

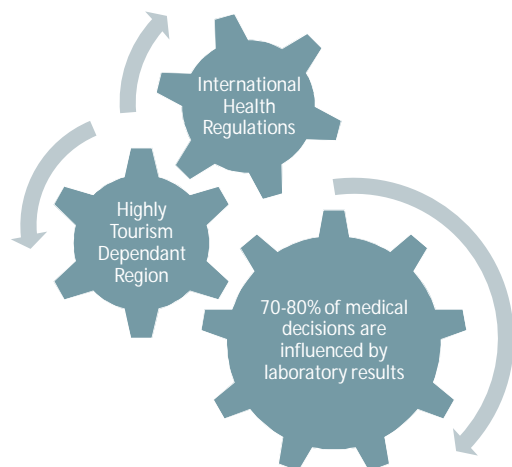
Learning Objectives

By the end of this presentation, participants will be able to:
Discuss the rationale for and major aspects of the Caribbean national laboratory policy framework
Describe the process for national laboratory policy adoption within OECS member states

Background & Rationale

Under the PANCAP Round 9 Global Fund (GF) Grant, **Ministers of Health in 2014, endorsed the initiative advanced by the Caribbean Med Labs Foundation (CMLF) for development and adoption of National Laboratory policies and supporting legislation.**

By the end of 2015, CMLF had facilitated the development of draft national laboratory policies in seventeen countries – including six OECS member states.



PROGRAMME DESIGN

Under the OECS GF HIV TB Elimination Programme (HTEP - 2016-2019), in 2017, CMLF undertook a study engaging KPs to identify barriers to access to laboratory services by these populations in the OECS. **The outcomes of the study were discussed with policy makers, laboratory directors and KP organisations, to identify elements of the draft national laboratory policies that required adjustments to address these barriers.**

The finalised national laboratory policies included the following major elements:

- Governance, co-ordination and monitoring of the national laboratory network (public and private);
- Quality Management Systems - with Tier 1 of the Laboratory Quality Management Systems – Stepwise Improvement Process (LQMS-SIP) as licensing requirements, a client rights-based approach, confidentiality and accountability;
- Laboratory Support Systems including procurement and inventory management, validated algorithms, equipment management and laboratory safety;
- Information Management - use of laboratory data including public health reporting by laboratories.

National consultations were held in each OECS country in 2018 with CMLF facilitation including a Legislative Drafting Consultant, to finalise these policies and adapt model legislation to support them.



FIGURE 1: Caribbean Stepwise Approach towards Accreditation (PAHO/WHO/CDC/CROSO)

Results

As at August 2019, all OECS countries have final draft national laboratory policies that are at various stages of adoption. St Lucia's national laboratory policy was adopted as part of the national quality policy for health services in 2018. Grenada's national laboratory policy has received Cabinet approval with a directive to develop an implementation plan. Cabinet approval is pending for the national laboratory policy in Antigua & Barbuda, St. Kitts & Nevis, St. Vincent & the Grenadines and Dominica.

Conclusions & Next Steps

CMLF will convene a meeting of OECS Policy Makers to develop a joint implementation plan with indicators that can be used to monitor national laboratory policy implementation and regulatory progress in OECS member states. CMLF will work with member states to ensure that these policies and supporting legislation will be in place by 2021.

Contact

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