

Actions Taken by ELAP Since the Panel Report

Christine Sotelo, Chief
California ELAP
Expert Review Panel Meeting
January 31 – February 2, 2017
Costa Mesa, California

Background

- ELAP was moved to the Water Board in 2014
- The Water Board commissioned an Expert Review Panel to make recommendations on how to improve ELAP
- We met you first in March 2015
 - You released a report of findings and recommendations in October 2015

Your Findings

- Poor credibility with the Stakeholder Community
- Lack of Effective Accreditation Process
- Absence of Routine Management Processes
- Inadequate Resources

Your Recommendations

- Establish a Management System
- Adopt Laboratory Accreditation Standards
- Ensure Relevant Analytical Methods
- Expand Resources
- Enhance Communication

We have embraced your recommendations

- As has the Water Board and executive management
- ELAP developed a Work Plan to implement your recommendations
 - We've filled you in on our progress over the last year during quarterly webinars
- Today we'll give you a more comprehensive update

Our Accomplishments

- ***We have adopted a management system***
- Improved program resources
- We have a plan to ensure relevant methods
- Selected a new laboratory accreditation standard
- Increased communications with stakeholders

Adopted a Management System

- We selected TNI, Volume 2 (2009)
 - Your report recommended this as one option
- Created a new Quality Manual and Standard Operating Procedures
- We are holding staff accountable
 - Roles and expectations are clearly defined

Implementation

- We are in early stages
 - But we are already seeing improved consistency in processes
- Further staff training on the SOPs is needed
 - We've scheduled trainings during the month of March

Our Accomplishments

- We are implementing a management system
- ***Improved program resources***
- We have a plan to ensure relevant methods
- Selected a new laboratory accreditation standard
- Increased communications with stakeholders

Improved Program Resources

- You identified a deficit in program resources
- We've taken several actions to address this:
 - Restructured ELAP
 - Increased staff training
 - Established a reciprocity process
 - Increased fees

Restructured ELAP

- We created specialized units
 - Enforcement Unit
 - Proficiency Testing (PT) Unit
 - Assessment Staff
 - Planning
- Previously, there was no separation of duties between staff
 - Staff managed themselves
 - Some tasks did not get done at all

Enforcement Unit

- Created an enforcement unit
 - Did not previously exist
- They investigate complaints and referrals
- You will hear at 9:45 how this is a game changer

Proficiency Testing (PT) Unit

- Created a Proficiency Testing Unit
 - ELAP was not evaluating PT results regularly
- We now evaluate annual and renewal year PT results for all laboratories
- We're in the process of securing funding for a PT database

Staff Training

- We are investing in ELAP staff
 - Technical trainings
 - Communications trainings
 - Customer service trainings
- The State Water Board has authorized \$1.5 million dollars for an external assessor training program
 - You'll hear more about this at 10:50

Reciprocity

- We have been able to partly address our backlog by establishing a reciprocity process
 - Certified 34 laboratories in 2016

Fees

- The Board increased ELAP fees to support the program
 - On track to be fully-fee funded
- Currently working with ELTAC on developing a revised structure

Our Accomplishments

- We are implementing a management system
- Improved program resources
- ***We have a plan to ensure relevant methods***
- Selected a new laboratory accreditation standard
- Increased communications with stakeholders

Ensuring Relevant Methods

- Short term: We updated our drinking water and wastewater FOTs to include current methods
 - Hazardous waste is in the works
- Long term: We will eliminate specific methods from our regulations
 - 2018 regulation package
 - Allows us to update Field of Testing lists as needed

Our Accomplishments

- We are implementing a management system
- Improved program resources
- We have a plan to ensure relevant methods
- ***Selected a new laboratory accreditation standard***
- Increased communications with stakeholders

Selected a Laboratory Accreditation Standard

- We recommended adoption of the 2016 TNI Standard
 - With modifications to ease implementation on laboratories
- We reached this point in collaboration with our agency clients and the laboratory community
- We'll hear more about this at 11:15

Our Accomplishments

- We are implementing a management system
- Improved program resources
- We have a plan to ensure relevant methods
- Selected a new laboratory accreditation standard
- ***Increased communications with stakeholders***

We're all in this together!



Increased Stakeholder Communications

- Rebuilt our technical advisory committee (ELTAC)
- Formed a new advisory body from representatives of the state agencies ELAP serves (State Agency Partners Committee)
- Established communications with the broader stakeholder community

ELTAC is Engaged

- They have met 7 times since March 2016
 - Only three meetings are required in the committee By-Laws
 - Communications between ELAP and ELTAC are positive and productive
- They are responding to our requests for advice on program reforms
 - And we communicate with them when we follow a different path

ELTAC Accomplishments

- Developed a mission statement
- Made four recommendations that ELAP has accepted:
 - Offer certification by analyte
 - Agency and laboratory coordination process for new regulatory needs
 - PT requirement for standard
 - Technical requirement for standard
- List of proposed modifications to the standard

State Agency Partners are Active

- Did not exist previously
 - Not only have they been formed, but they met 7 times in 2016
- What have they accomplished
 - Agency/lab coordination process for new methods
 - Defined mutual needs for lab standard deliberations
 - Verifying content of FOT lists
 - Reviewing potential modifications to standard

Communications with the laboratory community

- We've established new avenues to communicate with the community
 - Email/Phone
 - Website
 - Newsletter
 - Workshops
 - Panel webinars
- We anticipate further improving communications in 2017

Summing it All Up

- ELAP has taken your recommendations to heart
 - We have followed your advice as much as possible
 - We've made progress on all five recommendations
- Now we better understand the challenges of implementing an accreditation program for 700+ laboratories across a large state
 - Which brings me to my next presentation
 - But first, questions



Questions