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WSLH

*Wisconsin State
Laboratory of Hygiene*

Public Service with a Smile

A Brief Guide to the Wisconsin State Laboratory of Hygiene

Since 1903, Wisconsin citizens have depended on the Wisconsin State Laboratory of Hygiene (WSLH) to help maintain the high quality of life expected by most citizens. As the state's public and environmental health laboratory, we help maintain the public health of all of Wisconsin's citizens, protect the state's environment and educate state residents on public health issues.

The WSLH affects the daily lives of nearly every Wisconsin citizen. WSLH staffers screen every baby born in Wisconsin for genetic disorders, investigate the causes of foodborne disease outbreaks, test blood samples for alcohol and drug content for law enforcement cases and test water for environmental toxins and bacteria. And that's just some of the work our 300+ staff members perform for the public every day.

All state workers provide a public service, but here at WSLH, helping the public and promoting the public's health is the most important aspect of what we do.

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The WSLH offers quality services in an array of technical specialties, including bacteriology, clinical chemistry, cytogenetics, cytology, environmental sciences, immunology, industrial hygiene, proficiency testing, toxicology and virology.

In addition, we work closely with the state's Division of Public Health and the Department of Natural Resources to monitor foodborne, waterborne and communicable disease outbreaks.

The WSLH is also home to the School of Cytotechnology, a year-long program that teaches college seniors or graduates to detect microscopic changes in cells that may signal cancer or a pre-cancerous condition.

Our goal is to discover the best ways to keep the public and our ecosystem healthy. As a world-class laboratory at the UW-Madison, we explore new ideas that benefit the health of the state, the nation and the world. We take our role to provide public service to heart every day.

Take a Closer Look at the WSLH

Just a small portion of what goes on every day at the WSLH

As part of the Wisconsin State Laboratory of Hygiene's commitment to public and environmental health, we perform quite a bit of research and outreach. Here's a sampling of some of the more innovative research and testing that happens here.

Test Method Development: The WSLH is a leader in developing new testing methods in various fields, from testing fish for the presence of estrogen in water to identifying outbreaks of *Cryptosporidium*.

Environmental Virology: In this section of the Environmental Health Division, scientists examine the link between the environment and human health by researching viruses in water.

Region V Infertility Prevention Project: Part of a national project administered through the Centers for Disease Control and the Office of Population Affairs, this program aims to reduce infertility related to sexually transmitted diseases. The program is a cooperative effort between family planning programs, STD prevention programs and public health laboratories.

Virology Laboratory Information Network: This is a cooperative laboratory-based network for sharing information among participating public health and private diagnostic virology laboratories, and through them, the public health agencies and clinicians in Wisconsin. The information distributed to the participating labs is an important component of the Wisconsin Division of Public Health's epidemiology and surveillance programs.

Newborn Screening Program: Every baby born in Wisconsin—over 60,000 babies a year—is tested for 21 genetic disorders within days of its birth. WSLH staff follow up quickly on results to ensure that babies with a confirmed positive diagnosis begin receiving treatment for their conditions.

Wisconsin Occupational Health Laboratory (WOHL): For more than 50 years, WOHL has been a leader in industrial hygiene testing, providing high-quality industrial hygiene and occupational health analytical services to businesses, governmental agencies and citizens concerned with their living and working environment.