



Bureau of Public Health Laboratories (BPHL)

# The Florida LABLINK



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## Team Member Spotlight

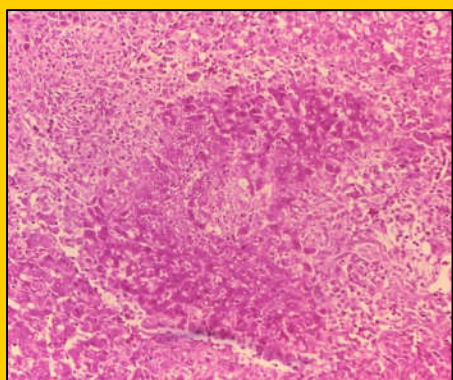
### Meet Rudys Marie Garcia, MBA Jacksonville Biological Terrorism (BT) Trainer

Rudys was born and raised in Puerto Rico. She served 20 years in the United States Air Force and retired. She has a master's degree in business administration and a bachelor's degree in biology with a concentration in microbiology.

Her career with the Florida Department of Health began in January 2023 in the Bioterrorism Section where she serves as a BT Trainer for the BPHL.



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CDC  
1976 Dr. Marshall Fox  
This photomicrograph reveals some of the histopathologic details exhibited by a guinea pig hepatic tissue sample, in an experimental, *Brucella suis* infection.

# CHEMICAL THREATS

*The following is an excerpt from an article that originally ran in the 2019 Lab Link Q3 newsletter.*

## **LABORATORY RESPONSE NETWORK – CHEMICAL THREATS**

Michelle Latona, BS, MPA and Lylah Seaton, MPH, MLS(ASCP)<sup>CM</sup>

### **Laboratory Response Network-Chemical**

In the United States (US) and one US territory, there are 54 laboratories in the Laboratory Response Network-Chemical (LRN-C) that provide emergency response capabilities locally, nationally or both. A designation of Level 1, 2, or 3 identifies laboratory capabilities and defines network participation.

Level 3 LRN-C laboratories work with the health and medical community to maintain competency by providing training in the collection, storage and shipment of clinical specimens obtained from individuals following a chemical exposure event. There are 10 laboratories specifically designated as Level 3 but all 54 LRN-C laboratories maintain this capacity.

There are thirty-four Level 2 laboratories. Chemists in these laboratories are trained to detect exposure to several toxic chemical agents such as cyanide, nerve agents and toxic metals.

There are 10 Level 1 laboratories. In addition to being able to test for the same agents as Level 2 laboratories, Level 1 laboratories can also detect exposure to an expanded list of chemicals such as mustard agents, nerve agents, plant toxins and industrial chemicals. These laboratories serve as a surge capacity for the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) using high-throughput analysis and expand the CDC's ability to analyze large numbers of patient samples following a large-scale exposure. The list of test methods for new chemical agents increases every year as new methods are released from the CDC.<sup>1</sup>

### **Florida's Bureau of Public Health Laboratories-Chemical Threat (BPHL CT) Preparedness Program**

In Florida, the Bureau of Public Health Laboratories Chemical Threat (BPHL CT) Preparedness Program consists of two LRN-C Laboratories. There is a Level 1 laboratory located in Jacksonville, and a Level 3 laboratory located in Tampa.

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# Chemical Threats *continued*



The Decon team preparing for action at Nicklaus Children's Hospital in Miami as part of the 2019 FL Chemical Threat Exposure Exercise (CTEE)

The Jacksonville CT laboratory is equipped with state-of-the-art instruments used for chemical analysis which include gas chromatography-mass spectrometry (GC-MS), liquid chromatography tandem mass spectrometry (LC-MS/MS) and inductively coupled plasma mass spectrometry (ICP-MS). The laboratory maintains operational capacity by performing monthly proficiency testing and by participation in CDC sponsored exercises. Each year the CDC sends mock samples to be tested to assess the surge capacity of its Level 1 labs.

Tampa and Jacksonville also participate in the CDC's annual Specimen Packaging and Shipping Exercise (SPaSE) which is designed to test the laboratories' ability to package and ship clinical specimens correctly to the CDC in the event of a widespread chemical exposure. Hospitals, county health departments, state and federal partners are invited to participate in BPHL sponsored annual tabletop emergency exercises.

Florida has two Chemical Threat coordinators who provide training to county health departments and hospitals in the collection, storage and shipment of clinical specimens following a chemical exposure. This training is provided on-site at no cost to participating facilities.

If you would like to schedule training or would like to be notified for future exercises, please contact the CT coordinator in your area (see the Bureau of Public Health Laboratories Directory on page 4 for contact information).

## References

1. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (Apr. 10, 2019). *Laboratory Response Network for Chemical Threats*. Retrieved from <https://emergency.cdc.gov/lrn/chemical.asp>.
2. United States Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA), Drug Facts. Fentanyl. Retrieved from: <https://www.dea.gov/factsheets/fentanyl>



The LC/Q-ToF instrument used for opioid analysis in the CT Lab

## Contributing to a healthier Florida one test at a time

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Unless otherwise indicated, all photography is for illustrative purposes only and all persons depicted are models.

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# Bureau of Public Health Laboratories-Directory

Bureau Chief: Marie-Claire Rowlinson, PhD, D(ABMM)  
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After hours (24/7)	Bioterrorism Event			Chemical Threat Event
	<u>Jacksonville</u> 904-945-4415 904-637-9260	<u>Tampa</u> 813-459-4039	<u>Miami</u> 305-433-0442	904-271-1593

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