

**MINUTES OF  
THE NELAC INSTITUTE'S  
PROFICIENCY TESTING COMMITTEE  
September 14, 2010**

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**Agenda Item 1: Standing Committee Operations**

The Proficiency Testing (PT) Committee of The NELAC Institute (TNI) met by conference call on September 14, 2010 Committee Chairperson Kirstin McCracken led the call.

**Call to Order:** The teleconference was called to order at 1:35 PM ET.

Kirstin McCracken  
Judy Morgan  
Steve Arpie  
Shawn Kassner  
Dan Tholen  
Mitzi Miller  
Scott Hoatson  
Lisa Touet  
Roger Kenton

The following associate members were present for this call:

Gary Dechant  
Jim Broderick  
Rachel Ellis  
Joe Pardue

The minutes from the previous call and the NMEC conference will be reviewed and voted on next call. These were not available for the committee at this time.

The committee will be receiving an application for Joe Pardue to join the committee; this will be discussed at the call following the committee receiving his application.

**Agenda Item 2: Standard Interpretation Request #118**

The committee received the below standard interpretation request from the LASC:

<b>Section (eg. C.4.1.7.4)</b>	PT: 2.7.2 , 2.7.3 , 2.7.3.1 , 2.7.3.2
<b>Describe the problem:</b>	I have a question about supplemental PT samples Vs scheduled PT samples. According to the TNI standards - when can labs use a supplemental PT sample (initial certification, continuing certification, corrective action)? Second – According to the TNI standards – in what cases are labs required to use only scheduled PT studies? Thank You,

The committee began the discussion for the interpretation by noting that a supplemental PT study was assumed to be a quick response or short TAT proficiency testing (PT) sample commonly used for corrective actions. Kirstin noted that the definition for supplemental in the 2003 NELAC standard did not preclude the use of a quick response or short TAT PT sample from being used for a continuing accreditation PT. Kirstin noted that a laboratory could order a quick response or short TAT PT sample, when they forgot to order a regularly scheduled PT. She noted that as long as the sample was analyzed within the five to seven month timeframe and was a unique FOPT then there is no reason that a quick response or short TAT PT sample could not be used for continuing accreditation under the 2003 NELAC standards Chapter 2.

Kirstin reviewed the TNI standard definition for the supplemental PT. The committee noted that the definitions are very different. This standard interpretation request is specific to the 2003 NELAC standard. However, the committee feels that the answer should cover both standards. Steve pointed out that states handle quick response or short term PT's differently. He noted these differences were typically related due to the economy of scale in handling with PT results.

The committee then discussed what the intention of the definitions and the use of the supplemental PT's. The intention for the use of supplemental PT's is establish new accreditation or expanding the scope of a laboratories' accreditation and to re-establish a laboratories accreditation. The use of supplemental Pt for continuing accreditation has been discouraged. Regardless of their usage the supplemental PT's must meet the TNI or NELAC criteria for PT's. Shawn will craft a response to the requester and email for comment.

### **Agenda Item 3: TIA Review**

The committee received quite a bit of feedback from the NEMC conference and the CSDB to re-examine the TIA's as they are written to determine if these are of an emergency nature. Emergency nature being that the standard could not be implemented without these TIA's.

The first set of TIA's to be reviewed was from the Radchem subcommittee. TIA#1 was a TIA adding the requirements for PTP to have a radiochemistry license and review the licenses of laboratories who receive PT samples from them. Scott felt that this TIA did not meet the definition of an emergency. He further spoke that this could be seen as a regulatory issue for any provider who would want to have a radiochemistry program. Mitzi pointed out that if the item is not on a checklist then you can not audit to the PTP to the requirement. Gary asked if the lack of this requirement posed a liability to TNI as accrediting a vendor. Steve felt that the PTP should be following all applicable state/federal/regional laws and requirements when producing PT samples. Gary asked to have the TIA added based in DOE requirements for accrediting laboratories. Gary then indicated that the TIA could be dropped. Shawn asked for a motion to have the TIA dropped. Mitzi and Scott motioned to have the TIA dropped. All members present approved the motion.

The Radchem TIA2 was the next to be reviewed. This TIA did not allow the use of uncertainties for the purposes of accreditation. Shawn felt that this TIA was not of an emergency nature. Mitzi spoke that outside of the US uncertainties are being reported and used in eth evaluation of laboratories. Mitzi felt that this should definitely be added to the next version of the standard. Kirstin asked what a TNI AB would do if a laboratory reported an uncertainty. Scott indicated that the AB would ignore the uncertainty reported by the laboratory. Scott said that they would ignore the value. Steve indicated that reporting an uncertainty with your result is stating a range as opposed to reporting a single value. Reporting an uncertainty adds ambiguity to the reported value.

Gary indicated that the PT criteria ranges should also contain all of the uncertainties associated with the test. Scott asked how providers handle uncertainties currently. Steve spoke that there are no criteria. Scott spoke that no uncertainties are reported at this time. Mitzi spoke that TNI has required uncertainties to be calculated, the next step is to report uncertainties. Kirstin asked if the committee could add reporting requirements. Scott asked if this could be a PT Board issue. Gary suggested perhaps this was a Quality Systems issue. Kirstin felt that the standard was not meeting the needs of the discipline. Steve indicated that the data could be collected by the providers and reviewed to develop criteria prior to implementing a requirement.

Scott and Kirstin motioned to drop the TIA and add this to the next version of the standard. All of the members present approved the motion.

TIA #3 was the next TIA to be discussed. This TIA was addressing the reporting requirements that laboratories have versus the evaluations that PTP's have to make in the Potable Water microbiology 10 sample set for Total Coliforms, Fecal Coliforms and E.coli. Shawn stated that laboratories are being evaluated on the basis of 9 out of 10 with no false negatives. 'Not Reported' evaluations are seen as a 'Not Acceptable' and count against the laboratories. This causes the laboratories to be failed for an analyte and fail the overall evaluation for the set. Lisa spoke about a concern that laboratories would be reporting falsely if they reported a result for a method that was not actually analyzed. Kirstin stated that the AB's have different reporting and the analysis requirements. New Jersey, for example, asks the laboratories to verify all negative results, many states do not have this requirement. Shawn stated that perhaps different evaluation criteria would be more appropriate than the current 9 of out 10 with no false negatives. Kirstin thought that a minimum requirement should be established that would allow laboratories to report normally. Lisa thought that this TIA gave the laboratories permission to report false data. Kirstin asked if the TIA was of an emergency nature and needed to implement the standard. The general consensus was that this was not of an emergency nature.

Kirstin had the motion to drop TIA#3 and send a request to the PT Executive Committee for the Microbiology FOPT Subcommittee to examine this issue. Scott seconded the motion. All members present approved the motion.

The committee discussed whether a supplemental call was necessary to the finish discussing the WETT TIA. All agreed that a supplemental meeting was necessary. The next meeting is set for September 29, 2010 at 1:30 PM EST.

**Attachment A**

**ACTION ITEMS  
TNI PROFICIENCY TESTING COMMITTEE**

<b>Item</b>	<b>Action Item</b>	<b>Assigned To</b>	<b>Due Date</b>	<b>Date Complete</b>
1	Write proposed language for SIR	Shawn	Completed	
2	Contact Micro Subcommittee with decision on TIA	Kirstin	9-29-2010	
	Contact Radchem Subcommittee with decision on TIA	Shawn	9-29-2010	
3	Send email to PT Executive committee	Kirstin	9-29-2010	

## Attachment B

### TNI PROFICIENCY TESTING COMMITTEE MEMBERS

<b>Member</b>	<b>Affiliation</b>	<b>Email</b>	<b>Phone</b>	<b>Fax</b>
Stephen Arpie	Absolute Standards, Inc.	<a href="mailto:stephenarpie@absolutestandards.com">stephenarpie@absolutestandards.com</a>	800-368-1131	800-410-25
Stacie Metzler	Hampton Roads Sanitation District	<a href="mailto:smetzler@hrsd.com">smetzler@hrsd.com</a>	757-460-4217	757-460-65
Shawn Kassner (Vice-Chair)	ERA-A Waters Company	<a href="mailto:skassner@era.gc.com">skassner@era.gc.com</a>	303-463-3531	720-898-63
Scott Hoatson	Oregon DEQ	<a href="mailto:hoatson.scott@deq.state.or.us">hoatson.scott@deq.state.or.us</a>	503-693-5786	
Roger Kenton	Eastman Chemical Company	<a href="mailto:rogerk@eastman.com">rogerk@eastman.com</a>	903-237-6882	
Mitzi Miller	Dade Moeller & Associates	<a href="mailto:mitzimi@charter.net">mitzimi@charter.net</a>	509-531-2055	
Matt Sica	Maine CDCP	<a href="mailto:matthew.sica@maine.gov">matthew.sica@maine.gov</a>	207-287-1929	
Lisa Touet	Massachusetts DEP	<a href="mailto:lisa.touet@state.ma.us">lisa.touet@state.ma.us</a>	978-682-5237 x364	978-688-03
Kirstin McCracken (Chair)	TestAmerica, Inc.	<a href="mailto:KirstinL.McCracken@testamericainc.com">KirstinL.McCracken@testamericainc.com</a>	802-923-1019	802-660-19
Judy Morgan	Environmental Science Corp	<a href="mailto:Jmorgan@esclabsciences.com">Jmorgan@esclabsciences.com</a>	615-777-9657	
James Webber, Ph.D.	New York State DOH	<a href="mailto:webber@wadsworth.org">webber@wadsworth.org</a>	518-474-0009	518-473-28
Dan Tholen	A2LA	<a href="mailto:tholen.dan@gmail.com">tholen.dan@gmail.com</a>	231-929-1721	610-374-72
Amy Doupe	Lancaster Laboratories	<a href="mailto:adoupe@lancasterlabs.com">adoupe@lancasterlabs.com</a>	717-656-2300 x1812	717-656-26