

Summary of the NELAP Accreditation Council Meeting March 7, 2011

1. Roll call

The NELAP Accreditation Council (AC) met at 1:30 PM EST on March 7, 2011. Those members in attendance are listed in Attachment 1.

2. AB Renewals

The Completeness Review for the LA DHH renewal application is done and sent to the Lead Evaluator. Portions of the NH application were received, but there were technical difficulties with other parts, so the completeness review has not been initiated yet. KS received an additional 2 week extension, due to unanticipated extra in-state workload that arose during February.

Application packages from NY, UT, and PA are due in late March, depending on when their letters actually arrived and factoring in the 30 day extensions granted to each one.

3. Other Updates

New SIRs have been posted to the voting website; an email identifying these by number was sent out, and the voting “clock” begins today.

The LAS EC has asked for a committee member volunteer to draft the Implementation Policy, based on the issues provided from the AC and the evaluators also.

Some discussion occurred about how evaluations will be conducted, and how will the teams write findings when the old standard is still in use. This too will be addressed in the Implementation Policy, but when it was discussed during evaluator training, the evaluation will be against the 2009 TNI Standard, and the findings will be written in that way, essentially treating the ABs like new ABs that need to “come up to speed” as soon as possible. The training had been prepared prior to the discussions that led to “rolling implementation” but this seems to be what will work, unless the Implementation Policy contains some better option. The AC agreed to discuss this further at its March 21 meeting.

4. Drinking Water Field of Proficiency Testing (FoPT) Table (Eric Smith, Chair of the PT Executive Committee participating) – vote deferred from February 22 meeting

Stephanie Ostrowski reiterated that some of the changes to acceptable ranges are shifted so that they are inconsistent with the regulated analytes, in this new FoPT table, and NY has concerns that the PTs are scored differently for unregulated analytes even though those are performed by the same methodology used for regulated analytes. Eric sought to address that by explaining that the committee sought to align the unregulated contaminants with the method criteria for regulated analytes, even though the criteria for regulated analytes are tighter than the method itself provides.

A motion to accept the DW FoPT table was offered and seconded, and a roll call vote taken. One veto vote occurred, by NY. (*NOTE: the two absent members have since voted yes by email.*)

NY agreed to submit its objection in writing within a week, per the Voting SOP, and the veto will be considered at the March 21 AC meeting, to determine whether it is persuasive or not. (*NOTE: The written justification of NY's veto was submitted on March 11, 2011.*)

5. Additional PT issues

Eric Smith had also asked the AC to consider proposed language to be posted to the TNI website, to provide additional guidance to the PT community about the removal of the experimental PT tables. There was no adverse comment on the language as drafted.

Aaren raised several PT issues for discussion, as requested by Scott Hoatson for the PT Expert Committee, as they wrestle with how best to make the needed changes to the PT standard. She offered to send these around by email.

- Tracking by analysis date versus closing date – proposing that ABs should track by analysis date unless that is too cumbersome, then track by closing date. PA stated that its process is to track by closing date unless a PT analyte needs repeated for reinstatement of that analyte, then the analysis date is identified, to ensure the required 15-day interval is met. (*NOTE: This item is open for future discussion, but time did not permit during this meeting.*)
- No emergency change to the standard is needed to drop the experimental PT tables
- Use of unaccredited PT providers is not currently an active issue, and can be addressed during the next “routine” revision of the standard, but does not warrant emergency change. For the interim, the PT SOP will require that an accredited provider is available prior to adding a new analyte to the tables; the AC can verify this when the draft SOP is available for AC review
- LOQ reporting is not a change in “intent” of the standard, but more an issue of how PTs are scored. Whatever a specific state AB requires, is what the lab must meet. NY raised the issue of an out-of-state lab where the primary AB accepts the PT/analyte as reported, but that if reported as LOQ, that PT would fail NY’s scoring system. It was noted that this situation ought not occur, since the standard prohibits a secondary AB is from performing the same function(s) as the primary AB.
- The Whole Effluent Toxicity (WET) PT changes may be accomplished through a Temporary Interim Amendment (TIA)

6. Discussion of AB Assistance Task Force Recommendations – Judy Duncan participating

Judy provided a brief history of the formation of the Task Force (by the TNI Board, June 2010), and thanked the AC members for their quick responses to several short survey questions from the Task Force. She explained that these recommendations were also presented to the LAS EC at its late February meeting, and that the Task Force hopes to present a package of recommendations to the Board at its April meeting.

Aaren asked Judy to address possible overlap or conflicts between this Task Force and the Consistency Improvement Task Force. There might be some overlap but the two groups are working from entirely different perspectives.

Most discussion centered around these issues:

- potentially using the audit reports prepared for other federal agency recognition programs that use the NELAC standard (Defense and Energy Departments)
- how TNI might help with availability and procurement of third-party assessors
- surveillance audits including how to structure objective criteria for determining which labs would be “good enough” to warrant surveillance audits
- how TNI might help with training for both assessors and ABs

Some objections were offered to proposed “assistance” items, primarily based on how those items cannot be employed under present operational practices. Steve Arms pointed out that the AC might consider that its national operations, and those of its members, can always be improved, and just because a suggested item can't be accommodated today does not make it unworthy of consideration and adaptations for the future.

Judy asked the AC members please to contact her with their further thoughts, after the meeting, and explained that the Task Force would discuss the comments of both the AC and the LAS EC at its March 10 meeting, and prepare a package of options and recommendations for the TNI Board of Directors, based on its months of work and the feedback received from those two groups, for the April 2011 Board meeting.

7. Next meeting

The AC agreed to hold its next regular conference call on Monday, March 21, 2011, at 1:30 pm Eastern. The agenda items will include:

- Roll Call and Approval of Minutes
- Update on Renewals
- Determination of whether the veto vote on DW FoPT table is persuasive, and further actions to be taken (vote required)
- Discussion of evaluation against the TNI Standard for ABs that have not made the transition at the time of their evaluation site visit
- Consideration of Provisional Recognition SOP (vote required, eventually)

Attachment 1

STATE	REPRESENTATIVE	PRESENT
CA	George Kulasingam T: (510) 620-3155 F: (510) 620-3165 E: gkulasin@cdph.ca.gov	yes
	Alternate: Jane Jensen E: jjensen@cdph.ca.gov	no
FL	Stephen Arms T: (904) 791-1502 F: (904) 791-1591 E: steve_arms@doh.state.fl.us	yes
	Alternate: Carl Kircher E: carl_kircher@doh.state.fl.us	no
IL	Scott Siders T: (217) 785-5163 F: (217) 524-6169 E: scott.siders@illinois.gov	yes
	Alternate: TBA	
KS	Dennis L. Dobson 785-291-3162 E: ddobson@kdhe.state.ks.us F: (785) 296-1638	Yes
	Alternate: Michelle Wade E: MWade@kdheks.gov	yes
LA DEQ	Paul Bergeron T: 225-219-1244 F: 225-219-8244 E: Paul.Bergeron@la.gov	yes
	Alternate: TBD	
LA DHH	Louis Wales T: (225) 342-8491 F: (225) 342-7494 E: lwales@dhh.la.gov	no
	Alternate: Ginger Hutto E: ghutto@dhh.la.gov	no

MN	Susan Wyatt T: 651.201.5323 F: E: susan.wyatt@state.mn.us	yes
	Alternate: Stephanie Drier E: stephanie.drier@state.mn.us	yes
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	yes
	Alternate : TBD	
NY	Stephanie Ostrowski T: (518) 485-5570 F: (518) 485-5568 E: seo01@health.state.ny.us	yes
	Alternate: Dan Dickinson E: dmd15@health.state.ny.us	no
OR	Irene Ronning T: 503-693-4122 F: 503-693-5602 E: irene.e.ronning@state.or.us	yes
	Alternate: Raeann Haynes E: haynes.raeann@deg.state.or.us	no
PA	Aaren Alger T: (717) 346-8212 F: (717) 346-8590 E: aaalger@state.pa.us	yes
	Alternate: Dana Marshall E: dmarshall@state.pa.us	no

TX	Stephen Stubbs T: (512) 239-3343 F: (512) 239-4760 E: sstubbs@tceq.state.tx.us	yes
	Alternate: Steve Gibson E: igibson@tceq.state.tx.us	yes
UT	David Mendenhall T: (801) 584-8470 F: (801) 584-8501 E: davidmendenhall@utah.gov	yes
	Alternate: Kristin Brown E: kristinbrown@utah.gov	
VA	Cathy Westerman T: 804-648-4480 ext.391 E: cathy.westerman@dgs.va.gov	yes
	Alternate: Ed Shaw T: 804-648-4480 ext.152 E: ed.shaw@dgs.va.gov	no
	NELAP AC Program Administrator and Evaluation Coordinator Lynn Bradley T: 703-867-5966 E: LmbTbird@aol.com	yes
EPA Liaison	Arthur Clark T: 617-918-8374 F: 617-918-8274 E: clark.arthur@epa.gov	yes
	Quality Assurance Officer Paul Ellingson T: 801-201-8166 E: altasnow@gmail.com	yes
	Oklahoma David Caldwell, David.Caldwell@deq.ok.gov	David Caldwell
	Guests:	Eric Smith Judy Duncan