

**Summary of the NELAP Accreditation Council Meeting  
Forum on Laboratory Accreditation Virtual Conference  
11:45 am – 1 pm Eastern, January 28, 2021**

**1. Welcome and Introductions**

Kristin welcomed everyone to the meeting and invited the AB representatives to introduce themselves.

**2. State Adaptations to Pandemic Emergency**

<b>State</b>	<b>State Adaptations to Pandemic Emergency – January 2021</b>
<b>FL</b>	Program Manager is working from home; other staff working in office. All third party assessors were required to submit SOPs for remote assessments and have them approved by AB staff, or else continue in-person assessments. Each remote assessment requires approval by the Program Manager.
<b>IL</b>	Staff are mostly working remotely from home, only coming to the office as required to pick up and drop off files and resources. Initially delayed assessments, then began remote assessments in May, while catching up on the schedule. After one on-site assessment in July, the positivity rate climbed so reverted to remote assessments and now plan to continue those at least through April 2021. Will only resume on-site assessments when it is safe.
<b>KS</b>	Performing on-site assessments for in-state labs with rapid tests for COVID-19 in use prior to travel. All out-of-state labs are assessed by third party assessors (not specified whether remote or in-person).
<b>LA DEQ</b>	Staff originally ordered to work from home but now those with cubicles are in office 1 day/week and those with offices, 2 days/week. All travel and all assessments were initially halted, but some are reinstated now. Seeking regulatory change or Executive Order to permit remote assessments, but for now, more off-site reviews are being done where possible and third party assessors are used for out-of-state assessments
<b>MN</b>	Shut down completely from mid-March until state determination that lab personnel are “essential workers”, so assessments were delayed. One staff person pulled into COVID-19 response. State Health Commissioner allowed modification to use remote assessments, so staff prepared an SOP for the contract assessors that MN uses. Most assessments are now on time and being performed remotely, but initial applicants or new fields of testing with new technology are not eligible for remote assessment and thus not allowed at present.
<b>NH</b>	Prefer in-person assessments in the Northeast region but are using remote assessments for labs outside of that region. On-site visits are rescheduled if any health concerns exist. Many labs use paper records and those must be visited in person.
<b>NJ</b>	Staff working from home since mid-March and travel ban is in place. Program Manager goes into office 1-2 days/week; other staff only as necessary. Some remote assessments being done and some in-person on-site using safety protocols. Assessments are nearly on schedule.
<b>NY</b>	Performed no audits from mid-March until September, then resumed with entirely virtual audits. Many assessors were already working remotely as normal procedure.
<b>OK</b>	Staff working from home since the end of March. Remote assessments began in October. OK has no out-of-state primary labs, so no out-of-state travel. Maintaining assessment schedule with hybrid assessments (partly remote, partly on-site).

<b>OR</b>	Travel ban since March, but had temporary rules in place since June to allow remote assessments during pandemic emergency. Those rules are now permanent, with rewording to allow remote assessments during any Governor-declared emergency. While remote assessments allow less travel and easy communications with the labs, staff believe they are not as good as in-person because of limited situational awareness. Some site visits occurred from June through November but halted again as COVID-19 case numbers increased. Plan to resume travel when restaurants re-open.
<b>PA</b>	Staff working from home and performing remote assessments since May. An SOP for assessors as well as guidelines for labs to use SKYPE for assessments helped ease the remote assessment process. Occasionally an in-person visit is needed but remote assessments are preferred for safety reasons. Labs offer good feedback, and assessors are “awesome”.
<b>TX</b>	Staff are completely teleworking but may visit the office as needed, in compliance with lowered building occupancy limits. Initial travel ban was lifted quickly and staff are now doing modified on-site assessments (minimum time on-site) with safety precautions. Has no plans to do remote assessments and assessments and unsure if EPA R6 would support them for drinking water labs.
<b>UT</b>	Staff are teleworking, with manager in office 2-3 days/week but assessors only “as necessary”. Conducting remote assessments for out-of-state labs, but in-person site visits for in-state; considering use of “hybrid assessments” with only 1 assessor on-site and others participating remotely.
<b>VA</b>	All travel halted in mid-March and staff are working from home where possible; some staff were pulled into COVID-19 response. Prepared new SOPs and forms for remote assessments, which began in September. Assessors like using former travel times for document review instead, and feel that the assessments are equally effective although different. Labs are providing positive feedback about the new data packages required and other aspects of remote assessments.

A question was asked about whether staff have been exposed to COVID-19 from the assessment site visits. Multiple states responded that none have been identified to date, and that all CDC, OSHA and state recommended safety precautions are being followed. Also, assessments are rescheduled if any involved personnel (assessors or lab staff) are reporting symptoms or positive tests or even reported exposures requiring self-isolation. While names may not be used (per HIPAA regulations), building occupant notifications are routine when potential exposures may have occurred.

### 3. Implementation Status of 2016 TNI Environmental Laboratory Sector Standard

<b>Implementation Plans for 2016 TNI ELS Standard – 1/28/2021</b>		
<b>State</b>	<b>Process for Implementing the New Standard</b>	<b>Anticipated Implementation Date</b>
<b>FL</b>	FL adopted the TNI 2016 Standards by regulation on September 26, 2018. Laboratories were granted a grace period until April 1, 2019, to implement the new standards	Fully implemented on April 1, 2019
<b>IL</b>	Full implementation on January 31, 2020	January 31, 2020
<b>KS</b>	Rulemaking underway, but slowly. Is allowing labs to upgrade now and is assessing to 2016 Standard even though 2003 NELAC standard is still the official version	Unknown
<b>LA DEQ</b>	Regulation updates delayed by pandemic, tropical storms and hurricanes	Unknown
<b>MN</b>	Adopts by statute, and is updating its databases now.	January 2021

	Is encouraging labs to implement 2016 standard now, with database updates ready and checklist going into electronic data system now	
<b>NH</b>	Is encouraging labs to upgrade now, working with counsel about how and when they can proceed with rulemaking	Unknown
<b>NJ</b>	Incorporated into regulation by reference	January 31, 2020
<b>NY</b>	Adopts by reference; unable to obtain permission to complete rulemaking to update other aspects on separate timeline. Implemented PT modules of 2016 Standard immediately but not able to use the updated/2016 checklist yet. Encouraging labs to upgrade now	PT changes implemented; other modules await rulemaking to revise NYS certification manual. Unknown date for completion
<b>OK</b>	Discussions about rulemaking and implementation have resumed, is allowing labs to upgrade now	Unknown
<b>OR</b>	Implemented 2016 Standard effective January 1, 2021	January 1, 2021
<b>PA</b>	Incorporated into regulation by reference, all labs are required to have the 2016 standard implemented by July 2020.	January 31, 2020
<b>TX</b>	Incorporated into regulation by reference. Implementation has gone well.	January 31, 2020
<b>UT</b>	Rulemaking on hold due to emergency but recently re-started. May be open for comment in February 2021; allowing labs to upgrade to 2016 now	Several more months needed, but during 2021
<b>VA</b>	Regulatory update stalled, awaiting first publication.	Unknown

A follow-up question to implementation asked whether ABs are seeing common findings. While no multi-state compilation has been done, several ABs remarked that the Chemistry module (V1M4) seems to be problematic, with findings about the new MDL procedure and also the relative error calculations.

#### 4. Evaluations

Like everything else, the evaluation process slowed in the spring but the Council approved remote site visits for the evaluations and the processes are moving again. One evaluation with a remote site visit was concluded and the AB's renewal has been approved; another AB had a remote site visit and is working on its corrective actions.

#### 5. Revision to AB Operations Module of TNI Standard V2M1

Not all ABs have completed reviewing this module but there were a few comments. Some of the ISO language may need notes to clarify that governmental procedures and another participant noted that the shift to risk-based and more individualized but less prescriptive requirements is not very adaptable to governmental requirements.

Also, NH issued a request that all NELAP ABs please ensure that accredited methods are in LAMS (with method codes and SOPs if no-standard), especially for PFAS, as monitoring the methods individually to see whether secondary accreditations can be granted is taking excessive amounts of time.

#### 7. Next Meeting

The regularly scheduled February 1, 2021 teleconference meeting will not be held. A special and informal meeting to discuss the Draft Standard V2M1 is planned for **Tuesday, February 16 at 11:00 am Eastern.**

The next regular teleconference meeting is **Monday, March 1, 2021 at 1:30 pm Eastern.** The agenda and documents will be provided in advance.

**Attachment 1**

STATE	REPRESENTATIVE	PRESENT
FL	Carl Kircher E: <a href="mailto:carl.kircher@flhealth.gov">carl.kircher@flhealth.gov</a>	No
	Alternate: Vanessa Soto E: <a href="mailto:Vanessa.sotocontreras@flhealth.gov">Vanessa.sotocontreras@flhealth.gov</a>	No
IL	Susan Beshaw T: 217-557-0274 F: 217-524-6169 E: <a href="mailto:susan.beshaw@illinois.gov">susan.beshaw@illinois.gov</a>	no
	Alternate: Dave Reed E: <a href="mailto:Dave.Reed@Illinois.gov">Dave.Reed@Illinois.gov</a>	No
	For information purposes: John South E: <a href="mailto:john.south@illinois.gov">john.south@illinois.gov</a>	No
	For information purposes: Shirlene South E: <a href="mailto:shirlene.south@illinois.gov">shirlene.south@illinois.gov</a>	No
KS	Jennifer Evans E: <a href="mailto:jennifer.evans@ks.gov">jennifer.evans@ks.gov</a>	no
	Alternate: N. Myron Gunsalus T: <a href="tel:785-291-3162">785-291-3162</a> E: <a href="mailto:ngunsalus@ks.gov">ngunsalus@ks.gov</a>	No
LA DEQ	Kimberly Hamilton-Wims T: 225-219-3247 E: <a href="mailto:Kimberly.Hamilton-Wims@la.gov">Kimberly.Hamilton-Wims@la.gov</a>	Yes
	Altérnate: Elizabeth West E: <a href="mailto:elizabeth.west@la.gov">elizabeth.west@la.gov</a>	Yes
MN	Lynn Boysen E: <a href="mailto:lynn.boysen@state.mn.us">lynn.boysen@state.mn.us</a>	Yes
	Alternate: Stephanie Drier T: 651-201-5326 E: <a href="mailto:stephanie.drier@state.mn.us">stephanie.drier@state.mn.us</a>	Yes
NH	Bill Hall T: (603) 271-2998 F: (603) 271-5171 E: <a href="mailto:george.hall@des.nh.gov">george.hall@des.nh.gov</a>	Yes

	Alternate: Brian Lamarsh <a href="mailto:Brian.Lamarsh@des.nh.gov">Brian.Lamarsh@des.nh.gov</a>	Yes
NJ	Michele Potter T: (609) 984-3870 F: (609) 777-1774 E: <a href="mailto:michele.potter@dep.nj.gov">michele.potter@dep.nj.gov</a>	Yes
	Alternate : Rachel Ellis E: <a href="mailto:rachel.ellis@dep.nj.gov">rachel.ellis@dep.nj.gov</a>	Yes
NY	Victoria Pretti 518-485-5570 E: <a href="mailto:victoria.pretti@health.ny.gov">victoria.pretti@health.ny.gov</a>	Yes
	Alternate: Lynn McNaughton E: <a href="mailto:lynn.mcnaughton@health.ny.gov">lynn.mcnaughton@health.ny.gov</a>	No
OK	David Caldwell (405) 702-1000 E: <a href="mailto:David.Caldwell@deq.ok.gov">David.Caldwell@deq.ok.gov</a>	Yes
	Alternate: Chris Armstrong (405) 702-1000 E: <a href="mailto:chris.armstrong@deq.ok.gov">chris.armstrong@deq.ok.gov</a>	No
OR	Travis Bartholomew T: 503-693-4122 E: <a href="mailto:travis.j.bartholomew@dhsosha.state.or.us">travis.j.bartholomew@dhsosha.state.or.us</a>	Yes
	Alternate: Lizbeth Garcia 971 865 0443 E: <a href="mailto:LIZBETH.GARCIA@dhsosha.state.or.us">LIZBETH.GARCIA@dhsosha.state.or.us</a>	Yes
	Included for information purposes: Ryan Pangelinan E: <a href="mailto:Ryan.pangelinan@dhsosha.state.or.us">Ryan.pangelinan@dhsosha.state.or.us</a>	No
	Included for information purposes: Sara Krepps Oregon Department of Environmental Quality (503) 693-5704 E: <a href="mailto:sara.krepps@state.or.us">sara.krepps@state.or.us</a>	No
PA	Annmarie Beach E: <a href="mailto:anbeach@pa.gov">anbeach@pa.gov</a> T: 717-346-8212	Yes
	Alternate: Amber Ross <a href="mailto:ambross@pa.gov">ambross@pa.gov</a>	Yes
	Included for information purposes: Dana Marshall <a href="mailto:dmarshall@pa.gov">dmarshall@pa.gov</a>	

TX	Ken Lancaster T: (512) 239-1990 E: <a href="mailto:Ken.Lancaster@tceq.texas.gov">Ken.Lancaster@tceq.texas.gov</a>	Yes
	Alternate: Kristy Deaver T: (512) 239-6816 <a href="mailto:Kristy.deaver@tceq.texas.gov">Kristy.deaver@tceq.texas.gov</a>	Yes
UT	Kristin Brown T: <a href="tel:(801)965-2540">(801) 965-2540</a> F: <a href="tel:(801)965-2544">(801) 965-2544</a> E: <a href="mailto:kristinbrown@utah.gov">kristinbrown@utah.gov</a>	Yes
	Alternate: Alia Rauf T: 801-965-2511 E: <a href="mailto:arauf@utah.gov">arauf@utah.gov</a>	No
VA	Cathy Westerman T: 804-648-4480 ext.391 E: <a href="mailto:cathy.westerman@dgs.virginia.gov">cathy.westerman@dgs.virginia.gov</a>	Yes
	Alternate: Ed Shaw T: 804-648-4480 ext.152 E: <a href="mailto:ed.shaw@dgs.virginia.gov">ed.shaw@dgs.virginia.gov</a>	No
NELAP AC PA and EC	Lynn Bradley T: 540-885-5736 E: <a href="mailto:lynn.bradley@nelac-institute.org">lynn.bradley@nelac-institute.org</a>	Yes
EPA Liaison	Eric Graybill <a href="mailto:Graybill.eric@epa.gov">Graybill.eric@epa.gov</a>	Yes
California	Christine Sotelo <a href="mailto:Christine.Sotelo@waterboards.ca.gov">Christine.Sotelo@waterboards.ca.gov</a>	No
Guests:		

## Attachment 2 – Outline of Slides from Conference

### Updates from NELAP

Kristin Brown, Chair, NELAP Accreditation Council  
UT DOH

### Agenda

- Introductions
- Brief Summary of Major Events in NELAP for 2020
  - Leadership transition
  - Operational adaptations due to pandemic
  - 2016 Standard implementation
- Discussion and Q&A
  - Evaluations underway, delayed by pandemic but ongoing
  - First Draft Standard under improved Standards Development SOP ready for review
  - Participant Q&A (questions typed into Q&A – not “chat”)

### NELAP AB Representatives

FL – Carl Kircher, FL DOH  
IL – Susan Besaw, IL EPA  
KS – Jennifer Evans, KDHE  
LA – Kimberly Hamilton-Wims, LA DEQ  
MN – Lynn Boysen, MN DOH  
NH – Bill Hall, NH DES  
NJ – Michele Potter, NJ DEP  
NY – Victoria Pretti, NY DOH  
OK – David Caldwell, OK DEQ  
OR – Travis Bartholomew, OR DOH  
PA – Annmarie Beach, PA DEP  
TX – Ken Lancaster, TX CEQ  
UT – Kristin Brown, UT DOH  
VA – Cathy Westerman, VA DGS  
\*\*LA DOH withdrew, April 2020

### Major NELAP Events, 2020

#### Leadership Transition

- New Chair elected January 2020 – Kristin Brown (former Vice Chair)
- New Vice Chair elected January 2020 – Michele Potter
- Three year terms per new General Operations SOP 3-100
  - No term limits
- Major NELAP Events, 2020, cont'd

#### Operational Adaptations due to pandemic emergency

- General changes (not every state)
  - Work from home/remote
  - Remote assessments implemented
  - Staff in health departments tapped to assist with COVID-19 activities
- AB representatives discuss individual state adaptations



## Major NELAP Events, 2020, cont'd

### **2016 Standard Implementation**

- 7 states adopt by reference and thus officially implemented as of January 31, 2020
  - Actual compliance dates depend on state regulations and necessary database updates
- 7 states in various stages of rulemaking to enable implementation
  - Rulemakings delayed by pandemic
- AB representatives discuss individual state status

### **Discussion**

- Evaluations underway, severely delayed by pandemic
  - Remote site visits enabled (SOP revised to accommodate)
- Review of V2M1 Draft Standard underway
  - First module developed in compliance with improved Standards Development SOP 2-100
  - Public Meeting on V2M1 – LAB Committee  
Wednesday 1/27, 2 pm Eastern
- Respond to Q&A submitted online

### **Thank you for being with us!**

For more information, contact

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or

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