

We believe sharing information is one of the best ways to deal with the many challenges facing the clinical laboratory. In this issue of the NPHL newsletter, Peter Iwen discusses approaches to dealing with the shipment of potentially infectious material. The regulations are complex and involve the participation of numerous government agencies, including the Federal Aviation Administration and the Department of Transportation. Laboratories must do their best to conform to the guidelines but several of the key issues are subject to interpretation. By sharing this information, we hope to hear from other laboratories about any difference in opinion or approach to complying with these important regulations. Since we all travel by car and/or plane sometime during the year, we recognize the problems that could be created by inadvertent exposure to infectious organisms being shipped. Additionally, it should be no surprise that the public may also be placed at risk of infection through exposure to biological materials as a result of intentional acts by terrorists and criminals. Recently a national effort has been initiated to prepare for these threats. The NPHL is working with the Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services and CDC to provide diagnostic services and consultation regarding potential exposure of the public by infectious organisms. More information will be made available to Nebraska laboratories in the coming months. Finally, while we make preparations for the future, we must still be ready for the age old infections as evidenced by the recent outbreak of rubella in Douglas County and as noted in the article by Carol Allensworth of the Douglas County Health Department. We wish for you all a healthy beginning of a new century.

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