AMERICAN SOCIETY OF
CRIME LABORATORY DIRECTORS, INC.

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FORENSIC LABS IMPROVE EFFICIENCY WITH BUSINESS INFORMATION
Project connects forensic lab information systems to business analysis project

The American Society of Crime Lab Directors (ASCLD) is comprised of over 600 leaders in forensic science.

A software project has made it easier for forensic labs to analyze and use information from their daily work to improve their business processes. The software, FORESIGHT 2020, connects the labs' current laboratory information management systems (LIMS) to the FORESIGHT Project, a process that researches how forensic labs can work better, faster, and cheaper. Before FORESIGHT 2020, lab directors had to manually enter the data into a spreadsheet and submit it. With the new software, the lab directors can not only submit the data almost automatically but they also have real-time information dashboards that tell them the status and trends of their workload. This benchmarking approach--comparing performance between units in an industry--helps to share what works, change what doesn't, and improve operational performance.

"When we created FORESIGHT, we knew it was helpful to the labs, it was just a pain to get all the data into the spreadsheet tool," says FORESIGHT 2020 Project Manager Dr. Max M. Houck. The spreadsheet tool, the Laboratory Reporting and Analysis Tool, or LabRAT, required dozens, if not hundreds, of data entries, depending on the size of the lab. "Now, with FORESIGHT 2020, the labs can submit the data with a few clicks and get feedback on how they are performing compared against other labs in the project." The FORESIGHT Project provides dozens of metrics that indicate how well a lab is working, comparing productivity, costs, staffing, and efficiency. Over 100 forensic labs around the world use FORESIGHT and the project has several years of data, making analysis, comparisons, and forecasting accurate and reliable.

"ASCLD is continuously providing means for its members to improve their forensic operations. Adding a mechanism to expedite the provision of metrics is another step to provide better management tools to improve forensic services," stated Ray Wickenheiser, the ASCLD President. "These metrics will permit crime labs to identify and then adopt best practices by

emulating our top performers. We wish to thank the Laura and John Arnold Foundation for their generous grant to support the funding of this valuable initiative."

The FORESIGHT 2020 software was written by TOMIKO, a software company with a history of law enforcement and forensic software projects, in conjunction with LIMS vendors who participated in the project, including JusticeTrax, Porter Lee, STaCS, and StarLIMS.

FORESIGHT 2020 was a project proposed by the American Society of Crime Laboratory Directors and received grant funding. The FORESIGHT Project was created by an award from the National Institute of Justice to West Virginia University and is now run out of its College of Business and Economics.

The American Society of Crime Laboratory Directors (ASCLD) is a nonprofit professional society of crime laboratory directors and forensic science managers dedicated to providing excellence in forensic science through leadership and innovation.

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