

Minutes, PT Frequency Subcommittee call 19

DATE: July 17, 2009 at 1:00 p.m. EDT

Subcommittee members in attendance (5): D Tholen (chair), J Lowry, C Wibby, M Karapondo, J Morgan

Associate members: K McCracken, A van Langenhove

Dan Tholen opened the meeting at 1:08 p.m. (EDT). With 5 members present there was a quorum. However this meeting was intended for discussing the analysis of the State data, and gather any suggestions for further analysis. No official business took place.

Prior to the meeting Dan had distributed an Excel spreadsheet with State-by-State data on unacceptable rates for NELAP and non-NELAP laboratories, by category of PT.

Dan presented the various spreadsheets on raw data from all States and data on subsets of Large States and NELAP States. Many of the smaller States had too few results for both sets of laboratories, but can be useful for checking possible effects based on larger datasets. Bar charts showed unacceptable rates and numbers of participants for all comparison groups.

The objective of the analysis is to examine performance in States that have different policies for PT frequency for non-NELAP laboratories, that use different regulatory criteria for accreditation in that State, and different degrees of rigor in their oversight.

One striking difference is in WS where non-NELAP have lower unacceptable rates in most large States. There are several possible reasons for this, and the some members suggested that the report should mention these. However, the effects are likely to be related to factors other than the frequency proficiency testing. In WP and Soil results, there is a consistent pattern of lower unacceptable rates in NELAP laboratories.

The charts on number of graded results show that several States have large differences in numbers for NELAP and non-NELAP laboratories, and the overall percentages should be interpreted with caution.

A separate analysis examined the unacceptable rates in each State for whether they were over or under (OU) the national average for that area (WS WP Soil) and year. This examines the supposition that some states have consistently lower or consistently higher averages, perhaps as a result of a different policy or rigor of oversight. This analysis identified a few States with significantly lower rates of unacceptable results, and some where there were significant differences between NELAP and non-NELAP laboratory performance. The subcommittee is to consider whether these findings seem reasonable, or could be a reflection of randomness.

The subcommittee agreed that the data are limited in that they cover just two years, and are not from all PT providers. (Note the 3 PT providers that participated are 3 of the 4

largest providers in 2007 and 2008, and so the data reflect a substantial majority of laboratories.)

Dan will revise the analysis, if requested. He will also revise the draft final report appropriately (highlighting changes), and distribute them to the subcommittee early next week. He will schedule a call for July 24. At that time the subcommittee will make final changes to the report and recommendations. The final report will then be voted on by the subcommittee (by email if necessary), and sent to the PT Committee.

Kristen informed the subcommittee that the PT Committee will be making a recommendation before the meeting in San Antonio, and needs to consider the subcommittee report,

Dan informed the subcommittee he was assembling reports and publications on this topic, to have them included with the report to the PT Committee. He asked for contributions from other members, if they have relevant reports or journal articles.

There being no further business, the call was adjourned at 2:18 pm EDT

Action Items:

1. Committee members to review State data, make any recommendations to Dan
2. Dan to revise analysis as requested, re-send by Wednesday July 22
3. Dan to revise draft final report to reflect discussion on State analysis, and any changes to recommendations. Changes to be clearly identified in draft to subcommittee, by July 22.
4. Dan to schedule another call for July 24 1:00
5. Objective is to have report to PT Committee by end of month.