



MEETING OF MEMBERS' REPRESENTATIVES ON NATA COUNCIL

24 May 2012

SUMMARY OF KEY ISSUES

- Blood refrigerators in hospitals

There was some discussion about the long-standing issue in regards to how deficiencies identified with the maintenance of blood storage refrigerators in hospitals (ie that are outside the control of pathology laboratories) can be communicated. This issue is now considered to have been resolved. The new Standard AS 3864 *Medical refrigeration equipment - For the storage of blood and blood products* is due for release this year, this extends the weekly alarm checks to monthly, so compliance may improve.

NATA now has the capacity to act when it is found on an assessment that a refrigerator outside of the control of the facility is not being maintained appropriately. To encourage action in such instances NATA will send a letter to the CE of the hospital or to the highest ranking official explaining they do not comply with the National Standards from the ACQSH or AS 3864. This is generally the only action NATA can take as it is outside our jurisdiction.

- Rules review

As previously advised, the NATA Rules underwent a complete review in 2011-2012. Inputs to the revision were sought from members. In particular feedback was sought in relation to the Council and Board and their composition, tenures and roles.

Recommendations are still to be endorsed by Board. Member consultation sessions are planned, as well as other feedback opportunities. Changes to the Rules will require adoption by members at an Annual General Meeting. The likely timeframe for the completion of the Rules review is now end 2013.

- New Charter of Service (CoS)

Revised CoS standard timeframes have been agreed by NATA's Executive. The first phase of changes will be in place from 1 July 2012 with a second phase to be implemented from 1 July 2013.

Changes from 1 July 2012:

- Service Standard 1 – 4 wks
- Service Standard 3 – 12 wks (from July 2013 – 8 wks)
- Service Standard 5 – 4 wks (from July 2013 – 2 wks)
- Service Standard 6 – 4 wks
- Service Standard 7 – 6 wks (from July 2013 – 4 wks)
- Service Standard 9 – 4 wks

- Integrated Accreditation Implementation

Since the last Members' Representatives meeting held in May 2011 there has been an internal restructure to improve the management and delivery of NATA's accreditation activities.

The following changes have been adopted since 2011 Members' Representatives meeting:

- realignment of positions occurred in last quarter of 2011 to focus either on service delivery or technical management

- Service Delivery
 - Service Delivery Manager and Accreditation Managers (AMs) appointed
 - reorganisation of accreditation staff reporting to AMs (discontinuation of staff reporting to Field / Program Managers)
 - title of accreditation staff is now Client Coordinator (CC) or Senior CC
 - January 2012 - each accredited facility has been appointed a coordinator to manage their immediate accreditation needs
- Technical Management
 - fields and programs grouped and managed as sectors
 - coordinated process for training NATA staff and technical assessors by appointing a Professional Development Manager
 - training provided in December 2011 to all staff on client management issues
 - shortly all accreditation staff to have refresher training on assessment report writing
 - external provider sourced to offer management training to AMs in second half of 2012
- Assessment Effort

In principle, it is not necessary during assessments for every activity (covering different specimens, matrices or materials), process or technique (however named) covered by a facility's scope of accreditation to be assessed. This acknowledges the fact that core competencies involved between one method and another may be the same.

Each field / program has identified core competency areas based on either disciplines, principles, techniques, matrices, materials, sample types (or combination of these). Having these defined allows assessments to be structured around the review of each competency, minimising the duplication of assessment effort

- Scopes of Accreditation

A project has commenced to review the format of the scopes of accreditation by mid 2012.. The aim of the project is to introduce a uniform format for scopes across all fields and programs. The scopes of accreditation will be presented in a tabular format. Feedback will be sought shortly from members, regulators & specifiers and end-users.

- Removal of NATA approved signatories

Signatory approval process now applies only to CMT, Calibration and RMP. CMT has a transition policy for removal of signatories effective until 2013. Calibration and RMP will release a policy shortly.

NATA approved signatories (however named) will continue to apply in those areas where there is a regulatory requirement or where NATA has an agreement e.g. MoU or deed, with a third party.

- Format of members meetings

A paper was provided to stimulate discussion on the future format for how NATA might engage with its members and assessors, including the traditional state/territory based meeting of NATA members and assessors.

A number of options were put forward and discussed including webinars. Information and suggestions contained in the paper will be provided to NATA's members in the near future for their input.