

TNI PT Board Meeting Summary March 19, 2009

1. Roll call and approval of minutes:

Chairman Eric Smith called the TNI PT Board to order on March 19, 2009, at 1:00 PM EST. Attendance is recorded in Attachment A. Associate members, Randy Querry, Chuck Wibby and Jeff Lowry, were also present. The meeting was adjourned at 2:30 PM EST.

Minutes from the February 19, 2009 meeting were reviewed. The minutes were approved for posting on the TNI website. Ilona will have minutes posted.

2. Status of SSAS and WET FoPT Tables

The SSAS table was sent to Maria Friedman, Chair of the SSAS Expert Committee on March 3, 2009. Eric asked how the Board felt this table should be posted on the TNI website. Carl commented that it should be posted either on the SSAS Expert Committee page or the PT Board page. However, if posted on the PT Board page, it should be clearly noted that this table is different from the other FOPT accreditation tables on the site.

The WET FOPT table was forwarded to Dan Hickman, Chair of the NELAP Board, on February 21, 2009. As of today's meeting, Eric has not received notification from Dan Hickman as to whether or not the WET FOPT table has been officially approved by the NELAP Board. Carl mentioned that he had received an email from Dan indicating it had been approved. Eric will follow up with Dan to receive official notification.

3. Comments from PT Expert Committee Chair

Discussion on comments forwarded to PT Board Chair by Kirstin McCracken – All comments (verbal and email) received from PT Board members on this topic stated that WS and WP should remain as separate studies. PT Board members present on the call were all in agreement on this topic.

4. SOP (TNI #4-001)

A motion was made by Carl to accept the Limits SOP (TNI #4-001) with the additional language to address acceptance limits relative to regulatory acceptance limits. The motion was seconded by Gary. It was unanimously approved. The final SOP will be forwarded to the Policy Committee for finalization.

5. E-Mail from Jeff Lowry RE: Micro

E-mail:

Please look over this question about the new Drinking Water FoPT footnote.

*The new NELAC Microbiology requirements went into place in January 1, 2009. The question was related to footnote 14, which reads "**14) Laboratories analyzing qualitative sample sets for more than one method in a particular study shall obtain a unique ten-sample set for each method reported as specified in Footnote 13.**". The client uses method 9221E (Fecal Coliforms using EC) and 9221F (E. coli using EC MUG) and are certified for these methods. Both of these methods are confirmatory tests that require prior enrichment in a presumptive media and cannot be done directly. The prior enrichment method that is performed by this client is 9222B (Total Coliforms using mEndo media) which they also hold certification.*

*The question, **How may unique ten-sample sets does this client have to purchase for this scenario?** Technically, all results (Total, Fecal, E. coli) are obtained from the analysis of one ten-sample set. Given the fact that 9221E and 9221F cannot be done independently from 9222B, I would hope that only one unique ten-sample set is required for these methods in this situation. But, if you read the way the footnote is written, it could be interpreted that 3 unique ten-sample sets are required, one for each of the three methods that are being certified. I do not believe that was the intent of this requirement.*

After much discussion the final conclusion was that for the specific scenario presented above, only one unique ten sample set would need to be purchased. The discussion also prompted Eric to submit a revision on the footnote to submit to Board members for comment.

6. A2LA – DRAFT Scope of Work

Eric forwarded a document to the Board members. He would like everyone to review the document for discussion at the next meeting. Does it meet the PT Board's expectations?

Carl commented: "Special PT Studies" – 2.1 General. We should add a reference to Vol 4 of the TNI Standard.

7. A2LA Review

Gary is scheduled to complete the review next Tuesday morning. He will write up a final summary and distribute it to the group before the next meeting.

Eric distributed an e-mail previously with four questions regarding the PT Assessor report:

During the evaluation process there were several issues that the assessors believe require clarification or additional guidance by either the PT Board or the TNI to

make this process more effective. The following issues are presented to the Board for their consideration.

1) While the 2003 Standard and the TNI PT modules specifically cover production of PT materials and reference appropriate ISO standards covering these processes neither of these Standards adequately addresses the quality requirements specific to the verification of assigned values. In the 2003 Standard this is superficially referenced as “applicable requirements” and the TNI Standard do not reference the laboratory module at all. This has resulted in a lack of specificity in evaluating the analytical and quality processes used to verify PT results. As an example, section 5.5.13.1 Support Equipment of Volume 1 of the TNI standard covers specific TNI requirements for maintenance and documentation of support equipment which is not covered under ISO 17025. This situation results in a process where the PTPA must try to interpret the intent and develop requirements that are deemed appropriate for the various sections. In addition there does not appear to be a formal documented process for these interpretations and requirements to be submitted and approved by either TNI or the PT Board. This process should also include a formal review and acceptance of the PTPA proposed assessment checklist.

2) The checklist that was developed for the assessment of the POTB/PTBA contains a significant number of lines of inquiry that are ambiguous or not able to be evaluated, or obsolete. Both the checklist and SOP needs major revision.

3) While the assessment of the home office went well and we believe was minimally disruptive the use of multiple observers for the provider assessment seems excessive and disruptive. Given that the intent should be to evaluate the general assessment process and not to specifically determine if each individual line of inquiry was completed (this can be done during record reviews) we recommend only one observer be assigned to observe the PT Provider assessment. In addition, the observation of an audit should only be required the 1st time the PTPA is assessed; no observations should be required for renewal assessments unless the PTPA has made significant changes to their policies and procedures or there has been a major revision to the standard.

4) While the actual content of the assessment is fairly well defined the actual assessment process is not. Of specific concern is that no policy has been established for:

a) The final report format.

b) Who approves and issues the final report? What time frame is required?

c) Our SOP defines what records are sent to TNI Program office but who get them is not defined and no mechanism exists at the TNI program level to accept or control them except for the final approval.

d) Who has access to the reports and documents?

e) Who gets and approves the corrective action plan?

f) How will verification and closure of corrective actions be documented?

1 & 2) We need to keep these in mind as the SOP and checklist are updated with the implementation of the new TNI Standard. We will start looking at this after San Antonio.

Curtis suggested that a guidance document be prepared for PT provider audits to help with ambiguous items. This will be looked at after San Antonio.

Randy commented that the anniversary dates of the PT providers are spread throughout the year to make the audit process manageable. He would prefer that all providers be assessed against the same standard, so this will need be considered as the Board begins looking at implementation of the new TNI standard. He does not want to assess some providers against the 2003 standard and others against the TNI standard. He suggested that the Board look at completing the new PTPA application prior to July 2010.

3) Leave as is.

4) Place on back burner until May/June.

8. PT Board SOP Review

Eric will take a look at all PT Board SOPs. He will also forward the SOPs to the Board members for their review. This will be a future agenda item.

9. Review of Action Items

Action Item #17: There is language to address this in the new standard, but the agreement was that we would put a policy into place until the new TNI standard is in place. Continue with action item.

Action Item #37: It was approved by Criteria Council, but someone now has a challenge with some of the language. The Council meets April 5th and an update on this action item will be provided at the April PT Board meeting.

Action Item #34: It is to be archived, not posted. (Original Action Item: Check to see if review needs to be posted on website or only archived – Ilona.)

Action Item #32: The following response was received from Jerry:
Appears we need both and interim and long-term solution. On the NELAP side, they adopted polices that took care of changes on an interim basis. An example was a decision to replace Accrediting Authority with Accreditation Body, even though 2003 NELAC uses AA. I think the PT Board could do the same thing and just document it in meeting minutes. On the long term, they probably need to begin considering how to adopt any requirements from the new TNI standard.

6. Next Meeting

The next meeting of the PT Board will be Thursday, April 16, 2009, at 1pm EST.

Action Items are included in Attachment B and Attachment C includes a listing of reminders.

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Attachment A

**Participants
TNI
Proficiency Testing Board**

Members	Affiliation	Contact Information
Eric Smith, Chair (2009) Present	TestAmerica	615-726-0177 x1238 eric.smith@testamericainc.com
Ilona Taunton, Program Administrator Present	TNI	828-712-9242 tauntoni@msn.com
Gary Dechant Present	Analytical Quality Associates, Inc.	970-434-4875 gldechant@aol.com
Amy Doupe Present	Lancaster Laboratories, Inc.	717-656-2300 x1812 aldoupe@lancasterlabs.com
Steve Gibson Present	Texas Comm. on Env. Quality	512-239-1518 jgibson@tceq.state.tx.us
Svetlana Isozamova Absent	Accutest Laboratories – Southeast Division	407-425-6700 svetlani@accutest.com
Michella Karapondo Present	USEPA	513-569-7141 karapondo.michella@epa.gov
Carl Kircher Present	Florida DOH	904-791-1574 carl_kircher@doh.state.fl.us
Stacie Metzler Absent	HRSD	757-460-4217 smetzler@hrsd.com
Matt Sica Present	State of Maine	207-287-1929 matthew.sica@maine.gov
Curtis Wood Present	Environmental Resource Associates	303-431-8454 cwood@eraqc.com

Attachment B

Action Items – TNI PT Board

	Action Item	Who	Expected Completion	Actual Completion
8.	Gather additional names for newly formed Chemistry FoPT Subcommittee.	Carl	On-going until membership is about 14.	
10.	Let the new Chemistry FoPT Subcommittee know that information is available from NY regarding extraction/prep methods and PT results.	Carl	When Chemistry FoPT Subcommittee is formed.	
17.	Work on language for new TNI policy based on NELAC Policy #16 and EPA Criteria Document.	Chuck	Eric will follow-up with Chuck to determine a date.	
31	Update PTPA Review SOP.	Gary	Discussion: 4/16/09	
32	Confirm that NELAC designated where different responsibilities within NELAC went after TNI formed. See note from Jerry (3/19/09 minutes.) Further action needed?	Ilona	4/16/09	
37	Receive final copy of the SOP discussed in #5 of the A2LA Review.	Gary	4/16/09	
40	Prepare formal acceptance of A2LA's responses to review when corrective actions are approved.	Gary	After review of database. Expected by 4/16/09.	
41	Forward final Limits SOP (TNI #4-001) to Policy Committee for finalization.	Eric	After language is updated.	
42	Submit modified footnote based on the micro discussion during the 3/19/09 meeting.	Eric	Before tables are finalized.	
43	Review Draft Scope of Work distributed by Eric.	All	4/16/09	

Attachment E

Backburner / Reminders – TNI PT Board

	Item	Meeting Reference	Comments
2	Finalize the SOP for Evaluating Updated Limits. The Board will work on an update based on the Experimental PT decision. If this update is not completed by 3/09, go ahead and finalize the version the Board voted on electronically.	1/14/09	
3	Send A2LA a formal request to ask PT Providers if PT data can be shared with the Board. Needs to be done before 8/09.	1/14/09	
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