Army Team Medicine,

LTG Dingle and I are pleased to announce the 3rd Quarter FY 2021 Army Medicine Wolf Pack Award winner is the US Army Public Health Center (APHC), Directorate of Laboratory Sciences (LS), located within the Army Public Health Laboratory Enterprise (APHLE), COVID-19 Pooled Surveillance Implementation Team, Aberdeen Proving Ground, Maryland.

The APHC COVID-19 Pooled Surveillance Implementation Team is comprised of 46 Army Active Duty military and Department of the Army Civilians.  In response to the global pandemic, the APHC COVID-19 Pooled Surveillance Implementation Team rapidly implemented and expanded the SARS-CoV-2 pooled surveillance testing capability using accredited methods to identify asymptomatic individuals in military communities to isolate potentially infectious individuals reducing further transmission and clinical testing burden on Army laboratories. The establishment of the pooled surveillance testing capability of asymptomatic personnel was essential to allowing FORSCOM units to resume training with implemented safety measures.

The team’s exceptional contributions resulted in the overall reduction in time to test, materials utilized, preserving reagents and tests kits that were in short supply, allowing the APHC Teams and the LS Leadership to develop the capability to assess for SARS-CoV-2 and to expand the capacity to handle 1000 lab samples per day.  The project’s completion developed successful methods to address issues of dilution, reduction of sensitivity and false positives.

The coordinating efforts between the units, laboratories and the entire COVID-19 Pooled Surveillance team was the lynchpin that tied the output from the Army Testing Advisory Board and the FORSCOM Surgeon’s Office to the testing laboratories for sample/mission testing assignment and tracking processes.  APHC’s efforts was critical to the Army’s COVID-19 response and the work involved a large amount of analytical, logistical and technical coordination by the entire team.

Their extreme dedication to duty and amazing support to, and care for, the Warfighter allowed them to transition to a new mission to create an accredited program to analyze COVID-19 samples in a rapid and scientifically valid way while continuing their normal duties.  Through the team’s expertise in molecular biology, biosafety, regulatory affairs, and operational activities rapidly established a vision for the surveillance activities at APHC and used their skills to shape and implement that vision to support the COVID-19 surveillance needs of the U.S. Army.  The Team’s efforts mitigated the spread of disease and helped sustain the health of the Force.

Please join us in congratulating the Team for their exceptional teamwork and noteworthy outcomes.  The COVID-19 Pooled Surveillance Team sets the standard for force health protection best practices for COVID-19 across the Army. These efforts illustrate selfless service and dedication reflecting great credit on the Army, Army Medicine and the APHC epitomizing the highest standards of the Army and Army Medicine.

Congratulations Team!

v/r,

Rich