



# The Integrated Consortium of Laboratory Networks Newsletter

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**ICLN**  
**Countering Weapons**  
**of Mass Destruction**

**Department of**  
**Homeland Security**

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*The Integrated Consortium of Laboratory Networks (ICLN) is a system of interconnected federal laboratory networks that can quickly respond to high consequence incidents and give decision makers timely, credible, and interpretable data.*

**Welcome to the first issue** of the quarterly ICLN Newsletter! This first issue is intended to familiarize readers with the ICLN and its operations. Future issues will provide information and news about the ICLN and share recent accomplishments. Feel free to share the ICLN Newsletter with your colleagues in the laboratory community. Note that the ICLN was established in 2005, but took a hiatus between February 2019 and March 2020 due to budget constraints. The ICLN was re-instituted in April 2020 as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.

## Coordinated Lab Response for Chemical, Biological, Radiological, or Nuclear Incidents

The ICLN, in accordance with the Food Safety and Modernization Act of 2011, is a partnership of nine federal departments and agencies, including seven national lab networks that comprise 450 public and private sector laboratories around the nation.

Each national lab network focuses on analyzing threat agents and toxic substances in a specific type of sample, such as contamination in food, plants, animals, people, or the environment. The ICLN provides the framework and tools that link these federal departments and agencies, federal lab networks, and lab network members so that they can handle and manage sample analysis, share data, methods, and resources during an emergency.



## THE INTEGRATED CONSORTIUM OF LABORATORY NETWORKS

*More than 450 distinct labs represented in member response networks*

### Joint Leadership Council

DHS ICLN JLC Chair

*The Integrated Consortium of Laboratory Networks is sponsored by the Department of Homeland Security*

### Stakeholder Members

DOJ/FBI  
 DOE  
 DOS  
 DOI

### Networking Coordinating Group

DHS ICLN NCG Chair

### Technical Project Management Team

DHS CWMD

### Subgroups

- Scenario/Threat Prioritization
- Methods/Detection Technology
- Interlaboratory Comparability/ QA Subgroup (IC/QA) Training
- Training
- Radiological Laboratory Response
- Sample Prioritization
- Laboratory Logistics

### DLN

DoD Laboratory Network

DoD

### LRN

Laboratory Response Network

CDC

### NAHLN

National Animal Health Laboratory Network

USDA

### NPDN

National Plant Diagnostic Network

USDA

### FERN

Food Emergency Response Network

USDA/FDA

### ERLN

Environmental Response Laboratory Network

EPA

### Vet-LIRN

Veterinary Laboratory Investigation & Response Network

FDA

## Seven Federal Laboratory Networks Make Up the ICLN

(Visit [ICLN.org](http://ICLN.org) to learn more about each laboratory network)

NETWORK NAME	PRIMARY NETWORK FOCUS
<b>DLN:</b> DoD Laboratory Network; Agency: DoD	Human clinical, animal (e.g., zoonotic surveillance), vector-borne (e.g., mosquito and tick surveillance), environmental, and food matrices of the military
<b>ERLN:</b> Environmental Response Laboratory Network; Agency: EPA	Environmental matrices, including water
<b>FERN:</b> Food Emergency Response Network; Agencies: HHS/FDA and USDA/FSIS	Food consumed by humans and animal feeds
<b>LRN:</b> Laboratory Response Network; Agencies: HHS/CDC	Clinical, environmental, water, and food samples for infectious disease agents and clinical samples for chemical agents.
<b>NAHLN:</b> National Animal Health Laboratory Network; Agency: USDA	Animal clinical/live animals in the field
<b>NPDN:</b> National Plant Diagnostic Network; Agency: USDA	Plants/crops in the field
<b>Vet-LIRN:</b> Veterinary Laboratory Investigation & Response Network; Agencies: HHS/FDA	Regulatory compliance and safety of animal feeds and veterinary drugs by testing animal diagnostic samples

## TOOLS AND RESOURCES

- **www.ICLN.org** The ICLN public website offers a variety of resources to lab partners such as, Radiological Educational Webinars, Chemical and Biological Training Links, and guidance documents. Examples of guidance documents created by the ICLN subgroups are:
  - Laboratory Limiting Issues Guidelines
  - Sample Prioritization for Incident Decision Making
  - Proficiency Testing and Training Guidance
  - Methods Validation
  - Sample Collection and Handling Guidance
  - Chain of Custody form
- **Portal** The ICLN hosts a secure, password-protected web portal that network program offices use to share routine information and coordinate lab responses during an incident.
- **Data Exchange Utility** The ICLN uses a secure online tool to transfer data from one network into a common format the other networks can read and analyze. The data exchange utility allows lab test results to be shared across the seven networks.

## THE INTEGRATED RESPONSE

The ICLN regularly conducts exercises to evaluate and improve response operations.

- **Periodic Portal drills** help familiarize ICLN network representatives with key components of the Portal, such as communication protocols and the data exchange utility.
- **Exercises and interagency collaboration** bring ICLN members together to discuss how the networks might respond to a specific scenario or incident-related situation.
  - The ICLN is currently focusing on COVID-19 and how networks can assist with supporting analysis of human and animal clinical samples and addressing lessons-learned during this incident.
- **Confidence Building Competency Tests** help each network build and evaluate proficiency with samples and methods its labs might not routinely use.
- **Interagency exercises** bring the ICLN into large scale exercises to see how the lab network would interact with multiple federal, state, and local agencies in the context of a high consequence incident.

