

State Crime Lab

Issues, Effects & Responses

September 23, 2014



NORTH CAROLINA

Conference of District Attorneys

1

State Crime Lab: Backlog Issues

- Toxicology
 - 18 – 24 months
- Controlled substances
 - 12 to 18 months
- DNA
 - 24 months
- Other Disciplines
 - 12 months minimum

2

State Crime Lab: Backlog Effects

- Superior Court Case age (5 years)
 - Misdemeanors – 40% increase
 - Felonies – 30% increase
- Judicial Response
 - Continuances denied
 - Many Cases dismissed

3

Coordinated Response: Conference of District Attorneys

- 2013: Identified 3,000 cases removed from State Crime Lab queue
- Suggested process to identify cases not needing analysis
- Identified methods to streamline case processing
- Improved communication between Lab and districts
- Implemented joint education programs
- Developed hospital toxicology contracts to divert lab workload

4

District Level Response: Locally Funded Labs

- Local Lab Development: limited services
 - Wake
 - Alcohol Toxicology – Less than 30 days
 - Drug Toxicology – 4-6 months
 - Drug Analysis – Less than 30 days
 - Latent Fingerprint – one week to 12 months
 - Mecklenburg
 - Drug Analysis – 2-4 months
 - DNA Analysis – 1-6 months
 - Latent Fingerprint – 2-3 months
 - New Hanover
 - Alcohol Toxicology only
 - Iredell
 - Alcohol Toxicology – 30 days
 - Drug Analysis – 60 days
- 3 counties in development process

5

District Level Response: Hospital Toxicology Program

- 7 hospital contracts
 - Pitt, Randolph, Catawba, Gaston, McDowell, Henderson, Haywood
- Blood Toxicology Only
 - One week to one month turnaround

6



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