

**SUMMARY OF THE
TNI STATE PRIMACY LABORATORY ACCREDITATION TASK FORCE
MEETING**

JUNE 24, 2011

The Task Force held a conference call on Friday, June 24, 2011, at 3:00 pm EDT.

Chris Armstrong, OK DEQ	Absent
Kristin Brown, UT DOH	Absent
Art Clark, EPA Region 1	Present
Ken Jackson, TNI (Chair)	Present
Megan Latshaw, APHL	Present
Martina McGarvey, PA DEP	Absent
Michelle Wade, KS DHE	Present
Kathryn Wangsness, AZ DHS	Present
Michael Wichman, State Hygienic lab at UI	Present

1 – Approval of Previous Minutes

Michelle moved for approval of the minutes from the May 13 conference call, and this was seconded by Mike. The motion was approved unanimously. Since this is a subcommittee of the TNI Advocacy Committee, Ken will have the minutes published on the Advocacy Committee web-page.

2 – ISO Certification

It was questioned whether TNI can provide certification to ISO 17025. This certification is provided by A2LA, which might give them a competitive advantage with some laboratories. Ken agreed to look into this.

3 - Brainstorming of "developing an acceptable approach for accreditation of primacy laboratories in the TNI system"

Art suggested, since 3rd party assessors are generally expensive, what about having individual assessors be the 3rd party assessor instead of an organization? They should be required to have completed requisite TNI training and have the necessary experience. Rhode Island regularly does this. State retirees may be interested in doing this and would be a readily available source. Maine and Rhode Island have also used 3rd party assessors. Art agreed to make inquiries of Maine and Rhode Island to find out how much they pay for 3rd party assessors.

It was suggested having someone from TNI being the assessor or working with the 3rd party assessor. Mike suggested an EPA Regional Office combining with the States in that region to become an AB; e.g., Region 5 might accredit the Region 7 primacy laboratories. This would involve a voluntary group of ABs, rather than asking all of the

NELAP Accreditation Council ABs to do it. The question was raised whether EPA would be prepared to become an AB, and it is likely some regions would not be interested in being involved with NELAP. We may need to search for an amenable region.

Ken proposed asking the NELAP Accreditation Council to form an AB, using a 3rd party/parties to do all the work. That way, the AB would only have to receive and review the recommendations of the 3rd party Certification Officer. This should require minimal work by the individual NELAP ABs, but would provide accreditation by government bodies with their collective authority. Perhaps the Certification Officer could be a TNI staff member. The task force members were reminded, however, that the State governments are suffering from reduced resources and this extra work might be more than they would be prepared to handle. It was suggested that some ABs, but not all, might be prepared to do this. Perhaps States such as VT, which is not a NELAP AB, but requires its laboratories to be NELAP-accredited, would be prepared to become involved.

Megan said, although EPA requires laboratories to demonstrate competency to get money (e.g., cooperative awards etc.), this is not pushing many state laboratories towards accreditation. Art pointed out, however, that people contracting with laboratories will want the laboratories to be accredited.

There was some discussion of how to deal with some of the legal issues, and at some point we may want to speak with lawyers. The Public Health Law Institute was suggested.

Megan suggested reaching out to state legislators, offering them “best practices” presentations and discussions. This might promote better state buy-in. There is a National Conference for State Legislators, and APHL has worked with them in the past on biomonitoring.

NELAP requires laboratories to analyze two proficiency test (PT) samples per year for every analyte by every technology. This is more than EPA’s drinking water certification program that requires one PT per year for every analyte by every method. It was suggested the TNI standard might be amended for primacy laboratories to make accreditation more acceptable. Ken said TNI is committed to working with the EPA Office of Water to “harmonize” the EPA certification requirements and the TNI accreditation standards. The frequency of proficiency testing has been discussed in TNI, specifically whether there should be just one PT per year, and this remains an open subject.

Kathryn said there needs to be a tie-in with data users to push state laboratories to be accredited beyond drinking water. The Environmental Response Laboratory Network and more recent Water Laboratory Alliance are very positive for persuading laboratories to become accredited.

Ken suggested, for comparative purposes, it will be useful to find out what NELAP states charge for accrediting primacy laboratories. He will ask the NELAP Accreditation Council members for this information.

4 – Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 4:30 pm. Ken will contact members to schedule the next conference call.

LIST OF ACTION ITEMS TO BE COMPLETED

Item No.	Date Proposed	Action	Assigned to:	To be Completed by:
1	6/24/11	Find out if TNI could provide certification to ISO 17025.	Ken	Next conference call
2	6/24/11	Ask some States how much it costs them to hire 3 rd -party assessors.	Art	Next conference call
3	6/24/11	Ask NELAP state how much it would cost for primacy laboratory accreditation	Ken	Next conference call