Summary of the TNI NELAP Board Meeting
January 27, 2010

1. Roll call

Aaren Alger, Chair, called the NELAP Board to order on January 27, 2010, at the winter meeting in Chicago, IL. Those members in attendance are listed in Attachment 1.

2. Introductions and Review of Accomplishments

Aaren began the meeting by introducing the NELAP ABs and reviewing the Board's activities for the past year. The status of the following activities were reviewed:

Status of AB renewals
Update on New AB applicants
Adoption of Non-potable FoPT tables
Adoption of new TNI standards
SIRs
Mutual Recognition Policy

Aaren then requested comments from the audience.

Dave Speis requested an update on the Board's actions to resolve the issue of inconsistent accreditation for SW 846. Aaren reported that she was hopeful that the issue may get resolved through the new database. Dave encouraged the NELAP Board to keep this item active on the agenda and to find a resolution. Audience members provided the following comments:

- Some ABs can drop the letter designation on the method, some cannot. The ABs are waiting for EPA to work this out.
- The ELAB tiger team has tried to resolve this issue with EPA. They are working to finalize policy now. EPA likes the FL model. The version designation on accreditations needs to be eliminated on accreditations. The problem needs to be fixed in concert with EPA. The solution will need to be sold to agency programs and data users.
- One party cannot fix all the issues. Everyone has to work together to resolve this. Need to recognize that there are no technological differences between versions; the difference is in the QA/QC.
- An EPA policy change is not needed for the NELAP Board to resolve this. The NELAP Board alone can make a change.
- State accreditation programs are not opposed to making the change, but the programs will need direction from EPA.
- As individuals, the NELAP Board members are bright and creative. As a group, not so much.

- The primary purpose of the lab accreditation program is to support state regulatory programs. Regulatory programs depend on accreditation program to verify competency of labs. State programs don't move quickly to new versions of methods. If the method number changes, it is easier to make the change.
- If a state regulatory program needs to have a letter designation, we should find out the reason. If we understood the reason, maybe we could find a solution.
- The CWA in Section 503 clearly states SW 846 methods by letter designation. Could be a problem for sludge land application. QAPPs specify method and version. Agencies and permittees reluctant to open a QAPP to change a method version.
- NELAP accredits to a quality system. It is the lab's job to know which version the client needs.
- We don't accredit to 8270 (DoD) or 8270 (DuPont). Why do we accredit by letter designation? It is just the same.
- We should accredit to technology and then assess to method. Assessment would make sure that system is in place to perform method. May require laws and regs to change.
- This would not work for some labs. Too much hand-holding needed.
- In DW program, certification shows method detail, but electronic data doesn't get reported with version #.
- NELAP Board needs to put on two hats to solve this issue, state agency and TNI. Step out of your role as state agencies and look at how to make this work for TNI.
- EPA will never withdraw any versions. It is a liability issue for them. All versions are considered guidance.
- AB has tried to educate regulatory programs in state and be a resource, but regulatory programs are not interested.
- Why can't we just accept each other's accreditations?

On another topic related to accreditation inconsistency, one commenter noted that her lab had recently applied for accreditation in New Jersey and was told that she would have to do duplicate PTs and could only use ERA as her PT provider. Joe Aiello offered to follow up on this matter.

3. Dispute Resolution SOP

Aaren asked Susan Wyatt to review the status of the Dispute Resolution SOP. Susan reported that a subcommittee composed of Steve Stubbs, Brian Boling and herself had prepared a draft SOP that has been presented to the NELAP Board. The SOP is targeted at AB to AB disputes which are in reality the basis for many lab to AB disputes. The draft document has not been fully vetted in the NELAP Board as yet.

Comments from the audience included:

- The SOP should contain a provision to inform the TNI Board of the outcome of each dispute handled through the SOP. Also, this draft should be compared to the existing Dispute SOP.
- Is there a need for a separate Lab to AB dispute resolution process?

- TNI can never circumvent state due process, but the SOP can be used to bring national consensus to an issue. This SOP is an adjunct to due process, but will be untimely.
- The draft global complaint SOP encourages resolution at the lowest level. That should be the goal.
- The NELAP Board needs to work harder on management systems. NELAP Board needs to document actions and be consistent.

4. Other comments for the audience

- What is the problem with Standards Interpretation Requests? The NELAP Board is holding up over 50 requests and stalling the process.
- SIR is a very important process and the timelines are very important.
- Once an SIR is approved, how do the ABs do training to inform their staff?
- What is being done by TNI to fix something in the standard that the SIR says isn't clear?
- Electronic approvals may be one way to eliminate the backlog caused by the NELAP Board. We need to find a more efficient way.
- Low level analyte codes are needed for the new non-potable FoPT tables. Who is requesting those? Also, Eric Smith wants to talk to NELAP Board about DMRQA PT tables.

The meeting was adjourned.

Attachment 1

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	Quality Assurance Officer Paul Ellingson T: 801-201-8166 E: altasnow@gmail.com	No
	Minnesota Susan Wyatt Lynn Boysen	Yes
	Oklahoma David Caldwell Judy Duncan	Yes