

# ***National Molecular Microbiology Diagnostic User Group (NMG)***

## **TERMS OF REFERENCE**

### **1. Background**

Diagnostic molecular microbiology testing is routinely performed in federal, provincial, regional and local public health, hospital and private laboratories across Canada. Currently, NMG provides the dedicated framework to guide, direct, or facilitate the standardization of molecular diagnostic microbiology testing in partnership with other organizations on evidence based best practices.

The National Molecular Microbiology Diagnostics User Group (NMG) was established to enhance collaboration between laboratory services by facilitating networking and communication related to any or all molecular assay or platform development, selection, evaluation (validation / verification), quality assurance, and implementation in diagnostic laboratories. The NMG strives to develop a sustainable “info-structure” related to molecular diagnostics for infectious diseases, provide guiding leadership in this arena, and ultimately, contribute to improved patient care for Canadians.

### **2. Mission Statement**

To provide a forum for an integrated, collaborative national network of clinical microbiology laboratory experts to support education in the arena of molecular diagnostics for infectious diseases.

### **3. Goals and Objectives**

#### **Goals**

1. Provide a forum for communication of advances in clinical molecular diagnostic methods, discussion of method development, evaluation, standardization, and troubleshooting.
2. Develop processes for sharing methods, specimens, data and information.
3. Make recommendations and collaborate with groups setting standards and developing proficiency tools and regulatory policy.
4. Advise members on standardization of quality control and quality assurance programs for molecular diagnostic methods.
5. Offer expert opinion for governmental and non-governmental groups setting technical standards related to molecular diagnostics in clinical microbiology.

#### **Objectives**

1. Organize and host an annual conference for NMG members and representatives from industry in order to provide a forum for face to face discussions of practical molecular diagnostic laboratory issues and advances in diagnostic testing technology.

2. Develop tools to assist with test development and/or evaluation in the area of clinical molecular diagnostics (e.g. challenge testing materials supply and/or exchange).
3. Utilize web-board communication to develop a forum for discussion of testing-related issues, projects, validation, and research.
4. Assist in coordination of molecular testing capabilities for clinical microbiology laboratories through education and expert advice.
5. Identify, prioritize and assist in obtaining member funding for projects related to clinical molecular diagnostics.

#### **4. Operating Principles**

The NMG is a voluntary-membership, non-regulatory and not-for-profit corporation governed by its bylaws, which in turn are compliant with the *Canada Not-For-Profit Corporations Act S.C. 2009, C.23*.

The NMG shall respect the mandates and roles of all its partners and work together in a way that will enhance their efforts.

Although individuals from the diagnostics industry will not be members of the NMG, the NMG will collaborate and liaise with industry to discuss current and future methodology and the development of new assays and platforms.

#### **5. Governance**

The business of NMG shall be run by a board of directors ("the board"; formerly referred to as the core working group).

##### **5.1. Board of Directors Structure and Terms of Service**

###### *Structure*

The NMG board shall be composed of no fewer than 6 and no more than 20 members, including the chair and vice-chair, secretary, and treasurer. Two or more offices may be held by the same person.

###### *Terms of service*

**Chair:** The board chair is elected or appointed for a two-year term followed by a two-year term as past chair (6 years total).

**Vice chair:** The board vice chair is elected or appointed for a two-year term followed by a two-year term as chair and two-year term as past chair.

**Treasurer:** The treasurer will be nominated and elected for a two-year term. The treasurer term is renewable two times in two-year increments (ie. A total of six years). The incumbent may be extended beyond 6 years in the

absence of a successor contingent on board approval.

**Secretary:** The secretary will be nominated and approved for a two-year term. The secretary term is renewable two times in two-year increments. The incumbent may be extended beyond 6 years in the absence of a successor contingent on board approval.

**Conference chair:** The conference chair will be nominated and approved for a two-year term. The meeting chair term is renewable in two-year increments in perpetuity contingent on the individual being in active employment at the location of the conference to allow for use of the conference facilities.

Other members of the board are nominated and approved for a term of two years (renewable for 2 terms, a total of 6 years).

The board can review membership status annually of delinquent board members who often miss meetings and/or teleconferences where there has been no communication regarding their absence with the NMG. If efforts to correct this lack of engagement fail, the board may move to remove the member. A majority (quorum with 50% plus 1) vote is required to remove an individual from the board.

Board members who are no longer practicing laboratory professionals (as per this document, section 5.4 paragraph 1), but for professional reasons wish to remain on the board for the remainder of their current term, must apply to the Board of Directors within three (3) months of their change of employment status. Requests will only be considered if the member's new employment status is not in conflict with section 5.2, paragraph 2 of this document.

The process followed is:

1. Notification to the board of employment status change/request for continued membership, via the Chair (if the member in question is the Chair, notification is via the Vice chair).
2. Request brought to a meeting of the remaining members of the board by the Chair (or Vice chair), and subject to a vote by these members. A special meeting may be called if a regular board meeting is not scheduled within a month of notification.
3. Approval of a request requires a majority (quorum with 50% plus 1) vote in favour by the remaining members of the board. If no request for continued membership is made or if the request is denied, the member will be removed from the board.

Should a board member be removed or decide to resign during their term, a replacement (to serve for the balance of the term) will be nominated and voted by the remaining members of the board. If no active board member successfully fills the open position, the general membership will be engaged to fill the position.

## 5.2 Board of Directors Roles and Responsibilities

The board is responsible for directing the activities of the NMG and for working collectively to organize and host the annual NMG conference.

No member of the NMG board shall be remunerated for being or acting as a member

of the board, nor shall any member of the board benefit financially by virtue of his/her being or acting as a member of the board. Further, members of the board cannot be representatives of the diagnostic products industry, represent interests benefitting commercially from diagnostic product development, sales or service, or have a financial relationship with any molecular diagnostic commercial enterprise.

Members of the board shall commit to attending scheduled meetings, actively participate in the work of the board and the NMG, and to make timely decisions and take action as to not hold up the work of the board and the NMG.

### 5.3 Meetings of the board

The board will meet (via teleconference) at least quarterly with *ad hoc* meetings called by the chair when necessary. An in-person meeting of the board will also be held at the annual NMG conference. Meetings will proceed when quorum is achieved, 50% of board members plus 1.

### 5.4 Nominations to the Board

Members of the board must have a minimum of 2 years of professional work laboratory expertise in clinical molecular diagnostics of infectious diseases and shall represent federal, provincial, territorial, or regional public health laboratories, or hospital or private microbiology laboratories. Trainees are not eligible for board membership. The NMG will attempt to obtain representation from each jurisdiction and geographical region.

Nominations and expressions of interest to fill board vacancies will be communicated to the general membership when registration for the annual conference is announced. Upcoming vacancies may be communicated by any member of the board throughout the year, up to and including the annual NMG conference meeting of members. Voting for nominees occurs at the meeting of members held during the annual NMG conference.

## **6. Amendments to the NMG Terms of Reference**

- 6.1 Minor amendments to the Terms of Reference may be made by the board chair and vice-chair. These are subject to ratification by the board at the next board teleconference or board meeting at the annual NMG conference.
- 6.2 The Terms of Reference may be further amended at any meeting of the NMG by vote of the general membership.

## **7. NMG Finances**

- 7.1 The NMG is a registered not-for-profit corporation. The behaviors and practices of the NMG and its board members are governed by the corporation's bylaws, which *are* compliant with the *Canada Not-For-Profit Corporations Act S.C. 2009, C.23*.
- 7.2 Funds will be sought by from a variety of sources to promote and sustain the efforts of the NMG, and these will be used for no other purpose than the furtherance of the NMG's goals and objectives. All expenses incurred by the corporation in pursuit of

these goals and objectives will be borne from funds raised by it.

## **8. NMG Membership**

Membership in NMG is voluntary and is open to all health care professionals working in the field of molecular diagnostics in a clinical microbiology laboratory, including individuals performing research or training in this field. Industry representatives are not eligible for NMG membership.

- 8.1 Applications for membership must be made to the secretary using the appropriate form and must be renewed annually.
- 8.2 Applications for membership are subject to approval by the board.
- 8.3 A member shall cease to be a member on death, expulsion, disqualification or surrender.
- 8.4 The NMG shall maintain an electronic register of the names and addresses of its members and these will be published or shared with industry with the individual's permission.

## **9. Annual NMG Conference**

- 9.1 Barring extraordinary circumstances (e.g. public health or geopolitical), the NMG shall hold an annual conference in each financial year, at such hour, date and place as the board shall determine.
- 9.2 Barring extraordinary circumstances (e.g. public health or geopolitical), not more than 15 months shall elapse between the date of one annual conference and that of the next.
- 9.3 The notice of the time and place of the annual meeting shall be ~~communicated~~ communicated to all members 3 months in advance with no less than 21 days of a reminder notice.

## **10. Annual Meeting of Members**

The meeting of members scheduled during the annual NMG conference will provide the general membership with updates of the items discussed during board teleconferences and the progress of NMG initiatives throughout the year. The meeting of members also provides a forum for planning of NMG activities, voting to pass resolutions put forward by the board and by the general membership, nominating and voting in board members, and presentation of the corporation's annual financial accounts and of the auditor's report.

### **10.1 Quorum at the Annual Conference's Meeting of Members**

No business shall be considered unless quorum is present. Quorum shall be constituted for all purposes by the majority (50% plus 1) of board members and the majority (50% plus 1) of general members in attendance at the meeting of members.

- 10.2 If quorum is not attained within half an hour after the start time appointed for the Meeting of Members, the meeting may continue at the discretion of the board chair,

but no voting may take place.

## **11. Dissolution of NMG**

NMG may at any time be dissolved by an instrument of dissolution approved by a Special Resolution. Upon dissolution, and following payment in full of all NMG creditors, any funds found surplus shall be distributed to another association having similar missions, aims, and goals.