

Laboratory Certification Standards Review Council Meeting Minutes From 11/11/2020

Remote Attendance (18)

Council Members: Kevin Freber (Chair), Craig Obry, Jennifer Buchholz, Paul Junio, Tad Schwartzhoff, Carol Mielke, Angie Albrecht
DNR Staff: Steve Geis, Tom Trainor, Brandy Baker-Muhich, Zana Sijan, Autumn Farrell, Patty Doerflinger, Janelle Nehs
Others: RT Krueger (NLS), Jessica McCammom (Mad MSD), Yu Zhuang (BLS), Rick Mealy (WWOA)

The meeting was called to order at 9 AM.

Check-In, Agenda Repair, Review/Approval of last meeting minutes

- Kevin asked if there were any agenda repair items and there were none.
- Kevin asked if there were any changes to the minutes from the September 2020 meeting and there were none.
- Carol moved to pass the minutes as is and Jennifer seconded.

Program Metrics Report

Large-scale lab metrics: July 2020 – Oct 2020 (FY 2021 partial)

- Completed: Audited = 92%, Reports issued = 58%, Closed = 33%.
 - Janelle worked 50% for DWD during this time frame.
- Reports issued within 60 days = 71%.
- The 2 greater than 60 days were non-drinking water PFAS reports that required special attention.
- Audits not closed over 1 year from report date = 2. Audits not closed over 6 months from report date = 2.
- 3-year cycle audits overdue at time of meeting = 13 labs + 5 new apps.
- 1 new PFAS, 1 new WET, and 1 new TOC lab applied to program since last meeting – not audited.
- No labs dropped from program since last meeting.

Small-scale labs: July 2020 – Oct 2020 (FY 2021 partial)

- Completed: Audited = 40%, Reports issued = 60%, Closed = 44%.
 - Contract auditor not available during this time frame.
 - Janelle worked 50% for DWD during this time frame.
- Reports issued within 30 days = 80%.
- The 3 reports greater than 30 days were one from JMN who was working for DWD at the time and 2 from PLD who was working at 2 different positions at the time.
- Audits not closed over 6 months from report date = 1 lab.
- 3-year cycle audits overdue at time of meeting = 43 labs.
- No new labs applied to program since last meeting.
- No labs dropped from program since last meeting.
- Tom discussed on-site auditing during Covid-19. We have no idea when we can fly to see labs due to Covid-19. We feel that NR 149 requires us to perform on-site audits for new labs to the program and triennial visits. What we have been experiencing is that a lot of labs, both large scale and small scale, that we have scheduled for on-site visits, have been canceling on us at the last minute due to Covid-19 issues. As a result, it is next to impossible for us to reach our auditing goals during Covid-19. When a lab cancels an onsite visit, we just can't pick up the phone and replace them with another lab. We need to contact labs ahead of time to find an agreed upon audit date that fits into both party's schedule. Paul thought that like many regulatory agencies, during trying times, it would be appropriate for us to use virtual audits as a replacement for on-site audits. This would allow us the ability to continue auditing without the issue of labs canceling on us.
- Paul made a motion that Lab Cert develop a policy to ensure that they can do audits, as best as possible, using a virtual audit whenever we are faced with any extenuating circumstances keeping us from performing on-site audits. Carol seconded the motion. Motion carried. Steve said that he would discuss the Council's position with management to get approval. Tom said he would put together a statement regarding on-site audits for Council to sign. This will be provided to Kevin before the next Council meeting.
- Kevin asked how we plan on catching up with audits. Tom indicated that we will want to keep the contract auditor until we get caught up. Generally speaking, the contract auditor performs 2 audits per month. Tom said that the ability to perform virtual audits now will help significantly, but due to the large backlog it will still take time to catch up. Besides Covid-19, we lost an auditor for a full year and another auditor for a quarter of a year.

Other business Items

- **PFAS certification:** 10 labs have submitted applications so far. Expect applications for PFAS from 3 more labs in 2021. There are no laboratories Wisconsin certified for PFAS in non-drinking water matrices yet. Four labs are waiting for audits. We are waiting for non-drinking water report responses from 4 labs. Once the EPA CWA 1600 method is released all new certifications will need to use this method for non-drinking water matrices. Tom mentioned that the DNR is in discussion to possibly remove 3 compounds from our WI list of 36 compounds. Paul asked if the list shouldn't be paired down even further based on DHS recommendations. Tom said no because we want to mirror the EPA method list of compounds which is at 40. Carol asked if we are going to wait until we receive responses from all 4 non-drinking water labs before we grant certification. Tom said that we will wait until we have 3 that are ready and then we grant those 3 labs certification all at the same time. Carol asked if the DNR was going ahead with the wastewater sampling effort without labs having certification. Tom said yes because they need to move this effort along and they will use the list of labs that have applied so far. Carol asked when I thought we might have certified labs. Tom said it depends on how acceptable their report responses are. Tom's best guess was sometime in quarter one of 2021.
- **FY 2022 Budget "First Look":** Changes this year from last year. Decreased in-state travel expenses anticipating less travel costs due to Covid-19. Decreased training and training travel expenses anticipating less travel costs due to Covid-19. Added contract auditor costs. Added database programmer costs. The new "Cost per RVU" proposed is \$75.50 which is an increase of \$1.50 from last year which represents a 2% increase. Last year there was no "Cost per RVU" increase so this is the first in 2 years. This increase is due to the need for the contract auditor and IT programmer. For budgeting purposes, Paul indicated that the January TNI conference will be virtual, but the August TNI conference plan is to be in person in Washington DC. Kevin asked Tom to send the proposed budget information to the council for review.

Council Member Issues

- Paul asked about OpCert exams. Steve explained the current plan to provide them during Covid-19.

Checkout and Next Remote Meeting Date

- Next meeting is scheduled for January 20, 2021 at 9 AM remotely via Zoom.

Meeting adjourned at 10:20 AM.