

Regional Toxicology Liaison – Quarterly Reflection and Progress Report

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Quarter reported: January – March, 2024

One of the goals for the RTL program in 2024 is to provide training for forensic toxicology laboratories on drug testing method development and validation. This has been the most often requested training topic by the laboratories. For three days, March 26-28, 2024, the RTLs held a four-hour training each day. Day one focused on the American Academy of Forensic Sciences (AAFS) Standards Board (ASB) documents. The ASB standards [036](#), Standard Practices for Method Validation in Forensic Toxicology, [017](#), Standard Practices for Measurement Traceability in Forensic Toxicology and [056](#), Standard for Evaluation of Measurement Uncertainty in Forensic Toxicology were presented. Details on the documents, as well as guidance for implementation, were discussed. Day two went into greater detail with laboratory experiences on how they've developed methods and insight to streamline the process for greater efficiency. The second half of day 2 was spent in breakout rooms with each LCMSMS vendor. There, laboratories could ask specific questions unique to their instrumentation and gain insight into troubleshooting and testing strategies. Finally, day 3 covered High Resolution Mass Spectrometry (HRMS), as many laboratories are now acquiring instruments such as Quadrupole Time of Flight Mass Spectrometry (QToF). The second half of day 3 was similar to day 2, however, the focus of the breakout sessions was QToF instrumentation. There were approximately 70 attendees daily, and the presentations and breakout sessions were recorded. Those in laboratories outside NHTSA regions 5, 7, and 9 or who could not attend the workshop can access the recorded link. Feedback from the three-day workshop has been highly positive, with requests to continue the breakout sessions in the future. The RTLs are working with SOFT to create a discussion board on the SOFT website to facilitate discussions and determine the best way to continue the method development and validation training.

During 2023, the RTLs could not reach all states and laboratories to provide testimony training. Responsibility.org has agreed to fund the training again so the remaining toxicologists can attend. In addition to the testimony training, Responsibility.org is funding statewide toxicology partner summits in region 7. After the completion of the meetings in region 7, the RTLs will assess the ability to hold these meetings in the rest of the states in the regions that have yet to participate. Illinois is experiencing challenges with a laboratory that has closed recently and the impact that has had on the state. They have requested a statewide toxicology partners meeting. Dr. Jones (R5 RTL) and Amy Miles will organize and moderate the Illinois meeting. Funding has yet to be identified for this meeting.

Upcoming events

The RTLs have been invited to present at the Lifesavers Conference in April. There is a meeting between the JOLs, LELs and TSRPs to which the RTLs have been invited. The RTLs intend to use both the collaborative meeting and the presentation during the conference to further promote the RTL program.

Quarterly meetings will continue for the RTLs for the regions. Suggested topics from the laboratories include management and leadership training, more information on method development and validation, and guidance on how to implement the ASB documents.

The National Alliance to Stop Impaired Driving (NASID) is planning a conference for November of this year. The RTLs have been included in the planning of the content for the conference and will be

organizing and moderating a panel. In addition, Dr. Jones will be creating a panel that will focus on mental health challenges as they relate to impaired drivers.

Project challenges:

The last two years have been extremely busy for the RTLs. What was thought to potentially be a 40 hour a week position has proven to be just that and more. There was not enough time and bandwidth to provide the testimony training to all of the laboratories in the three represented regions and the RTLs will have to continue this effort in 2024.

The program continues to receive assistance requests from states outside of the three regions. Oregon has asked for testimony training by July as they have transitioned from testing urine as the primary matrix to blood. Along with this change brings the need to provide training to the toxicologists to understand the differences in interpretation between blood and urine. The RTLs are going to try to fulfill this request, the Oregon State Police Laboratory has offered to provide funding for two of the RTLs to travel to Oregon and provide the training.

There is some concern that the RTLs do not have the capability to serve their current regions and the addition of more regions into their positions will be a struggle. If this occurs, the program will continue to assess the needs and determine if one RTL is needed for each region.

As always, the Buy America Act continues to hamper efforts to procure much-needed testing instrumentation using highway safety funding. The DUID Toolkit and related funding provided by NHTSA was very useful, but further funding and unique ways to circumvent the BAA are required.

Future goals:

Standardization is the primary goal for the RTLs in 2024. The laboratories must achieve the same testing standards to compare data within and between states. The March method development and validation workshop was useful in getting feedback from the laboratories as to whether or not they have adopted the ASB standards. Many are in progress and have requested assistance. The RTLs will continue to provide training on this topic throughout the year. Webinars targeting each of the standards and the process for implementation will be provided throughout 2024 in collaboration with the SOFT Continuing Education Committee.

The laboratories have expressed great appreciation for the RTLs meeting with them in person. More laboratory visits and meetings are planned for each region throughout the year.

SOFT's Toxicology Resource Committee has requested the RTLs assist in a full-scale salary survey for forensic toxicologists. The PM has met with the authors of a triennial clinical toxicology salary report and will be using this model to create a survey specific to forensic toxicology. Reported outcomes from the clinical toxicology survey include gender equalization of salary and better data for regional pay scales.

See Appendix for full list of activities and financial report

Appendix

RTL Activities Q1, 2024

R5 Q1, 2024 Activities:

Recurring:

RTL weekly meetings – Wednesday each week.

Minnesota DWI Taskforce–Monthly

Minnesota Office of Traffic Safety Staff Meeting – Monthly

Illinois Impaired Driving Task Force Meeting – Monthly

Wisconsin Impaired Driving Work Group - Quarterly

National Safety Council – Alcohol Drug and Impairment Division – Model DUI Law meeting - No set time or date.

National Safety Council – Alcohol Drug and Impairment Division – Cannabis in Safety Sensitive Positions – Meet every two weeks

National Safety Council – Alcohol Drug and Impairment Division – Cannabis Section – Monthly

National Safety Council – Alcohol Drug and Impairment Division –Position Statement on Adoption of Consensus-Based Standards and Laboratory Accreditation- No set time or date.

Academy Standards Board – Toxicology Consensus Body and Leadership Meetings – Monthly

Organizational Scientific Area Committees (OSAC)/Academy Standards Board Leadership Meetings – Monthly

Academy Standards Board – Toxicology Consensus Body Working Group Technical Report Terms and Definitions- No set time or date.

Academy Standards Board – Toxicology Consensus Body Working Group BPR 037-Guidelines for Opinions and Testimony in Forensic Toxicology- No set time or date.

Academy Standards Board – Toxicology Consensus Body Working Group 173 Standard for Education and Training of Forensic Toxicology Personnel –Weekly Meetings

Forensic Science Oversight Board Meeting (MA) – Monthly

RecoveryOhio Drug Trends Meeting - Monthly

Past Single event:

RTL Q1 Quarterly Meeting-Virtual, January 16, 2024

Region 5 JOL/TSRP Meeting - Presenting on Marijuana-Virtual, January 22, 2024

Michigan’s Prosecuting Attorneys Association Presentation “Advanced OWI Prosecutions-Toxicology”, February 15, 2024

Michigan’s Traffic Safety Summit and Michigan State Police Toxicology Laboratory Visit, Lansing, MI, March 11-13, 2024

Michigan Post DWI Deaths and Toxicology Data Meeting, March 18, 2024

Michigan’s Governor’s Traffic Safety Advisory Commission Meeting, March 19, 2024

RTL Method Validation Training – Virtual, March 26-28, 2024

Upcoming Activities:

Midwest Association for Toxicology and Therapeutic Drug Monitoring Annual Meeting, Chicago, IL

Presentation “What Is Happening in the Midwest? RTL NHTSA Regions 5 and 7 Update”, April 4-5, 2024

Lifesavers Conference, LEL/JOL/TSRP/RTL meeting – Presenting on RTL program, April 6-9, 2024

Spring Judicial College Indiana, Presentation “Cosmic Caution: Toxicology”, Indianapolis, IN, April 10, 2024

National Traffic Safety Resource Prosecutor Annual Meeting, Presenting on RTL program, Grand Rapids, MI, May 9, 2024

Current Trends in Forensic Toxicology, Chair, May 20-24, 2024

Region 5 JOL/TSRP Meeting, May 20, 2024

Michigan’s Governor’s Traffic Safety Advisory Commission, June 4, 2024

Minnesota Testimony Training – June 12-13, 2024

Illinois Forensic Science Commission Meeting, June 18, 2024

R7 Q1, 2024 Activities:

Recurring:

RTL weekly meetings – Wednesday each week.

R7 Monthly State conference call – Last Tuesday each month

National Safety Council – Alcohol Drug and Impairment Division – Executive Board – Secretary, member of Administrative Committee.

Society of Forensic Toxicologists – monthly Board of Directors Meetings

Additional SOFT Activities include – Current President Elect, Member of the Finance Committee,

Member of the Toxicology Resource Committee, Co-Editor of ToxTalk, mentor in SOFT

Mentoring Program, monthly meetings for 2024 Annual meeting in St. Louis.

OSAC Toxicology Subcommittee Monthly meetings

Additional OSAC work includes participation on the Alcohol Standard Methods subcommittee.

AAFS Academy Standards Board – Working on committee updating document ASB 017 Measurement Traceability, working on committee publishing document ASB 122 Alcohol Calculations.

Midwest Toxicology Collaborative – Round Table – monthly meetings

NASID Conference Planning Committee – scheduled meetings to plan 2024 meeting.

NDAA Breath Testing for Prosecutors Monograph – scheduled meetings to rewrite monograph.

Past Single event:

Planning and Coordination meeting for continued Testimony Training Curriculum – ongoing with RTL Meetings

American Academy of Forensic Sciences Meeting, Denver, CO, February 19-23, 2024

Moderator of Scientific Session – Friday, February 23, 2024

National Safety Council Division Meeting – Denver, CO, February 18, 2024

Missouri Impaired Driving Subcommittee Meeting – February 9, 2024

Nebraska Traffic Safety Conference – February 26-29, 2024

Virtual Meetings with all R7 laboratories – March 1, 4, 2024

Method Development and Validation Webinar – All region’s laboratories March 26-28, 2024

Upcoming Activities:

Planning and scheduling R7 State Assessments in 2024

OSAC in-person meeting – Indianapolis, IA April 1-5, 2024

TSRP/JOL/LEL/RTL Conference – Denver, CO April 5-6, 2024

Lifesavers Conference (Speaker) – Denver, CO April 7-9, 2024

Southwest Association of Toxicologists (Speaker), Dallas, TX, April 10-12, 2024

International Association of Chemical Testing (Speaker, Workshop Chair), La Jolla, CA, April 21-26, 2024

R9, Q1 2024 Activities:

Recurring:

Weekly RTL Meetings

Monthly Meetings with NHTSA R9

Various emails with lab staff (ten labs) within R9

Various email communication with the RTL Group

Document preparations for RTL Group

CA Impaired Driving Task Force March, May, and Nov 8th are intermittent.

CA Impaired Driving Task Force Subcommittee Meetings: Prevention Subcommittee (Chair) and Screening, Assessment and Treatment Subcommittee

Past Single Events:

RTL Quarterly Meeting – Jan

Method Development Validation Training – March 26-28, 2024

SOFT TRC Meeting

NSC-ADID Half Day Meeting

Method Development Meetings with Presenters

Meetings with AZ Labs regarding Testimony Training

NASID Member Meeting

NHTSA R 10 Oral Fluid Presentation

Upcoming Events:

R9 Partners Meeting – April 10-11, 2024

Lifesavers – TSRP/JOL/LE – Meeting – Presentation on RTL program, April 6-9, 2024

NorCal Testimony Training – Summer 2024

CAT Spring Meeting May 2024

SFME Testimony Training – May 2024

SOFT Meeting Oct 2024

CAT Meeting – Fall 2024

SoCal Testimony Training – December 2024

NASID Planning Meetings

MN Testimony Training

Meet with six more labs

Possible GHSA Meeting