

## **Summary of the NELAP Accreditation Council Meeting October 7, 2019**

### **1. Welcome and Introductions**

The NELAP Accreditation Council (AC) met at 1 pm Eastern on Monday, October 7, 2019. Kristin presided over the meeting. Attendance is noted in Attachment 1. The minutes of July 8 were approved, and the minutes of September 9 were approved.

### **2. Further Discussion of Revisions to Drinking Water FoPT Table for MPN Testing**

At conference in Jacksonville, further conversations with EPA representatives and PTPEC resulted in agreement that Jennifer Best would meet with the Council to discuss more about EPA's ARA submitted to the PTPEC to modify the FoPT to separate the MPN tests into two different technologies – tubes and wells. Michella Karaondo and Dan Hautman joined Jennifer; all are part of the Drinking Water program's Technical Support Center (OGWDW/TSC) in Cincinnati, OH.

Jennifer distributed the PowerPoint presentation that Maria Friedman, PTPEC Chair, had used previously to discuss this issue in April, after the Council rejected a proposed revised DW FoPT table at its December 2018 meeting.

Jennifer explained that, after prompting from several labs including EPA Region 10, she submitted the Analyte Request Application (ARA) and then worked with PTPEC to form a subcommittee to explore this issue. The micro subcommittee (with prompting from the AC) collected data from several years from the PT Providers. Analysis of this data showed that there is a statistically sound difference in the test results between the “tube” technology (22% failure rate) and the “well” technology (4.9% failure rate), which led the subcommittee and the larger PTPEC to support the ARA to separate the two technologies on the FoPT table.

Jennifer attempted to address some of the concerns that had been expressed surrounding the ARA. Carl Kirchner asked if the PT data were analyzed to show which method produced better results, Jennifer noted they were not, because PT data isn't sufficient to judge the efficacy of a microbial method. Evaluating method efficacy is done through a process using low levels of chlorine stressed coliforms from partially treated sewage (to obtain wild type coliform strains), while PTs are made with lab acclimated, pure cultures at elevated levels. The discussion ranged to various topics regarding micro PTs and the applicability of the TNI program. EPA expressed concerns regarding whether the TNI PT program is truly a national program if it is controlled by 14 states.

At the close of the discussion, Jennifer noted that she was told that the Agency could submit a complaint to get the issue raised to the TNI Board of Directors for reconsideration. Kristen indicated that Jennifer could have Maria resubmit the request to the AC for it to be reconsidered. At the close of EPA's presentation, Jennifer was undecided whether to ask PTPEC to resubmit the revised FoPT table for AC reconsideration or to file a formal complaint about TNI's FoPT table process, presumably focusing on whether TNI's PT program serves NELAP or all fifty states. She committed to “think about it”. Update: After the meeting, Jennifer spoke with Maria and Maria has agreed to resubmit the PTPEC recommendation to the AC.

### **3. LOD/LOQ Guidance GUI 3-109**

The latest revision of this guidance document was approved by LASEC at its July meeting, with a recommendation to the Council that it approve and adopt the guidance. There were several comments on that version, but Jerry Parr has provided the most recent update of the document which already addressed each comment, saying that the commenters must have reviewed a previous version. This version from Jerry was distributed to the NELAP AC with the agenda for this meeting. With that explanation, Cathy moved to accept the guidance as presented at this meeting and Carl seconded the motion; approval was unanimous.

#### **4. Update from California**

Christine Sotelo had asked for time to talk with the Council about California. She briefly reviewed the background of CA with NELAP, noted that CA's regulation is about to be published for implementation in the spring of 2020, and explained that she hopes for CA's program to regain TNI recognition as an Accrediting Body, but if not TNI, she will seek ILAC recognition, probably in 2021, in order to be considered a "legitimate AB".

Presently, there are two modifications to the TNI ELS Standard being implemented in CA – only one PT per year and modifications to the Technical Director requirements. Christine expressed some hope that those two issues could be "upgraded" after implementation is underway in the lab community, and noted that rejoining NELAP would relieve the other ABs of the burden of assessing CA labs. CA accepts NELAP accreditation for the purpose of granting its own certification to a lab, although CA has additional and different methods that most NELAP states do not offer.

She asked for one or two NELAP ABs to agree to a formalized mentor relationship with CA, and noted that CA has a relationship with ACIL to provide support to its laboratory community. PA and UT have offered to advise CA, and Carl specifically offered to field any questions, but none of those are yet formalized in any fashion. Carl suggested that Christine consider joining one of the NELAP Evaluation Teams, as that would be a tremendous learning experience and benefit the CA program, as others have found. On a related note, participants briefly discussed whether Steve Arms would be considered to have a conflict of interest in evaluating CA, since he has been involved with its advisory committee in recent years, and while there was no clear-cut decision, sentiment was that his service would be similar to having done prior consultancy, and that should not be a conflict.

#### **5. Proficiency Testing for PCBs (Aroclors)**

Since the first Analyte Request Application was declined by PTPEC, the Council has repeatedly discussed how to resolve the issue that a lab can repeatedly fail the quantitative Aroclor PT but because it does not fail the same congener twice in a row, never lose its accreditation for the "Aroclor group". The proper document was distributed with this meeting's agenda.

The only question was what would happen for a lab that did not have all seven PCBs accredited, and participants agreed that would be a rare scenario that could be addressed, and ought not to delay resolving nearly all of the problem. Aside from that question, there were no adverse comments and NJ will submit the ARA to PTPEC shortly.**5.**

#### **6. Revisions to the Evaluation SOP 3-102**

Cathy noted that she has reviewed this document, since the workgroup has stalled, and that she would share her few comments with the Council (done shortly after the meeting). If there are no objections to her comments, those will be incorporated along with the changes recommended by the NELAP evaluators, and the document brought to the Council for approval in November.

Cathy also stated that she is working with TNI's Database Administrator about how to assign a TNI lab ID number to a mobile lab currently accredited by LDEQ, which assigns the same number to a mobile as to its fixed base "owner" lab. She sent an email request for information, and all respondents said they assign a separate ID number; LDEQ is discussing the issue

with its IT personnel to see how it can contribute to resolving this issue.

Also, several participants asked about updated evaluator training, and there will be none, since changes to the SOP are minor. Lynn did send the webcast link to those who asked for it, and noted that when the revised V2M1 is adopted and implemented, that the evaluator training will likely be completely revised and offered again, but the timeframe is presently unknown.

## **7. Next Meeting**

The next teleconference meeting will be Tuesday, November 12, 2019, at 1:30 pm Eastern. This rescheduling is needed because the Vice Chair is unavailable during the regularly scheduled date, and the following Monday is a federal holiday. An 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>	Yes
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	Altérnate: Elizabeth West <a href="mailto:elizabeth.west@la.gov">elizabeth.west@la.gov</a>	no
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