

Summary of the NELAP Accreditation Council Meeting
March 5, 2012

1. Roll call and Approval of Minutes

The NELAP Accreditation Council (AC) met at 1:30 pm EST on March 5, 2012. Minutes of the February 21, 2012, meeting were approved. Those members in attendance are listed in Attachment 1.

2. Action Items Pending

- Policy about triggers for AB re-evaluation
- Open Meeting of AC for May 2012 – Lynn & Aaren to draft agenda and return to AC, date selection, announcement
- Use of DoD-DOE reports (pending receipt of sample reports, raised w/ AB/TF again on 2/23/12)
- SIRs – discussion of “needs discussion” votes, 1-2 each AC meeting
- Update on AB Task Force (AB/TF) activities
- Letter from TNI Board to NELAP and related correspondence (sent w/ A Alger email of 12/29/11)
- Suggestion to have Kathy Gumper meet with AC to discuss consistency (on indefinite delay – keep?)

3. Updates on AB Renewals and other items

Lynn reported on the status of ongoing evaluations

CA – technical review underway, Kristin Brown is getting up to speed.

KS – discussion with Evaluation Team today

NJ – technical review response submitted, undergoing review. Site visit re-scheduled to week of April 16, with observation in late March.

TX – technical review underway

LA DEQ – requested 30-day extension to submit application, now due April 19.

VA – application submitted, pending completeness review. Application materials submitted the same week as the renewal letter arrived – CONGRATULATIONS TO VIRGINIA, THIS SETS THE RECORD FOR FASTEST TURNAROUND!

OR – renewal letter to be sent next week

4. Discussion of KS evaluation

The Evaluation Team (ET) assigned to KS sought input from the AC about how to proceed. Aaren summarized the facts:

- The technical review and site visit were satisfactory and all corrective actions have been completed.

- After the site visit, the Program Manager retired, leaving the sole staff person (the assessor) reporting to the KS DHE Lab Director, with no second person available. This creates a situation where the assessor approves her own work and no one in the AB operation now has a “dotted line” access to the departmental Secretary if needed (the QA role.)
- The AC was not to consider “what if” situations, only the current facts.

ET Leader Carl Kircher and member Linda Mauel praised Michelle Wade, the KS AC representative, pointing out that current operations are proceeding within required timeframes. The vulnerability concerns about the program are based strictly upon the standard, not about any actual shortcomings in the program having occurred. The standard, V2M1 sections 4.3.5, 4.3.6, and 4.3.7 are relevant. The Team noted that since either a shorter period of renewal or possible use of the Provisional Accreditation SOP provisions would be precedent-setting, they hoped to get feedback from the AC before making such a recommendation.

Michelle noted, and her manager, KS Lab Director Leo Henning, supported that the Program Manager and QAO position was about to be advertised as a vacancy, but the time is presently indefinite. (NOTE: The vacancy has since been posted, but remains to be filled.)

After some discussion about the options, and several new suggestions, the AC reached consensus that the ET should issue an amendment to the KS site report, noting that circumstances changed after the site visit concluded, adding findings created by the lack of a Program Manager for the KS program, and requesting additional corrective actions. The ET agreed this was an acceptable next step, and expressed gratitude for the AC’s insights. (NOTE: the amendment to the site report has been transmitted.)

5. Request to Add New Section to Evaluation SOP Concerning Off-Site Document Review

The NELAP Evaluators, an informal group that meets monthly by teleconference, asked to have language inserted into the SOP prior to the next full revision, to address one of the recommended process improvements, the review of AB documents off-site, prior to the actual site visit. It is believed this will conserve travel resources as well as making more efficient use of time for ET members.

Several AB representatives were uncomfortable with taking this action unless reviewing the entire SOP, but all agreed that there is nothing in the existing SOP that prohibits off-site document review now. So, on behalf of the evaluators, Lynn recommended dropping the request to add a section, noting that the new language can be incorporated into the version undergoing revision by the evaluators now, to accommodate process revisions as recommended by the NELAP QAO. This next version will eventually be submitted to the LAB Expert Committee and the LAS Executive Committee for approval before presentation to the AC.

6. Follow-Up on Open AC Teleconference, Planned for May 2012

Lynn noted that the expected guidance from Advocacy Committee did not materialize. Rather, the Advocacy Committee looks to the AC to help it structure the intended session for non-NELAP ABs at conference in DC in August. Aaren will work with Lynn to create a draft agenda for our teleconference and bring it to the AC for consideration.

7. Policy Development for Handling Changes to an AB's Program Operations

This item was carried over from the previous meeting, where there were no longer the necessary number of participants to conduct voting on accreditation business (2/3 instead of half required.) Aaren recommended that the AC use the TNI system of committees pro-actively, and ask that the LAS EC draft a policy (and any needed procedures) for monitoring and evaluating the status of ABs during the period of recognition. The motion was proposed by Steve Stubbs and seconded by Gary Ward. Eleven "yes" votes were cast during the call, with 2 ABs requesting to vote by email, along with the 2 absent ABs.

NOTE: One of the absent ABs voted "no" with detailed explanation of reasoning, 2 other ABs then voted "no" by email, and IL requested to change its vote to "no." Despite the fact that technically, the motion passes with 11 "yes" votes, Aaren will bring the issue up for discussion at the March 19 meeting, since there may be another solution that leaves all ABs satisfied with the outcome.

8. Discussion of SIRs

SIRs # 17 and 27 were brought up for discussion. It was agreed to return SIR #17 to the committee that developed the answer, along with the comment posted on the site, and ask for a revised response. SIR #27 just needs additional votes, it had only 9 "yes" votes, so AB representatives were asked to return to the site and vote.

9. Next meeting

The next AC meeting will be Monday, March 19, 2012, at 1:30 pm EDT. Teleconference information and an agenda will be sent beforehand. The agenda will include:

Updates

Draft Agenda for Open AC Call in May

Revisit Policy Development for Changes in AB Operations

Update from the March 14 TNI Board meeting and AB/TF recommendations

SIRs (the next 2 oldest ones)

Attachment 1

STATE	REPRESENTATIVE	PRESENT
CA	Jane Jensen 510-620-3174 F: 510-620-3471 E: jjensen@cdph.ca.gov	yes
	Alternate: Fred Choske 510-620-3175 F: 510-620-3471 E: fchoske@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	yes
IL	Scott Siders T: (217) 785-5163 F: (217) 524-6169 E: scott.siders@illinois.gov	no
	Alternate: Janet Cruse T: 217-785-0601 E: Janet.Cruse@illinois.gov	yes
KS	Michelle Wade E: MWade@kdheks.gov Ph: (785) 296-6198 Fax: (785) 296-1638	yes
	Alternate: none	
LA DEQ	Paul Bergeron T: 225-219-3247 F: 225-325-8244 E: Paul.Bergeron@la.gov	yes
	Altérnate: TBD	
LA DHH	Donnell Ward T: E: donnell.ward@la.gov	yes
	Alternate: TBD	
MN	Susan Wyatt T: 651.201.5323 F: E: susan.wyatt@state.mn.us	no
	Alternate: Stephanie Drier E: stephanie.drier@state.mn.us	no

NH	Bill Hall T: (603) 271-2998 F: (603) 271-5171 E: george.hall@des.nh.gov	yes
	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	Gary Ward T: 503-693-4122 F: 503-693-5602 E: gary.k.ward@state.or.us	yes
	Alternate: 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@state.pa.us	yes
	Alternate: Dwayne Burkholder E: dburkholde@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: jgibson@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	no
VA	Cathy Westerman T: 804-648-4480 ext.391 E: cathy.westerman@dgs.virginia.gov	no

	Alternate: Ed Shaw T: 804-648-4480 ext.152 E: ed.shaw@dgs.virginia.gov	yes
	NELAP AC Program Administrator and Evaluation Coordinator Lynn Bradley T: 540-885-5736 E: lynn.bradley@nelac-institute.org	yes
EPA Liaison	Marvelyn Humphrey T: (281) 983-2140 E: Humphrey.Marvelyn@epa.gov	yes
	Quality Assurance Officer Paul Ellingson T: 801-201-8166 E: altasnow@gmail.com	yes
	Oklahoma: David Caldwell	yes
	Guests: Linda Mael, EPA R2 and member of KS Evaluation Team Leo Henning, KS Laboratory Director (manager of Michelle Wade)	