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# Transitioning from the National QA Standards to ISO Accreditation

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Forensic Quality Services

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# Forensic Quality Services

- Not-for-profit corporation
  - Separated from NFSTC January 2004
  - FQS
    - Training and education
    - Needs analysis
    - Laboratory Services
  - FQS-/
    - ISO Accreditation
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# Board of Directors and Members

## ■ Board of Directors

- ❑ Ben Perillo, (Chairman), West Palm Beach Sheriff's Laboratory
- ❑ Bill Tilstone, (President)
- ❑ Arthur Eisenberg, University of North Texas
- ❑ Kathy Lee, Georgia Bureau of Investigation
- ❑ Sudhir Sinha, Reliagene
- ❑ Manuel Valadez, Texas DPS

## ■ Members

- ❑ Barry A J Fisher, Los Angeles County Sheriff's Laboratory
  - ❑ Clifton Vander Ark, Arizona DPS
  - ❑ All organizations accredited by FQS-I
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# ISO Accreditation?

- International Organization for Standardization
  - Standards are documented agreements of technical specifications or other criteria to ensure that materials, products, processes and services are fit for their purpose
  - Credit, phone and 'smart' cards derived from an ISO standard
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# FQS-I

- ISO 17025 Accreditation to forensic labs including specialist areas
    - Crime Labs
    - DNA Labs
    - Environmental
    - Racing Labs
  - Auditor Selection
    - QAS and NDIS Requirements
  - Accreditation Decision Making Process
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# NACLA Recognition

- National Cooperation for Laboratory Accreditation
  - Nonprofit corporation
    - Coordinate laboratory accreditation activities within US
    - Serve as US link to worldwide lab accreditation system
  - Evaluate ABs and grant recognition to those found to meet ISO/IEC guide 58 (soon to be ISO 17011)
  - ABs judged competent then invited to sign NACLA Mutual Recognition Agreement (consider each other's accreditation as technically equivalent)
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# NACLA Recognition

- FQS-I recognized by NACLA for ISO 17025 accreditation within the scope of forensic science
  - One of only 7 recognized ABs and the only one with scope of forensic science
  - Accreditations provided through FQS-I since NACLA requires independence of operations from the parent company
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# NDIS Procedures Board Recognition

- FQS-I recognized by the NDIS Procedures Board as meeting the requirements to accredit laboratories participating in NDIS or seeking to participate in NDIS.
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# NIJ Grant Funding

*“Are accredited by a nonprofit professional association actively involved in forensic science that is nationally recognized within the forensic science community, such as the American Society of Crime Laboratory Directors/Laboratory Accreditation Board (ASCLD/LAB) or Forensic Quality Services (FQS)”*

*Forensic Casework DNA Backlog Reduction Grant*

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# FQS-I Program Changes

- Legacy 'DNA certification of compliance' no longer being offered
  - ISO accreditation only
  - Other labs transitioned with no significant difficulties
  - Laboratories can choose whether to apply for accreditation in all areas, or just a few, or even start with one so that they can introduce the benefit of accreditation in a step-wise manner to the laboratory.
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# Gaps between ISO and the DNA Standards

- Document control – ISO 4.3
  - Review of requests – ISO 4.4
  - Some aspects of purchasing – ISO 4.6
  - Service to the customer – ISO 4.7
  - Complaints – ISO 4.8
  - Control of non-conforming testing – ISO 4.9
  - Preventive action – ISO 4.11
  - Management review – ISO 4.14
  - Safety – DNA Standard 16
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# Conclusions

- FQS-I has successfully transitioned several laboratories from DNA certifications
  - Not difficult
  - Not something to be afraid of!
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# For Further Information

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