

Summary of the NELAP Accreditation Council Meeting

January 5, 2015

1. Roll Call and Approval of Minutes

The NELAP Accreditation Council (AC) met at 1:30 pm EST on Monday, January 5, 2015. The minutes from December 15, 2014, were approved with one correction; Myron abstained from voting due to his absence at that meeting. Those members in attendance are listed in Attachment 1.

2. Action Items Pending

- Certificates of Recognition and letters to EPA Regional staff affirming renewals for IL, UT, LA DHH and PA (Lynn and Aaren, Paul to sign the PA certificate)

3. Recommendation for Renewal of Recognition for NY ELAP

The Evaluation Team's recommendation that the AC approve renewal of NY's Certificate of Recognition as a NELAP AB was circulated to AB representatives prior to the meeting.

Before beginning discussion on the recommendation, Aaren noted that Stephanie had contacted her to say that Stephanie would be leaving NY ELAP as of January 14. Stephanie noted that Mike Ryan will have voting privileges for NY and that Lynn McNaughton and Victoria Pretti will be the designated contacts for the Council.

Aaren noted that NY successfully completed all corrective actions from its site report. Cathy and Donna were the team members, and Cathy noted that NY has a strong quality system, such that the transition of leadership would not be expected to disrupt or degrade its operations. Cathy moved and Steve seconded that the team's recommendation be approved by the AC. There were ten "yes" votes, with NY abstaining; three absent members will be polled by email.

4. Webinars for Standards Modules under Development

The webinar on the Modified WDS for Microbiology was held since the last AC meeting. While several AB representatives noted that they could not participate in the webinar and had not read the standard, another offered the view that it adds some "good fixes" to previously ambiguous language. Carl noted that he plans to read and comment on the MWDS and Aaren asked he alert the AC if he sees any "show-stoppers."

The comment period on the LOD/LOQ WDS closes January 12; comments on the Radiochemistry WDS closed on January 5.

Lynn noted that she was able to find out that the remaining revised modules of Volume 1 (M2, M3 and M7, but NOT M1) were revised and completed in 2012, and voted upon by TNI membership. As approved VDS standards, these have been awaiting adoption with the other modules of the 2015 standard, under the "old scheme" whereby LASEC and the AC review the complete Volume all at once.

Now that we know the actual status of these remaining QS modules, LASEC will begin reviewing them along with the PT modules of V1 and V2 which have just undergone voting.

5. Further Discussion on Request from EPA about Drinking Water Assessors

At the previous AC meeting, Donna had presented a request or position from the Agency that all assessors involved with assessing drinking water labs must have successfully completed the EPA training, based on the EPA Drinking Water Certification Manual, or else demonstrate that the state employing those assessors has equivalent training.

Additional discussion brought out the following points:

Currently accepted practices vary widely across regions. UT requires only the assessment team leader to have completed C.O. training; not all team members must do so. R3 designated that PA has “equivalent” training. IL assessors must have C.O. training in order to assess drinking water labs, and presently all assessors have completed both chem and micro courses. When it used state assessors, FL required passing the C.O. course; course completion is presently a contract specification, but not all otherwise qualified third party assessors are able to get accepted into the C.O. course. Course availability is also a concern in TX, especially with contract assessors. Essentially, the lack of course availability is restricting assessors from being able to compete for state contracts, in these cases.

All VA assessors have completed either the chem or micro C.O. course, but none have both.

An online training course for C.O., readily available to all assessors, would be ideal.

Approval for out of state travel is becoming increasingly difficult to obtain in many states, whether for assessments or training.

R2 as R5 holds that assessors may only assess drinking water methods related to the C.O. course they passed (e.g., if a trainee failed inorganic, they may not assess inorganic methods.)

It’s unclear whether the Agency is concerned about the competence of the assessor or only seeking to establish a course requirement. Donna indicated that acceptability of “equivalent training” is relevant to this concern.

Only the R3 states can claim to have been told by the regional office that they have “equivalent training.”

The TNI standard requires basic assessor training as well as detailed technical training. Is it truly necessary to have another week of C.O. training in order to be able to read a drinking water method and determine whether an analyst is following the method?

Donna mentioned another issue that the Technical Support Center plans to address, the certification of labs for “non-approved” methods in the drinking water matrix – those not approved by the Agency. EPA considers this objectionable. Several ABs noted that their state agencies require potable water analysis for analytes that are not federally regulated, based on in-state concerns, and that it would be a fundamental error for EPA to commingle the certification of a lab with federal approval of the analytical methods for state primacy.

Donna stated that EPA plans to issue a new “high-level” memorandum about this issue, but no timeline is yet established. She suggested that, since both these issues are “hot,” perhaps it would be helpful to have Dan Hautman (of the EPA drinking water program) to talk with the AC before issuing the upcoming memo. That idea was well received, and

Aaren committed to accommodating Dan's availability to meet with the Council.

6. Development of Policies Needed to Support AC Operations

Discussions at the previous meeting had leaned more towards the AC having a set-aside closed meeting at conference to discuss concepts for the policies to be developed. Aaren stated that, on reflection, she believes that an open meeting discussion will be preferable – both for choosing priority policies and agreeing on the concepts to be documented. Then a package can be put together for transmittal to the LASEC.

This led to considering whether the AC needs a full afternoon session at conference, and the conclusion that a half session would be adequate. NOTE: Aaren has notified Jerry that the AC will use only the after-break time period but not the pre-break time, since many AB representatives want to attend other sessions in the early afternoon. The routine update items will be handled otherwise (implementation status, evaluation status, and so forth.)

7. Next Assessor Call

Cathy earlier agreed to lead the next Assessor Call, tentatively scheduled for March, but in looking at the calendar with Monday holidays in both January and February, the Council agreed that April 6 would be a better time. NOTE: A "hold the date" announcement has been sent for that new date.

The suggested topic will focus on top concerns about method-specific issues during assessments – the most common or most serious findings about method issues. Cathy asked that each AB send her their "top three" concerns, and she will create a list from those.

8. Next Meeting

The next meeting of the AC will be in person, on Wednesday afternoon, February 4, beginning at 3:30 pm Eastern. A reminder will be sent in advance, for those not travelling to conference. The teleconference line will be 1-860-970-0300, passcode 155258#, and this number will be included in the reminder.

The next teleconference meeting of the AC will be Monday, March 2, 2015, at 1:30 pm Eastern. An agenda and teleconference information will be sent out before the meeting.

Attachment 1

STATE	REPRESENTATIVE	PRESENT
FL	Stephen Arms T: (904) 791-1502 F: (904) 791-1591 E: steve.arms@flhealth.gov	Yes
	Alternate: Carl Kircher E: carl.kircher@flhealth.gov	Yes
IL	Scott Siders T: (217) 785-5163 F: (217) 524-6169 E: scott.siders@illinois.gov	Yes
	Alternate: Janet Cruse T: 217-785-0601 E: Janet.Cruse@illinois.gov	No
KS	N. Myron Gunsalus 785-291-3162 E: ngunsalus@kdheks.gov	Yes
	Alternate: Sara Hoffman shoffman@kdheks.gov	No
LA DEQ	Paul Bergeron T: 225-219-3185 E: Paul.Bergeron@la.gov	Yes
	Alternate: TBD	
LA DHH	Donnell Ward T: E: donnell.ward@la.gov	Yes
	Alternate: TBD	
MN	Lynn Boysen E: lynn.boysen@state.mn.us	Yes
	Alternate: TBD	
NH	Bill Hall T: (603) 271-2998 F: (603) 271-5171 E: george.hall@des.nh.gov	No
	Alternate: TBD	

NJ	Joe Aiello T: (609) 633-3840 F: (609) 777-1774 E: joseph.aiello@dep.state.nj.us	No
	Alternate : Rachel Ellis E: rachel.ellis@dep.state.nj.us	No
NY	Mike Ryan T: (518) 473-3424 F: (518) 485-5568 E: michael.ryan@health.ny.gov	New voting representative for NY as of January 15
	Stephanie Ostrowski SEO01@health.ny.gov	Yes Final meeting, departing for new position January 14
	Information Contacts: Victoria Pretti victoria.pretti@health.ny.gov and Lynn McNaughton lynn.mcnaughton@health.ny.gov	No
OR	Gary Ward T: 503-693-4122 F: 503-693-5602 E: gary.k.ward@state.or.us	No
	Shannon Swantek T: 503-693-5784 E: Shannon.swantek@state.or.us	No
	Included for information purposes: Scott Hoatson T: (503) 693-5786 E: hoatson.scott@deq.state.or.us	No
PA	Aaren Alger T: (717) 346-8212 F: (717) 346-8590 E: aaalger@pa.gov	Yes
	Alternate: Yumi Creason E: ycreason@pa.gov	No
TX	Ken Lancaster T: (512) 239-1990 E: Ken.Lancaster@tceq.texas.gov	Yes
	Ruthie Wedig E: Ruth.Wedig@tceq.texas.gov	Yes
UT	Kristin Brown T: 801-965-2540 F: 801-965-2544 E: kristinbrown@utah.gov	No

	Alternate: Jill Jones T: (801) 965-3899 E: jilljones@utah.gov	Yes
VA	Cathy Westerman T: 804-648-4480 ext.391 E: cathy.westerman@dgs.virginia.gov	Yes
	Alternate: Ed Shaw T: 804-648-4480 ext.152 E: ed.shaw@dgs.virginia.gov	No
NELAP AC PA and EC	Lynn Bradley T: 540-885-5736 E: lynn.bradley@nelac-institute.org	Yes
EPA Liaison	Donna Ringel T: 732-321-4383 E: Ringel.Donna@epa.gov	Yes
California	Christine Sotelo Christine.Sotelo@waterboards.ca.gov	No
Oklahoma	David Caldwell E: David.Caldwell@deq.ok.gov	Yes
Guests:	none	