



UNITED STATES ANIMAL HEALTH ASSOCIATION

Resolution

114th Annual Meeting ~ November 11-17, 2010

Minneapolis, MN

RESOLUTION NUMBER: 21 APPROVED

SOURCE: USAHA/AAVLD COMMITTEE ON NAHLN

SUBJECT MATTER: NATIONAL ANIMAL HEALTH LABORATORY NETWORK
LABORATORY ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

The National Animal Health Laboratory Network (NAHLN) serves the nation's animal and public health communities through a state and federal partnership to ensure standardized, coordinated, and quality assured laboratory services. The NAHLN has evolved from an initial laboratory network structure involving 12 "core" laboratories to a network of 60 core, member, and contract laboratories. In 2007, the NAHLN Phase I review recommended that the current NAHLN laboratory network structure be reassessed to design an optimal network structure to achieve the current and future goals of the NAHLN. There has been limited progress made on that recommendation.

RESOLUTION:

The United States Animal Health Association (USAHA) recommends that the National Animal Health Laboratory Network (NAHLN) Coordinating Council place the highest priority on development of a draft model or models of NAHLN laboratory organizational structure (for example, numbers, types and responsibilities of laboratories) that best adheres to NAHLN principles, achieves the NAHLN objectives and delivers needed laboratory services to all stakeholders for disease surveillance, response and recovery; and that is consistent with available resources. It is intended that the model or models be shared broadly among all NAHLN stakeholders for input, feedback and modification once drafts are developed.

USAHA also recommends that an ad hoc working group be convened by the Coordinating Council to develop this draft model, and that this working group should include at minimum livestock industry representation, selected members of the NAHLN Coordinating Council, and other subject matter experts.

INTERIM RESPONSE:

The U.S. Department of Agriculture, Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, Veterinary Services (VS) appreciates the interest of the United States Animal Health Association (USAHA) in developing a model of the National Animal Health Laboratory Network (NAHLN) laboratory organizational structure. The NAHLN Coordinating Council has made discussing an optimal network structure based on strategic planning a priority in 2011. The Council's face-to-face meeting held on February 28 and March 1, 2011, focused on strategic planning and organizational structure and included stakeholder representatives solicited through the USAHA American Association of Veterinary Laboratory Diagnosticians (AAVLD) Committee on NAHLN. The preliminary draft models developed through these discussions will be provided to the

USAHA/AAVLD Committee on the NAHLN. In addition, there will be multiple opportunities provided in the future for discussions and input on the proposed models from the livestock industry, emergency management, and State animal health officials, as well as opportunities to seek feedback from all other NAHLN stakeholders.

FINAL RESPONSE:

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS), Veterinary Services (VS) recognizes the concerns of the United States Animal Health Association (USAHA) and appreciates the opportunity to respond.

The National Animal Health Laboratory Network (NAHLN) Coordinating Council met on February 28 to March 1, 2011. The NAHLN Coordinating Council members represent NAHLN laboratories, the American Association of Veterinary Laboratory Diagnosticians (AAVLD), State Animal Health officials, Veterinary Services (VS), and the National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA). Industry representatives also participated in the meeting to provide their perspective. Discussions focused on strategic planning of laboratory network structures and a review of the NAHLN mission, vision, and function. The models and a series of questions developed from the meeting were shared with stakeholders through the USAHA/AAVLD Committee on NAHLN in August and September. Feedback from stakeholders will be discussed at the September meeting of the NAHLN Coordinating Council. A summary of the comments will be discussed at the USAHA/AAVLD annual meeting. Additional opportunities for stakeholder input will be provided on future revisions by the NAHLN Coordinating Council.