

Mission:
To protect, promote & improve the health
of all people in Florida through integrated
state, county & community efforts.



Rick Scott
Governor

John H. Armstrong, MD, FACS
State Surgeon General & Secretary

Vision: To be the Healthiest State in the Nation

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
April 20, 2015

Contact: Communications Office
(850) 245-4111

MEDICAL LABORATORY PROFESSIONALS WEEK CELEBRATES BEHIND THE SCENES HEALTH PROFESSIONALS

TALLAHASSEE—April 20–26 is Medical Laboratory Professionals Week and the Florida Department of Health proudly recognizes its laboratory professionals and pathologists. The department's Bureau of Public Health Laboratories tests clinical samples for viruses, bacteria, parasites and toxins that cause emerging diseases or outbreaks in humans. This testing is critical to ensuring Floridians are healthy and that their environments are safe.

"Lab professionals play an important role in the health of all Floridians," said State Surgeon General and Secretary of Health Dr. John Armstrong. "Using sophisticated instruments, lab professionals confirm diagnoses and help to keep Florida's children, adults, families and visitors safe."

At sites located in Jacksonville, Miami, Pensacola and Tampa, the department's Bureau of Public Health Laboratories produces over 10 million results each year. In addition to identifying diseases like anthrax, smallpox, rabies, HIV/AIDS and other sexually transmitted diseases, the laboratories provide supporting data for food and waterborne outbreaks by checking for chemical and biological contaminants. The bureau also has the capability to identify more than 150 chemicals in case of a terrorist attack and to detect drug resistant organisms.

The bureau was one of the first state public health laboratories capable of testing for Middle Eastern Respiratory Syndrome (MERS) and Ebola and is a member of the World Health Organization Influenza Surveillance Network of Laboratories to alert world leaders of potential pandemic flu strains.

Medical laboratory professionals in clinical and public health laboratories are important in the rapid detection, treatment and statistical assessment of chronic and emergent diseases with the stronger emphasis on preventive medicine both nationally and here in Florida. Other factors increasing the demand for medical laboratory testing include an aging U.S. population, medical advancements such as organ transplants and unprecedented increases in international travel and immigration resulting in the importation of rare or previously unknown diseases.

###

The department works to protect, promote and improve the health of all people in Florida through integrated state, county and community efforts.

Follow us on Twitter at [@HealthyFla](#) and on [Facebook](#). For more information about the Florida Department of Health please visit www.floridahealth.gov.