

**The  
Laboratory Network  
in the  
US-Affiliated Pacific Islands**

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# Overview

- Introduction
- Major Accomplishments
- Major Activities for 2008
- Challenges

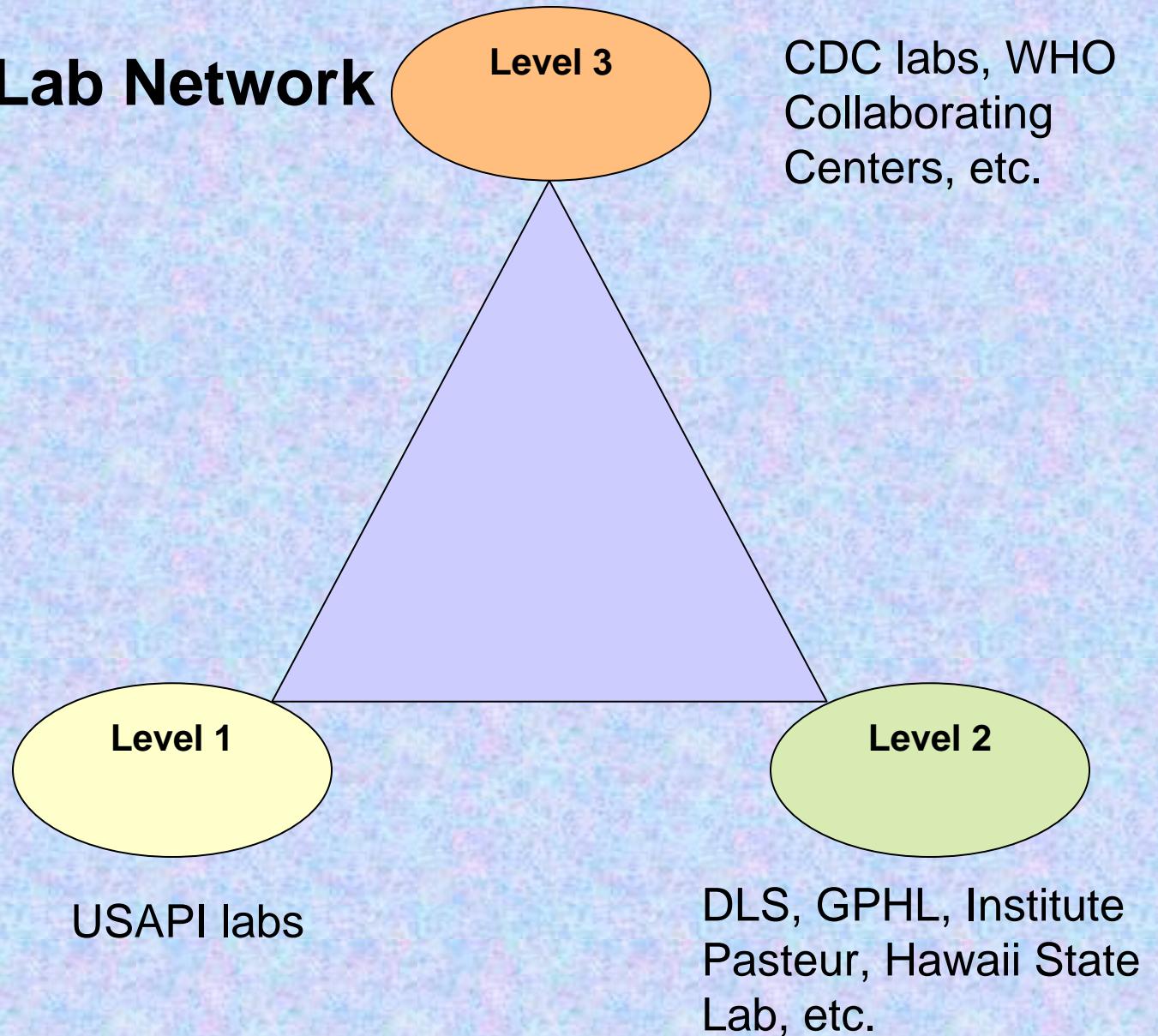
# Introduction

## □ The Labs in the USAPI

- 10 USAPI laboratories
- 3 CLIA-regulated labs (A/Samoa, Guam, Saipan, CNMI)
- 7 non-regulated labs (Palau, FSM [Chuuk, Pohnpei, Kosrae, Yap], RMI [Ebeye, Majuro])

# Introduction (cont'd)

## The USAPI Lab Network







# Introduction (cont'd)

## Laboratory Personnel in the USAPI

Lab	Total # Lab staff	Total # with formal MLT qualifications	# Locals with formal MLT qualifications	# Expatriates with formal MLT qualifications
A/Samoa	25	5	3	2
CNMI	12	7	1	6
Guam (GPHL)	7	7	7	0
Chuuk, FSM	9	1	0	0
Pohnpei, FSM	8	0	0	0
Kosrae, FSM	5	0	0	0
Yap, FSM	7	1	1	0
Palau	8	1	0	1
Majuro, RMI	11	4	1	3
Ebeye, RMI	4	1	0	1

# Accomplishments

## ❑ **Level 2/3 reference lab testing for the USAPI**

→ **Influenza:** CDC labs/WHO Collaborating Centers in Melbourne, Japan (to be confirmed)

→ **Dengue:** University of Hawaii/Institut Pasteur, New Caledonia/CDC labs

→ **Leptospirosis:** WHO Collaborating Center for Leptospirosis Research and Reference lab testing, Brisbane, Australia; Institut Pasteur, New Caledonia

→ **TB & HIV** – Diagnostic Lab Services (DLS), Hawaii

→ **Measles & Rubella** – Guam Public Health Laboratory, DLS

## ❑ **Laboratory visits/assessments**

→ Microbiology laboratory assessments in 2006

→ TB laboratory assessments

# Major Accomplishments

## □ Training

- IATA shipping training – 2005 (22), 2006 (51), 2007 (61)
- Microbiology Enhancement Training (MET): Completed for Palau (2006) and Pohnpei, FSM (2007)

## Shipping

- PIHOA shipping accounts with TNT (Guam), Continental Micronesia and Courier Corporation of Hawaii (CCH)
- Annual registration of 12 USAPI labs with Chemtrec for the 24 hour emergency response telephone number for shipping infectious specimens (a US DOT requirement)

# Major Activities for 2008

## **Laboratory Quality Assurance**

- Lab assessments – follow up recommendations from 2006 & TB lab assessments: Next microbiology lab assessment in 2009
- PIHOA Microbiology Proficiency Panel

## **Continuous Professional Development**

- CME for bacteriology, mycobacteriology and infectious disease serology for lab staff in the USAPI

## **Laboratory surveillance**

- Establish database for TB, HIV, STD and other infectious diseases in the USAPI

## **Training**

- MET for Ebeye (RMI) and Kosrae (FSM)
- IATA shipping re-certification

# Challenges

Working to meet the laboratory needs of a culturally diverse, geographically isolated group of island communities with limited funding and human resources.

## Laboratory Testing

1. There is a great need to further develop the standard of diagnostic microbiology laboratory services in the region.
2. Limitations in funding sources to support confirmatory testing and shipping specimens for other infectious diseases such dengue, leptopirosis, influenza, zika virus, etc.
3. Limited BT laboratory testing capacity in Guam and in the 9 USAPI laboratories.
4. Non-availability of confirmatory laboratory testing for H5N1 in Guam.
5. Shortage of laboratory supplies and test kits due to the prolonged procurement process in the USAPI.
6. Non-availability/limited histology and cytology services in the USAPI.

# Challenges

## Laboratory professionals

1. Shortage of laboratory staff with formal MLT qualifications and/or specializing in the field of microbiology.
2. Shortage of lab technicians specializing in cytology and histology in the USAPI.
3. Lack of awareness among the younger generation of the medical laboratory profession.

## Shipping

1. Continental Micronesia (the only airline servicing the Micronesian islands) and Hawaiian Airlines (the only airline servicing American Samoa) restrict the acceptance and carriage of suspected BT specimens/samples on their passenger/cargo aircraft.
2. Hawaiian Airlines restrict transport of specimens to other reference labs (apart from DLS, Hawaii) from American Samoa to Hawaii or US mainland.
3. Limited shipping of infectious shipments out of Saipan, CNMI.

Thank you!

Questions?