

SUPERVISORY MICROBIOLOGIST (VIROLOGY)
MS-403-13

INTRODUCTION

This position is located in the Department of Forensic Sciences (DFS). The mission of the DFS is to provide high-quality, timely, accurate, and reliable forensic science services using best practices and best available technology, focusing on unbiased science and transparency, to enhance public safety and health.

Serves as technical supervisor for the Virology Unit of the Public Health Laboratories (PHL), which includes Rabies, Virology and Immunology laboratory sections. The Unit provides rapid diagnosis of viral pathogens such as West Nile virus, typing and subtyping of influenza and other respiratory viruses as well as enteroviruses of health significance. The Unit supports the monitoring and prevention efforts of the Department of Health (DOH). It is a critical part of the DOH support response to outbreak of disease and to the Health Emergency Preparedness Response in the District of Columbia.

POSITION CONTROLS

Works under the general direction of the Director of Public Health Laboratory, who defines the overall objectives to be achieved, coordinates resources, and relies on the incumbent's expertise when coordinating, and accomplishing program objectives. The incumbent independently develop and provide advisory opinions and recommendations on major scientific and policy issues utilizing personal training, experience and competences; also exercises judgment, decision making, initiatives and actions in the administration of all technical, organizational and scientific phases. Recommendations are accepted as professional, scientific and technically authoritative in molecular biology and virology.

Work is reviewed for conformance to standards, guidelines, feasibility, and effectiveness in meeting objectives, deadlines, expected results, and maintenance of regulatory standards.

Guides consist of general policies, procedures, rules and regulations of D.C. and Federal Governments and other agencies affiliated with the Department of Forensic Science requirements and restrictions set forth in pertinent legislation. Guidelines also consist of American Public Health Association Standard Diagnostic Methods, the Manual of Clinical Laboratory Microbiology (American Society of Microbiology). Specific assignments are often scarce, not always applicable, which require considerable interpretation and/or adaptation for application to issues and problems.

Judgment, initiative, and resourcefulness in deviating from established methods to deal with research trends and patterns; propose new policies and practices; develop new methods and criteria; and/or modify, adapt, and/or refine broader guidelines to resolve specific complex and/or intricate issues and problems.

DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Responsible for planning, developing, implementing, evaluating and coordinating goals, objectives and priorities of highly professional and specialized technical services and activities of Virology laboratory. Also responsible for programs which provide laboratory support for the D.C. Healthcare System by the

detection of infectious microbiological agents in specimens from humans, animals, the environment and foodstuffs in retail and wholesale markets of the District of Columbia.

Works in conjunction with the Laboratory Director, plans and formulates objectives, priorities and methods of operation for carrying out long-term program goals to reduce or eliminate infections or diseases caused by highly pathogenic viral and microbial agents or by opportunistic viral pathogens. Designs plans, study protocols, and scientific procedures by which these objectives can be obtained and writes standard operating procedures as required.

Designs systems for the on-going review and maintenance of existing virology laboratory protocols and develops modifications of these protocols when necessary and/or appropriate on the basis of the on-going evaluations; and oversees the evaluation program including on-going modifications to reflect changes in the organization's objectives, diagnostic laboratory technology and public health goals.

Utilizes findings of specialized studies, new analytical developments, and modified processes to resolve novel, obscure, or highly controversial problems that affect the program area

Directs maintenance of all necessary laboratory records in a manner assuring timely retrieval, full coverage of examinations, etc. consistent with requirements of full documentation needed to respond to Content Management System (CMS), Medicare and/or submitting physician inquiry within Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) compliance rules and ISO 17025.

Collaborates in the epidemiological investigations of infectious diseases in the District and its environs, and designs evaluation methodologies for project studies related to these infections. Formulates and develops epidemiological and statistical methods for the analyses of microbial pathogen trends in morbidity and mortality in the District population as part of public health surveillance programs and prepares summary information on selected communicable diseases.

Communicates laboratory findings and other data to scientific and health care communities through seminars, professional meetings, scientific publications and direct contact with health care professionals.

Oversees the implementation and analysis of epidemiological evaluations conducted by subordinates in a way which ensures the technical merit of results and of recommendations based on these evaluations

Develops liaisons with professional organizations and other federal and state agencies to ensure that laboratory performance evaluation activities are consistent with national public health needs; and develops and promotes strong, productive laboratory training alliances with academic institutions in the District. Also, serves as a critical interface between the organization and a variety of external public, private and professional organizations; and on collaborative projects with State health department, Federal agency and non-governmental agencies and organizations.

Represents the PHL unit on various intra and interagency committees and task forces concerned with public health issues or policies involving the control and/or prevention of infectious diseases in the District of Columbia's population. Appears in court to testify as an expert witness on individual findings of tests or on behalf of a subordinate staff employee.

Provides the full range of supervisory services, as required to manage and direct the work efforts of subordinate staff and activities of assigned operations. Develops quantitative and qualitative measures for evaluating the work performance of staff; supervises and assigns duties and responsibilities; formulates overall plans for resources; approves and disapproves leave requests; recommends job selections, promotions, incentive recognition and corrective or adverse actions; establishes work standards; and identifies developmental and training needs.

OTHER SIGNIFICANT FACTS

Mastery of, and skill in applying advanced theories, principles, concepts, practices, standards, and methods of microbiological science, virology, public health laboratory science, and disease prevention.

Mastery of complex diagnostic virology, immunology, microbiology and biomedical laboratory science procedures, safety, and quality controls; and the ability to keep abreast of best practices in virology and immunology through on-going professional development activities and eligibility for technical supervisor (TS) certification by professional organization such as American Association of Bio-analysts (ABB), American Society for Microbiology (ASM), and American Society for Clinical Pathology (ASCP).

Expertise in using various types of highly complex equipment (e.g., thermo cyclers, DNA sequencers, centrifuges, fluorescence microscopes, bio-safety level 3 practices cabinets) in a public health laboratory setting and in reading and interpreting complex documents, test results and publications; and expert knowledge of public safety and security.

Ability to work well both independently and as part of a synergistic professional team in a multi-cultural workplace and interpersonal skills and ability to work effectively with a diverse staff, external agencies, and the public

Excellent oral and written communications skills sufficient to prepare and present pertinent information and research involving complex workforce development policies and initiatives, and represent the agency; and knowledge of and skill in communication and public relations techniques sufficient to effectively represent the agency at conferences, meetings and consultations with agency managers, employee groups, and special interest groups concerning program objectives and issues.

Ability to supervise and skill to lead a subordinate staff.

Demonstrated skill and ability to use a PC and software packages (e.g. Microsoft Word, Excel, Access and Power Point, etc.) and software applicable to various reporting systems, particularly laboratory information systems (LIS), inventory control, and sequence analysis software

A Bachelor's Degree from an accredited college or university that included a major field of study or specific course requirements. A). Degree in virology, microbiology, biological science, biochemistry, or biomedical laboratory science appropriate to the position or B) Combination of education and experience courses equivalent to a major, as shown in A above, plus appropriate experience or additional education. In addition to the basic requirements applicants must possess least three (3) years of specialized experience. To be creditable, at least one (1) year of specialized experience must have been equivalent to at least the next lower grade level in the normal line of progression for the occupation in the organization.

SPECIAL REQUIREMENTS:

Immunization against specific infectious agents may be required as a LRN participating Laboratory, the DC PHL requires US citizenship and a security risk assessment.

This position's duty station will be housed within the Consolidated Forensic Laboratory (CFL) which is a protection-sensitive facility. As such, incumbents of this position shall be subject to criminal background checks, background investigations, and mandatory drug and alcohol testing, as applicable. Due to the handling of primary evidence, the applicant will be required to submit a buccal swab for the purposes of the DNA Quality Control database for the DFS.

The nature of the DFS mission necessarily involves the potential risks associated with biological or chemical hazards, including morgue functions. Although contact with these functions is intended to be minimal, the risks are nevertheless possible; training to recognize, address, and mitigate these risks is required as is dealing with potentially personally difficult topics, such as crime, death, and disease.