

## **Summary of the NELAP Accreditation Council Meeting November 12, 2019**

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

The NELAP Accreditation Council (AC) met at 1 pm Eastern on Monday, November 12, 2019. As Vice Chair, Kristin presided over the meeting. Attendance is noted in Attachment 1. The minutes of October 7 were approved.

Kristin provided several news updates, as follows:

- Donna Ringel has accepted a new position within EPA and will no longer be the Liaison to the NELAP AC; she is seeking a replacement, working within Agency channels to find someone.
- The Environmental Laboratory Advisory Board (a Federal Advisory Committee Act committee advising EPA on laboratory issues) has been formally disbanded by the Agency, as of October 17, 2019. The EPA announcement said that it was due to the President's Executive Order to reduce the number of FACA committees (although that Order exempted the independent agencies, which EPA is) and that EPA "...determined that there are existing committees and other mechanisms that can provide EPA with the guidance and work products that fall under ELAB's charge."

### **2. Nominations for Chair and Vice Chair of the NELAP AC**

With the departure of Aaren Alger, the Council needs a new Chair. In accordance with the NELAP General Operations SOP 3-100, nominations were opened for Chair, and then for Vice Chair.

Cathy nominated Kristin for Chair; Kristin accepted the nomination, and there were no other nominations offered. Kristin then nominated Michele for Vice Chair, who had previously agreed to accept that nomination; Michele will be asked to affirm that agreement at the December meeting.

Nominations will remain open for the December meeting, with an opportunity for additional candidates to be nominated for both positions. The election will occur at the January 2020 meeting.

### **3. Recommendation for Renewal of Illinois as a NELAP AB**

Steve Arms presented the Council with the Evaluation Team's recommendation to renew IL and it was distributed on November 7. There was one question about the recommendation, concerning delays in IL's response to corrective action submissions; Grant, as team member, responded that there were one major and two minor delays noted in the evaluation but that the new database implemented in IL as well as the hiring of two new assessors was expected to solve that issue, going forward, so that no finding with additional corrective actions was considered necessary.

Carl moved and Paul seconded that the team's recommendation be approved and that the recognition of IL as a NELAP AB be continued. During the meeting, nine votes were cast in favor of the motion, with IL abstaining; as of Wednesday, November 13, the remaining votes were completed with all in favor.

#### **4. Approval of Revised NELAP Evaluation SOP 3-102**

A revised draft of this SOP was presented to the Council several months previously, and Aaren had expressed a desire to make additional revisions, but those were not discussed or accomplished before her departure. Cathy performed a final review of the draft and corrected some details that were missed by the NELAP evaluators, and declared it ready for the Council to consider for adoption. Cathy moved to approve the revised version and Celeste seconded; approval was unanimous.

NOTE: Policy Committee reviewed the NELAP AC-approved document and approved it with editorial changes on November 15. The minor edits required by Policy will be distributed to Council members in the event that someone finds them objectionable. Assuming those edits are acceptable, the document should be presented to the TNI Board of Directors for endorsement at its December meeting.

#### **5. Mobile Laboratory TNI Lab ID Numbers**

Cathy seeks to be able to list a mobile lab's secondary accreditation in LAMS, but found that the primary AB includes the mobile in the same ID code as its associated base lab. She polled the NELAP ABs, and learned that, while most ABs do accredit mobile labs separately from the base lab, at least three do not (TX, NJ, and LA DEQ), and offer "one accreditation, one scope" for the base lab and all associated mobile labs. Two ABs' practices remain "unknown" at this point (NH and OR).

The lab in question for VA has primary accreditation from LA DEQ which includes mobile labs under the ID number of the base lab, so that VA is unable to publish the accreditation of that mobile lab in LAMS, since the base lab has not requested secondary accreditation.

After discussing the issue with TNI's Database Administrator, Dan Hickman, the recommended solution is for the three states where mobile labs do not have separate IDs to create an entry for the mobile lab (just demographic data) in LAMS, as a one-time manual upload associated with the primary AB. That way, the secondary AB could easily enter the ID code and the scope for the secondary accreditation, so that the mobile lab's status is published and publicly available.

TX asked whether they could just wait until another AB is giving a secondary accreditation to a mobile lab before entering the information, since they have about 60 mobile labs. LA DEQ is waiting for a response from the information technology people there, but does not think they can upload only the demographic information. NH, NJ and OR still need to provide information about their processes.

NOTE: Dan Hickman will be on the December 2 teleconference, for a different discussion, so this topic will likely be revisited then.

#### **6. Further Discussion of Revisions to DW and NPW FoPT Tables for MPN Testing**

EPA decided to ask PTPEC to resubmit for NELAP AC approval the revised FoPT tables that were discussed at the October meeting, and that request was received from Maria Friedman on October 31. The primary issue for discussion this time was how to minimize confusion in the laboratories by facilitating the proper ordering and reporting of the appropriate PT samples and results. Carl moved and David seconded that the Council ratify the revised

Drinking Water and Non-potable Water FoPT tables as presented and request that PTPEC implement protocols for seamless implementation of those revised tables for both laboratories and PT providers. All ten ABs present voted in favor and the remaining five voted by email, all in favor, with the final vote cast on November 13.

NOTE: PTPEC was notified of this action on November 17, 2019.

## **7. Proposed Technical Director Language for Different Specialty Areas**

The Quality Systems (QS) Expert Committee asked each of the expert committees responsible for a V1 module to propose updated language for the Technical Director qualifications, and requested feedback from the Accreditation Council about the acceptability of the current proposals. QS's concern was primarily to identify "show stoppers" but they welcomed other comments, as well. The following comments were made during the meeting:

- Are there an adequate number of radiochemistry courses available to meet the stated requirements?
- For QS, what about chemical engineering?
- For QS again, is the QS language provided intended to be for chemistry only? And, it is possible to get 14 hours of courses in natural science without any chemistry courses, so the language should be clarified to be explicit. Also, where the standard says environmental analysis, people would prefer more precise language to specify chemistry, since environmental analysis would cover micro, WET, radiochem and there will be separate sets of qualifications to cover those. The second concern was it would be nice to see a minimum of number of chemistry credits still required.
- Several participants expressed concerns about additional years of experience substituting for coursework, since an AB granting secondary accreditation will not know the qualifications that were approved by the primary AB.
- The language about "the laboratory may petition each body for which accreditation is sought, presenting the candidate's qualifications in a consistent format to each" was considered unacceptable.
- How could the microbiology requirements be assessed?
- It is difficult to find a "general microbiology" course; one AB does require microbiology TD candidates to return to school for such a course if not already on their transcript, but others thought that might be overly prescriptive for someone with extensive experience.
- One AB wants to retain the option of declining to accept a TD candidate even though that individual meets the "paper requirements". This could be addressed under competence instead of qualifications, but should be considered by QS in the revision.
- Lastly, there must be a way to "grandfather" existing staff that may not meet the revised requirements, upon implementation of the next revision of the standard.

NOTE: These comments were transmitted to QS on November 17, and Kristin will continue to compile additional comments as they are sent to her, and forward those to the QS Chair later.

## **8. Next Meeting**

The next teleconference meeting will be Monday, December 2, 2019, at 1:30 pm Eastern. 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
	Alternate: Vanessa Soto E: <a href="mailto:Vanessa.sotocontreras@flhealth.gov">Vanessa.sotocontreras@flhealth.gov</a>	No
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	For information purposes: John South John.South@illinois.gov	No
KS	Paul Harrison <a href="mailto:paul.harrison@ks.gov">paul.harrison@ks.gov</a>	Yes
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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
	Alternate: Elizabeth West <a href="mailto:elizabeth.west@la.gov">elizabeth.west@la.gov</a>	Yes
LA DOH	Grant Aucoin <a href="mailto:Grant.aucoin@la.gov">Grant.aucoin@la.gov</a>	Yes
	Alternate: Scott Miles <a href="mailto:Scott.Miles@la.gov">Scott.Miles@la.gov</a>	No
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	Alternate: Stephanie Drier 651-201-5326 E: <a href="mailto:stephanie.drier@state.mn.us">stephanie.drier@state.mn.us</a>	No
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	Alternate: Brian Lamarsh <a href="mailto:Brian.Lamarsh@des.nh.gov">Brian.Lamarsh@des.nh.gov</a>	No
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	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>	Yes
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