

FORESIGHT Interpretation: What do I do with all this data?

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Abstract

Participation in FORESIGHT can have a significant impact on a laboratory's performance--but only if managers know what the data mean and how to use it. This workshop is for laboratory managers who want to know what a laboratory can and should do with their FORESIGHT data for improved laboratory performance.

The workshop will cover discussions of strategic missions, key performance indicators, budgeting, and specific short-term and long-term problems in the management of forensic laboratories at the tactical, operational, and strategic levels. The workshop will show managers how to combine a review of mission, vision, and values to connect the budget allocation process to a feedback loop through which the laboratory uses the FORESIGHT metrics to evaluate performance and reformulate strategic plans. These metrics offer insight into each of the areas of concern and include measures of return, quality, efficiency, analytical process, and recognition of the laboratory's local economic conditions. The data offer the ability to correct for differences in population, geographical areas served, and asset allocation. The workshop will detail how a laboratory might detect an explanation for its performance and identify potential red flags to address areas of concern. Armed with viable metrics and the means to analyze them, a foundation for the important planning stages of performance review and coordination with strategic goals can be created.

The initial adoption of a strategic management process will enable a laboratory to set the stage for continual improvement. The combination of these basic management tools with the FORESIGHT data being generated industry-wide will enable a laboratory to manage that process from production through quality assurance and budget allocation.