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## PHDSC and APHL Release White Paper:

### ***“Assure Health IT Standards for Public Health”***

BALTIMORE and SILVER SPRINGS MD, June 25, 2012 – The Public Health Data Standards Consortium (PHDSC), in collaboration with the Association of Public Health Laboratories (APHL) and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), has released the White Paper “***Assure Health IT Standards for Public Health***” in two parts: [Part 1 - HIT Standards in Public Health Laboratory Domain](#) and [Part 2: A Roadmap on HIT Standardization for Public Health Laboratories](#). The White Paper 1) comprehensively documents and analyzes the state of Health Information Technology (HIT) standards available for laboratory practices and in use in information exchanges to date; and 2) serves to develop an implementation strategy and roadmap for HIT standardization of laboratory data exchanges to support public health laboratory business practices, their integration with clinical partners and preparedness activities.

Specifically, the two parts of the White Paper document:

[Part 1: HIT Standards in Public Health Laboratory Domain](#) – an overview of HIT standards and their implementation efforts by public health laboratories and national organizations to date, *i.e., Where Are We Now*, and

[Part 2: A Roadmap on HIT Standardization for Public Health Laboratories](#) – a proposed implementation strategy and a roadmap to improve laboratory information management systems (LIMS) interoperability with all its partners and suggestions for future PHDSC-APHL projects, *i.e., Where Are We Going*.

[Part 1](#) of the White Paper serves as an informational resource about HIT standards available for Public Health Laboratory (PHL) data exchanges focused on testing of mostly human samples. [Part 2](#) describes activities with various HIT standardization entities related to the laboratory HIT standards based on the respective phase of HIT standardization in question. The proposed PHDSC-APHL HIT standards implementation strategy and near future (2012-2013) roadmap for PHLs are focused on addressing incomplete and inconsistent adoption of the existing standards and absence of a sustainable approach for standardization of information systems in public health by

**operationalizing** HIT standards that already exist for laboratory information exchanges and developing new standards that meet PHL business needs.

The White Papers target three audiences:

- **Leadership** – public health leadership and decision-makers at the local, state and federal levels; national HIT leaders; and leadership of State Health Information Exchanges (HIEs) including State Chief Information Officers (CIOs). The goal is to communicate to them the challenges and possible solutions for enabling adoption of interoperable HIT solutions for public health laboratory data exchanges
- **Health professionals involved in laboratory data exchanges** – Directors and staff of public health laboratories, directors and staff at partner organizations of the public health laboratory such as providers, public health preparedness programs and other programs involved in laboratory data exchanges at the local, state and federal levels to engage them in HIT standardization activities (standards development, harmonization and testing; standard-based products certification; and selection of standard-based HIT products for their agencies/programs)
- **IT professionals involved in HIT standardization** – vendors of electronic health record systems (EHR-S), laboratory information systems (LIS) and LIMS products involved in HIT standardization activities (standards development, harmonization and testing; and standard-based products certification and deployment) to address business needs of public health laboratories and programs in HIT standards to support laboratory health information exchanges.

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The **Public Health Data Standards Consortium** (PHDSC, The Consortium) is a national non-profit membership-based organization of federal, state and local health agencies, professional associations, academia, public and private sector organizations, international members, and individuals. **The Consortium is committed to bringing a common voice from the public health community to the national efforts of standardization of health information technology and population health data in order to improve individual and community health.** To fulfill its mission the Consortium: **Identifies** priorities for new national standards for population health data; **Promotes** integrating health-related information systems to meet the needs of public and private organizations, agencies and individuals; **Participates** in national and international efforts to standardize health-related information; **Represents** public health interests in standards development organizations, data content committees and standards harmonization entities; and **Educates** the public health community about health information technology standards and the health information technology community about public health.

The **Association of Public Health Laboratories** (APHL) is the national nonprofit representing governmental laboratories that protect the public’s health by detecting and monitoring health threats. Members include state, territorial and local public health labs; state environmental testing labs; state agricultural and food safety labs; and individual scientists, public health officials and academicians. **APHLs mission is to promote the role of public**

**health laboratories in shaping national and global health objectives, and to promote policies, programs, and technologies which assure continuous improvement in the quality of laboratory practice and health outcomes.** To fulfill its mission, APHL's focuses on the following areas: **Workforce:** Advance the training, leadership development, recruitment & retention of a competent workforce to meet the needs of the public health laboratory system; **Advocacy and Outreach:** Enhance the visibility, status & influence of the public health laboratory community through effective advocacy, strategic communications & public relations; **Networking and Community Building:** Act as a focal point for the collection and dissemination of information throughout the public health community and to external partners; **Informatics:** Improve the informatics capabilities of APHL & its members; and **Laboratory Science, Standards and Practices:** Advance the development, use, and evaluation of technologies, quality systems and practices

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