

COLA PRIMER 10

## ***THE POST-SURVEY PROCESS***

## ●After the Surveyor Leaves●

We strive to maintain a successful ongoing relationship with you.

The Survey Report and Cover Letter (a summation of citations) OR a letter indicating zero citations and your COLA Certificate of Accreditation will appear in the COLAcentral® Document Repository within ten business days.

*Once you receive your post survey letter, read it carefully and make note of any deadlines.*

## ●If No Citations Were Received●

Surveys that result in zero citations do not require a response.

A Perfect Survey or Laboratory Excellence Award (LEA) letter will appear in the Document Repository on COLAcentral® within 10 days of your survey along with your COLA Certificate of Accreditation. Your certificate will also be mailed to the laboratory.

You will not receive a Survey Report (other than the above letter).

## ●If Citations Were Received●

Please submit your signature on page 5 of the survey report. This signature indicates your agreement to follow the Plan of Required Improvement (PRI).

Your survey report will contain a table of citations. **If the far-right column of the table, titled “Send to COLA,” contains no text**, further submissions are not necessary and corrective actions will be reviewed at the next survey.

*Review the materials in the Education Resource Center and Solutions Library on COLAcentral® for helpful information on best practices. For further assistance call COLA’s Technical Advisors.*

Your COLA Certificate of Accreditation will be posted to the COLAcentral® Document Repository once the signed agreement is received, unless your survey report contains text in the “Send to COLA” column (see below).

## ●If Documentation is Required●

Specific document requests will be listed in the “Send to COLA” column on the table of citations within your Survey Report and Cover Letter. Corrective actions are due within

30 days of the date of the survey report.

Documentation can be uploaded to the COLAcentral® Document Repository or faxed to (410) 381 8611 (with your COLA ID on each fax page, please).

*Please do not email post-survey documentation to a specific individual at COLA. Should that employee be out of the office, your documents are not accessible for other staff to review and process.*

It helps the COLA team expedite the review if each submission is uploaded separately and labeled with the corresponding citation. Highlighting and/or circling relevant portions of documents also helps.

Please make sure protected health information is redacted from submissions and your COLA ID number is present on all pages.

### ●If Documentation Has Been Submitted●

It may take up to **30 days from the due date** for us to complete the preliminary review.

We appreciate your patience as your items are placed in a queue with submissions from other laboratories prioritized by due dates. Submitting items early may not necessarily guarantee an early review. We will only contact your laboratory if documentation is not acceptable or more information is required.

### ●If More Documentation is Needed●

If the documentation is incomplete or a response is not deemed sufficient, a **Partial Documentation letter will be posted** to the Document Repository and COLA staff will email the laboratory to explain what is still needed. The additional documentation will be due within 14 days of the date on the partial documentation letter.

*For this reason It is imperative that laboratory contact information be kept up to date on COLAcentral®.*

Once all items submitted are reviewed and found to be satisfactory, **your COLA Certificate of Accreditation will be posted to the COLAcentral® Document Repository** and a copy mailed to the laboratory. This is the last step in the survey process.

### ●If More Time is Needed●

**COLA staff will automatically EXTEND YOUR DEADLINE by 2 weeks as long as you are actively submitting documents/updates to COLAcentral®** (in the Document Repository) for the first two months after your survey; this includes the signed agreement (page 5 of

the Survey Report and Cover Letter) or a letter requesting additional time.

### ●If Questions Remain●

**A list of corrective actions to be taken is not sufficient;** we will be looking for documentation or data with a summary assessment reflecting that a change or process improvement has been made to correct the underlying issue. For example, this could include, but is not limited to, documentation of newly implemented calendar reminders, completed overdue maintenance or calibrations, updated signed policies and procedures or method validation data.

**An even more detailed response is expected for repeat citations.** Our Technical Advisors expect to see a completed corrective action process with details about the steps taken to correct problems that were cited. For example, it would be more appropriate to respond to a repeat Quality Assessment (QA) citation with a completed QA review, rather than a template or a calendar indicating when the review will occur.

**If it has been over 30 days since the due date for documentation and you have not received a certificate** or any follow-up communications (such as partial documentation letters on COLAcentral®), please call us to discuss timelines, due dates and materials required as it is important that deadlines are met in a timely manner.

*It is important to ask any questions you have about the documentation required to demonstrate compliance with COLA's accreditation standards; we look forward to seeing you at the next survey.*