



News Release

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State Laboratory Celebrates 10 Years in Richmond
Students get hands-on, day-in-the life scientist experience

RICHMOND – Marking a milestone in the advancement of public health, the California Department of Public Health (CDPH) today commemorated the 10-year anniversary of the California Public Health Laboratory in Richmond. In an event that occurred during National Public Health Week, the celebration underscored the vital role the laboratory plays in enabling scientist to identify and track diseases and contaminations.

“As one of the largest public health facilities in the nation, the California Public Health Laboratory provides fundamental scientific services that directly protect the life of everyone in California,” said CDPH Interim Director Dr. Howard Backer.

Following the recent earthquake in Japan, laboratory scientists played a key role by monitoring radiation and providing up-to-date reports on radiation levels statewide.

As part of the celebration, students from Richmond’s John F. Kennedy High School experienced real-life science applications. Donned in lab coats, goggles and gloves, the students toured behind-the-scenes, participated in experiments with scientists sometimes referred to as “disease detectives,” and had access to the state’s mobile laboratory that is used to screen and identify suspected chemicals and radiation in environmental samples.

“We welcome students to the facility to see how their studies can be applied to real-world health situations,” said Backer.

Originally housed at U.C. Berkeley, the California Public Health Laboratory has been in existence since 1906 and was instrumental in testing and virtually eradicating diseases such as small pox, plague, polio, malaria and typhoid. In 1953, a new laboratory was built in Berkeley, and in 2001, it was relocated to a larger facility in Richmond to accommodate updated equipment and services.

The state-of-the-art facility is responsible for the testing and research of numerous infectious, environmental and genetic diseases, from HIV/AIDS to influenza to cholera and a variety of food poisoning organisms such as salmonellosis and E. coli. The work conducted at the lab ensures that Californians have clean and safe air, food and drinking water. For more information, visit our [electronic press kit](http://cdphinternet/Pages/PressKits.aspx) at <http://cdphinternet/Pages/PressKits.aspx>.

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