

Summary of the NELAP Accreditation Council Meeting
February 21, 2012

1. Roll call and Approval of Minutes

The NELAP Accreditation Council (AC) met at 1:30 pm EST on February 21, 2012. Minutes of the January 17 and February 1, 2012, meetings were approved. Those members in attendance are listed in Attachment 1.

2. Action Items Pending (New Item for Minutes, includes historical items for this first time)

- Policy about triggers for AB re-evaluation
- Request from KS evaluation team about pending renewal of recognition
- Open Meeting of AC for May 2012 – date selection, announcement, agenda planning
- Use of DoD-DOE reports (pending receipt of sample reports, raised w/ AB/TF again on 2/23/12)
- SIRs – discussion of “needs discussion” votes, 1-2 each AC meeting
- Update on AB Task Force (AB/TF) activities
- Letter from TNI Board to NELAP and related correspondence (sent w/ A Alger email of 12/29/11)
- Suggestion to have Kathy Gumpfer meet with AC to discuss consistency (on indefinite delay – keep?)
- Are there other older issues that AC members believe should be added?

3. Updates on AB Renewals and other items

Lynn reported on the status of ongoing evaluations

CA – technical review underway, Kristin Brown is getting up to speed.

FL – vote today

KS – evaluation complete. Team seeks AC advice about whether to pursue provisional recognition or full recognition with possibly a shorter term and re-evaluation due to extensive changes needed

NJ – awaiting technical review response. Site visit re-scheduled to week of April 16, with observation in late March.

TX – application submitted Feb 10, completeness review underway.

LA DEQ and VA renewal letters will go out in mid-February.

OK is reconsidering whether to submit its application to become a NELAP AB, after the extensive discussions about third party ABs that took place in Sarasota. Aaren has discussed the matter with them. NOTE: in conversations before the 2/23 AB/TF meeting, Judy Duncan indicated that she will call her former colleagues to discuss OK's reluctance to proceed.

IL inquired whether EPA Region 5 will participate in its evaluation, later this year. Lynn explained that EPA committed to provide a regional evaluator, but no one has yet been identified, and that it appears that R5 will conduct a separate site visit to review the

drinking water part of IL's program.

4. Vote on Renewal Recommendations

Materials from the FL evaluation team, recommending renewal of Florida's recognition as a NELAP AB for all current fields of accreditation, were sent prior to the meeting. A quorum was present at the beginning of the discussion.

Questions arose about "what if" Florida's status changes, as a result of the current stated intent of the Department of Health to modify the program, or if the legislature mandates a change. Consensus was to proceed with a vote on the FL recommendation, and then determine how to address potential future changes in a separate discussion.

Voting occurred on a motion to renew FL's recognition. Steve Arms recused himself from the vote. Ten "yes" votes were cast at the meeting, including 2 votes cast prior to the meeting by Louisiana ABs who knew they would be absent due to a state holiday. Four ABs will vote by email. (NOTE: as of February 23, there were 13 "yes" votes, including emails; the remaining AB may not be able to vote until March 5.)

After some discussion, the Chair decided to postpone a vote about developing policy about monitoring and possibly reevaluating ABs during the period of recognition until the following meeting. Other topics suggested for inclusion in this policy were communications among ABs, the frequency and degree of participation in AC activities and what degree of change would warrant re-evaluation. There was some sentiment to ask the LAS EC to formulate such a policy for the AC, but this will be discussed further during the March 5 AC meeting.

5. Follow-up to TNI Board Meeting

Aaren provided brief updates from Sarasota conference, as follows.

- She is considering holding 1-2 open meetings per year, to include non-NELAP ABs, as well as lab and ACIL representatives, although possibly adding these latter groups in stages or for different teleconferences. There was some discussion about how to restrict the size of such a meeting to be manageable, as well as ground rules for such a meeting to make it useful for the non-NELAP ABs. Lynn noted that an open meeting in May 2012 will be very helpful to the Advocacy Committee's plan to have a listening session for non-NELAP ABs at conference in Washington, DC, this coming August.
- How can the AC and labs obtain concerns or complaints in writing, given that labs seem reluctant to provide negative feedback? It needs not to be anonymous, in order to be useful. Perhaps an "accreditation input form" of some sort, managed by TNI?
- The AC needs to seek ways to make scopes of accreditation uniform across the program, including whether prep methods are accredited. The goal is for a lab to need only one single primary AB.
- Labs desire a uniform, single application. This is under development by the LAB Expert Committee, but still needs input from ABs about unique details of each state's application that must be included (but not legacy items that are no longer useful or required.)
- ABs need to communicate in real-time about the accreditation status of labs. LAMS will be adequate for this if some notification process is included.

- There's much discussion remaining before the AC reaches agreement on what is acceptable use of assessment reports from non-NELAP ABs, including the DoD and DOE reports that have been under discussion.
- Coordinating assessments across multiple ABs looks to be helpful to all concerned, but that might be something that the labs themselves will need to coordinate, since non-NELAP ABs will clearly be involved. Is this an area that needs development of a policy for the NELAP program?

Aaren noted that summaries of the AC meetings with ACIL were sent to all AC members and alternates. She discussed her belief that TNI will move forward with plans to recognize a non-governmental AB to accredit labs in non-NELAP states that need NELAP accreditation for licensure in non-NELAP states (GA, WA, etc.,) or for non-regulatory purposes. Corollary issues were raised, that the TNI standard does not have the "home state" requirement, but most NELAP ABs wouldn't grant secondary recognition to an in-state lab, so that may not be a problematic issue. The length of time until such a non-governmental recognition could be granted will depend on how fast (or slowly) the AB/TF develops its implementation plan for Option 8 (Third party ABs) and presents it to the TNI Board of Directors. All agreed that TNI will need to clarify with the AC and clearly define the processes involved, with recognizing such a potential AB.

6. Discussion of Standards Interpretation Requests

SIR #54 concerns calculating the time interval between PT studies, and had one "needs discussion" vote. It was noted that this request applies to the NELAC standard, but the answer might be different if it were for the TNI Standard, and that the answer actually responds to a question that was not asked, in the 2nd sentence, which should be omitted, but that it does not warrant sending the SIR back to the expert committee.

SIR #61 discussion clarified the issue that method exceedances cannot substitute for the QC requirements in the method and if the method QC results were not within limits, the data should be flagged. The "needs discussion" vote will be changed to "yes."

7. Status of Florida's Accreditation Program

Steve Arms gave a summary of the current status of departmental and legislative activity about changing the Department of Health's Environmental Laboratory Certification Program, and noted that the status of legislation is available online but that no changes have actually been made, to date.

8. Next meeting

The next AC meeting will be Wednesday morning, February 1, 2012, at 8:30 pm EST, in Sarasota, FL (at conference.) The following meeting will fall on President's Day (February 20) and will need to be rescheduled.

Attachment 1

STATE	REPRESENTATIVE	PRESENT
CA	Jane Jensen 510-620-3174 F: 510-620-3471 E: jjensen@cdph.ca.gov	yes
	Alternate: Fred Choske 510-620-3175 F: 510-620-3471 E: fchoske@cdph.ca.gov .	no
FL	Stephen Arms T: (904) 791-1502 F: (904) 791-1591 E: steve_arms@doh.state.fl.us	yes
	Alternate: Carl Kircher E: carl_kircher@doh.state.fl.us	no
IL	Scott Siders T: (217) 785-5163 F: (217) 524-6169 E: scott.siders@illinois.gov	yes
	Alternate: TBA	
KS	Michelle Wade E: MWade@kdheks.gov Ph: (785) 296-6198 Fax: (785) 296-1638	yes
	Alternate: none	
LA DEQ	Paul Bergeron T: 225-219-3247 F: 225-325-8244 E: Paul.Bergeron@la.gov	no
	Altérnate: TBD	
LA DHH	Donnell Ward T: E: donnell.ward@la.gov	no
	Alternate: TBD	
MN	Susan Wyatt T: 651.201.5323 F: E: susan.wyatt@state.mn.us	no
	Alternate: Stephanie Drier E: stephanie.drier@state.mn.us	no

NH	Bill Hall T: (603) 271-2998 F: (603) 271-5171 E: george.hall@des.nh.gov	yes
	Alternate: TBD	
NJ	Joe Aiello T: (609) 633-3840 F: (609) 777-1774 E: joseph.aiello@dep.state.nj.us	no
	Alternate : TBD	
NY	Stephanie Ostrowski T: (518) 485-5570 F: (518) 485-5568 E: seo01@health.state.ny.us	yes
	Alternate: Dan Dickinson E: dmd15@health.state.ny.us	no
OR	Gary Ward T: 503-693-4122 F: 503-693-5602 E: gary.k.ward@state.or.us	yes
	Alternate: Scott Hoatson T: (503) 693-5786 E: hoatson.scott@deq.state.or.us	no
PA	Aaren Alger T: (717) 346-8212 F: (717) 346-8590 E: aaalger@state.pa.us	yes
	Alternate: Dwayne Burkholder E: dburkholde@state.pa.us	no
TX	Stephen Stubbs T: (512) 239-3343 F: (512) 239-4760 E: sstubbs@tceq.state.tx.us	yes
	Alternate: Steve Gibson E: jgibson@tceq.state.tx.us	yes
UT	David Mendenhall T: (801) 584-8470 F: (801) 584-8501 E: davidmendenhall@utah.gov	yes
	Alternate: Kristin Brown E: kristinbrown@utah.gov	no
VA	Cathy Westerman T: 804-648-4480 ext.391 E: cathy.westerman@dgs.virginia.gov	no

	Alternate: Ed Shaw T: 804-648-4480 ext.152 E: ed.shaw@dgs.virginia.gov	no
	NELAP AC Program Administrator and Evaluation Coordinator Lynn Bradley T: 540-885-5736 E: lynn.bradley@nelac-institute.org	yes
EPA Liaison	Marvelyn Humphrey T: (281) 983-2140 E: Humphrey.Marvelyn@epa.gov	no
	Quality Assurance Officer Paul Ellingson T: 801-201-8166 E: altasnow@gmail.com	yes
	Oklahoma: David Caldwell	no
	Guests: none	