification to ensure that testing quality is not impacted.
- 3. Rapid expansion of testing capacity and increased access to testing through commercial laboratories may reveal opportunities to rapidly disseminate information on test performance and utilization.**
In the case of a previously rare or unrecognized circulating pathogen, healthcare providers benefit from targeted educational outreach to assist with test selection, sample collection and result interpretation. In addition, the expansion of test access can rapidly help to define the epidemiology of an outbreak including geographic hot spots and demographics of the population being tested.
- 4. Continuous review of test performance allows for the implementation of previously unrecognized best practices.**
All laboratories should review testing performance and strive for continuous quality improvement. From this review, best practices can be implemented. In the case of the recent mpox outbreak, strategies for mitigating potential false positive results, especially in pediatrics, were developed and implemented based on an understanding the epidemiology of the outbreak.

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