Summary of the NELAP Accreditation Council Session
Forum on Laboratory Accreditation, Jacksonville, Florida
Tuesday, February 4, 2025 1:00 pm Eastern

Kristin welcomed everyone to the meeting and invited those state representatives at the head table to introduce themselves. The following updates were offered by those present:

- NJ – update to state regulation is coming (date uncertain) and the 2023 MUR will soon be implemented
- NY – working on 2023 MUR implementation, will announce to labs when dates are known
- MN – adding one new staff person
- OK – no changes
- IL – many retirements, but have now hired two new assessors and plan to hire one more
- NH – working to get both application and payments online, and is allowing (but not requiring) method upgrades for the 2023 MUR
- VA – both the 2021 and 2023 MURs are being implemented (program rulemaking completed now) and two new assessors will be hired to replace retiring ones

V2M1 Revision

As Kristin continued with her presentation, she invited Aaren Alger, Chair of the LAB Expert Committee, to talk about the ongoing revision of V2M1. Aaren noted that, while the ISO language in ISO/IEC 17011 has changed, the requirements are mostly the same. She has three requests of the Accreditation Council:

- Read the current draft for clarity and implementability, and for anything that might have been overlooked and should be added
- Avoid SIRs – think about clarity of the language as offered
- Are the requirements in the current draft important to the quality of accreditations

Assessor Round Table Discussions

Next, Kristin invited Cathy to talk about how she set up the Assessor Round Table Discussions so that they can become self-perpetuating. The concept is a virtual brown bag, and ABs were grouped (typically 2-3 together) so that the number of assessors would be fewer than 20. The plan is to have videoconferences four times/year, rotating through all ABs as "lead" over two years, with 60-90 minute sessions using either a prepared agenda or open discussion format. This should allow all assessors to have the opportunity to interact with one another over the course of two years. For now, third party assessors are not included, as the concept is to "start small" but hopefully for the future, there will be ways to include those individuals.

One commenter noted that there exists a "wish list" of topics among third party assessors, with the biggest one asking for consistency across ABs. Another commenter asked if suggested topics could be offered to the NELAP program managers (yes).

Adherence to Evaluation Timelines

In the most recent completed evaluation cycle, several evaluations had extensive delays, and not all of them could be blamed on the pandemic emergency. There were three Lead Evaluators, and each AB's team had an additional state representative plus for some, the EPA Regional Certification Officer. There were many reasons for delay, but most could probably have been avoided, and it's important that the timelines in the NELAP Evaluation SOP 3-102 be taken seriously. The planned revision of the evaluation process for renewals may help, when that is accomplished.

Suggestions offered by session participants were:

- Contract NGAB staff to participate instead of state personnel
- Adjust the timelines based on where significant delays occur
- Encourage having timeline compliance in program manager performance standards
- Expand the team member pool (non-NELAP ABs, NGABs, use non-DW EPA program staff, use lab staff for non-confidential reviews, recruit active TNI members as volunteers

Transition from Technical Manager to Technical Specialist

From the Monday morning session, NELAP program managers have concerns about the TS deputy language that's proposed, and also about using the TS credential as a qualification for TS. Also, the radiochemistry TS qualifications are too complicated to follow or to meet. Several individuals were concerned that the TS role will not be implementable, based on draft language that's being distributed thus far, and that several items may be "show stoppers".

An expert committee chair noted that the language shown in that session was a "placeholder" and not final. Another commenter noted that our modular system for the standard can create conflicts among the modules, as they all proceed at different rates. The CSDEC is comprised of all expert committee chairs, and is supposed to be a coordinating group, but does not have decision-making authority over standards; still, it could be more effective at reviewing standard modules for conflicts.

One AB noted that, if the standard is less stringent than the state's regulations, they could not remain part of NELAP. This led to a request to create a cross-walk showing the minimum requirements for all NELAP states – QMS Expert Committee needs such a document to be sure that whatever is proposed for the TS qualifications meets the minimum requirements.

Others expressed concerns about reliance upon credentialing as qualification for the TS role, when the credential process is a long way from complete for TS, and analytical disciplines are "nebulous" at best. One suggestion was that a credential might be acceptable in lieu of taking additional (and often irrelevant) coursework to meet the required number of course hours.

Questions from the Audience

Steve Arms brought a request from the NGAB session earlier in the day, about how can NELAP better use NGAB services. Several states offered opinions on this topic. Most if not all states can only offer reciprocity to other governmental accreditation bodies, but many could use third party assessors under contract. Several ABs insist upon accompanying a third party assessor doing a lab assessment for their AB (for instance, radiochemistry when there is no qualified assessor on staff). An NGAB manager stated that they are accountable to ILAC, because of their recognition, and that should be sufficient. However, ILAC is not a governmental body, and state laws and regulations always envisioned NELAP being only governmental. Additionally, NGABs have no legal enforcement authority, which states do have. No one questions that NELAP ABs are all overloaded but they still cannot offer reciprocity for NGAB accreditations.

Another participant asked for a TNI appeals process since they are accredited by a state that does not have a specific appeal process for accreditations, only the general state-wide one, which is not well suited to scientific/technical matters.

Attachment 1

STATE	REPRESENTATIVE	PRESENT
FL	Carl Kircher T: 904-791-1574 E: carl.kircher@flhealth.gov	
IL	Millie Rose T: 217-557-0220 E: mildred.rose@illinois.gov	Yes
KS	Carissa Robertson Carissa.Robertson@ks.gov (785) 291-3162	
	Alternate: Paul Harrison paul.harrison@ks.gov (785) 296-1656	
	For information purposes: Amy Suggitt Amy.Suggitt@ks.gov	
	For information purposes: Matthew Jones Matthew.jones@ks.gov	
LA DEQ	Tramecha Rankins E: tramecha.rankins@la.gov 225-219-3247	
	Paul Bergeron E: paul.bergeron@la.gov	
MN	Windsor Molnar Windsor.Molnar@state.mn.us 651-201-3702	Yes
	Alternate: Lynn Boysen E: lynn.boysen@state.mn.us	
	For Information only: Stephanie Drier T: 651-201-5326 E: stephanie.drier@state.mn.us	
NH	Brian Lamarsh (603) 271-2998 F: (603) 271-5171 Brian.M.Lamarsh@des.nh.gov	Yes
	Alternate: Bill Hall T: (603) 271-2998 E: george.hall@des.nh.gov	

NJ	Michele Potter T: (609) 984-3870 F: (609) 777-1774 E: michele.potter@dep.nj.gov	Yes
	Alternate : Rachel Ellis E: rachel.ellis@dep.nj.gov	
NY	Amy Steuerwald 518-473-0748 E: amy.steuerwald@health.ny.gov	
	Alternate: Gretchen Welfinger Gretchen.Welfinger@health.ny.gov	
	For Information only: Derek Symula derek.symula@health.ny.gov	
OK	Taryn Hurley Taryn.hurley@deq.ok.gov (405) 702-1006	Yes
	Alternate: Ryan Lerch Ryan.Lerch@deq.ok.gov (405) 702-1020	
OR	Steve Jetter T: 503-505-2672 E: steven.jetter@oha.oregon.gov	
	Alternate: Lizbeth Garcia 971 865 0443 E: Lizbeth.garcia@dhsoha.state.or.us	
	Included for information purposes: Ryan Pangelinan E: Ryan.pangelinan@dhsoha.state.or.us	
PA	Annmarie Beach E: anbeach@pa.gov T: 717-346-8212	
TX	Jody Koehler (512) 239-1990 Jody.Koehler@tceq.texas.gov	
	Steve Gibson (512) 239-1316 Steve.Gibson@tceq.texas.gov	
UT	Kristin Brown T: (801) 965-2540 F: (801) 965-2544 E: kristinbrown@utah.gov	Yes
VA	Cathy Westerman T: 804-648-4480 ext.391 E: cathy.westerman@dgs.virginia.gov	Yes

	Alternate: Shane Wyatt shane.wyatt@dgs.virginia.gov	
NELAP AC PA and EC	Lynn Bradley T: 540-885-5736 E: lynn.bradley@nelac-institute.org	
EPA Liaison	Michella Karapondo Karapondo.michella@epa.gov	
CA	Christine Sotelo Christine.Sotelo@waterboards.ca.gov	
	Christopher Hand Christopher.Hand@Waterboards.ca.gov	
AR	Brie Lusk brie.lusk@arkansas.gov	
NV	Jasmine Curiel jcuriel@ndep.nv.gov	
WV	Justin Carpenter justin.d.carpenter@wv.gov	