

Description of Wisconsin Enteric Pathogens Surveillance (WEPS)

The Wisconsin State Laboratory of Hygiene (WSLH) coordinates the Wisconsin Enteric Pathogens Surveillance (WEPS) program. WEPS is a laboratory-based surveillance program designed to monitor pulsed field gel electrophoresis (PFGE) patterns and antimicrobial resistance patterns of enteric bacterial pathogens in Wisconsin.

PFGE testing provides DNA patterns, or “fingerprints”, of bacteria. PFGE patterns of foodborne bacterial pathogens are shared electronically with a national network of federal, state, and local public health laboratories (“PulseNet”) to enhance foodborne disease surveillance. This national network provides a means to:

- detect outbreaks by identifying cases with indistinguishable PFGE patterns
- link apparently unrelated outbreaks
- expedite outbreak investigations by focusing efforts on cases with indistinguishable PFGE patterns
- monitor for illnesses associated with retail & recalled food products.

The WSLH requests that clinical laboratories submit all isolates of the following to the WSLH:

- *Campylobacter* species
- Shiga toxin-producing *E. coli* (STEC)
 - Enrichment broths or STEC isolates from Shiga toxin-positive EIA stool specimens
 - *E. coli* O157:H7 isolates
 - Non-O157 Shiga toxin-producing *E. coli* (STEC) isolates
- *Listeria monocytogenes*
- *Salmonella* species
- *Shigella* species
- *Yersinia* species
- *Vibrio* species.
- Any unexpected clusters of organisms of public health significance not listed above

See next page for submission instructions for isolates.

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To submit isolates of the organisms listed above:

- Laboratories should send isolates as they are recovered to allow timely analysis; *do not "save" isolates to send in batches* (especially pathogenic *E. coli* and *L. monocytogenes*). Testing for WEPS isolates is fee exempt; identification and serotyping results will be reported where applicable.
- Most isolates may be packaged, labeled and transported as "Biological Substance, Category B" materials, *except* isolates of Shiga toxin-producing *E. coli*, *Shigella dysenteriae* serotype 1, and suspected *Yersinia pestis*, which should be packaged, labeled and transported as "Category A, Infectious substance affecting humans" materials.
- Transport of the above isolates is available through the Dunham Express courier service at no cost to the submitter, as part of the WEPS program. For transport, contact the Dunham Express office in your area and refer to account number 7271.