



U.S. Citizenship
and Immigration
Services

HQOPRD 70/8

Interoffice Memorandum

To: Field Operations
Office of Refugee, Asylum and International Operations
Regional Directors
District Directors
Service Center Directors
Officers-in-Charge

From: William R. Yates /S/
Associate Director
Operations

Date: April 7, 2005

Re: List of American Association of Blood Banks (AABB)
Accredited Parentage Testing Laboratories

Revisions to *Adjudicator's Field Manual (AFM)* Chapter 21.2
and Appendix 21-3 (*AFM* Update AD 05-10)

This memorandum advises the above-stated U. S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) offices how to obtain a current list of the American Association of Blood Banks (AABB) accredited parentage testing laboratories. The AABB accredited laboratories perform parentage testing, also referred to as blood testing or DNA testing.

The AABB list of accredited parentage testing laboratories was last circulated in January 2002. *See* Memo, Pearson, Ex. Assoc. Comm. Field Operations, HQADN (Jan. 17, 2002). Since that time, many of the laboratories on the AABB list have changed addresses, phone numbers and names. Therefore, it is necessary to provide a current list of AABB accredited parentage testing labs. The current AABB list can be viewed at: http://www.aabb.org/About_the_AABB/StdS_and_Accred/aboutptlabs.htm.

Because the AABB frequently updates its list, a paper list of the AABB facilities will no longer be provided. Instead, USCIS offices should provide the above-stated AABB website link via the attached Fact Sheet to petitioners whenever blood testing or DNA testing information is requested. The AABB link stated above has also been added to the USCIS website FAQs section to insure that the public and USCIS offices have ongoing access to the current AABB list.

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Please note that the AABB no longer provides phone or address contact information for its accredited laboratories due to the transient nature of this information. Instead, only the headquarters or primary location for each laboratory is provided. Many of the laboratories listed have multi-state and/or multi-site locations despite being listed under only one state. Therefore, it is necessary to go to the website for the selected AABB laboratory to identify all locations and contact information for that particular laboratory.

The policy regarding all DNA testing as a means of establishing a claimed parental relationship remains as delineated in the Memorandum issued by legacy INS entitled "*Guidance on Parentage Testing for Family-Based Immigrant Visa Petitions.*" See Memo, Cronin, Acting Ex. Assoc. Comm., Programs, HQADN (July 14, 2000).

Questions regarding the actual parentage testing procedures or test results should be directed to the parentage testing laboratory selected by the petitioner. Service personnel with questions relating to this memorandum may contact Susan Kopp Keyack through appropriate channels.

Accordingly, the *AFM* is revised as follows:

- ☞ 1. The *AFM* currently contains Chapter 21.2 entitled, "Factors Common to the Adjudication of All Relative Visa Petitions." Section (d)(1)(G) of Chapter 21.2, entitled, "Parentage Testing Procedures" has been revised. A new section (d)(1)(G)(revision date 02/28/2005) is substituted, as follows:

(G) Parentage Testing Procedures. The American Association of Blood Banks (AABB) accredits parentage-testing laboratories for a 2-year period. The current list of AABB accredited parentage testing laboratories is contained in Appendix 21-3 of this field manual. Offices may accept parentage testing results only from laboratories on this list.

Note: The accreditation standards were developed by the committee on parentage testing of the AABB under a grant from the Federal Office of Child Support Enforcement of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and with assistance of special consultants and representatives from the American Bar Association, American Medical Association, American Society of Clinical Pathologists, American Society for Histocompatibility and Immunogenetics and the College of American Pathologists.

The burden of proof is on the petitioner to show that the laboratory chosen is accredited by the AABB.

When a field office requires blood testing or suggests DNA testing, it should provide the petitioner with the list of AABB accredited laboratories. Field offices should be aware that the state designations on the list are for laboratory headquarters. Many laboratories have collection sites in many different states and locations. The petitioner must select a laboratory, contact the laboratory directly, and make the necessary arrangements for

conducting the tests. To ensure the integrity of the test results, all stages of parentage testing must be conducted under appropriate safeguards. These safeguards must include strict controls concerning:

- protection of the chain of custody of blood or tissue samples;
- identification of the parties to be tested, generally by photographing individuals being tested; and
- correct presentation of test results.

Communication should be directly between the laboratory and the civil surgeon or panel physician or the field office. Under no circumstances should a third party, including the individuals being tested, be permitted to carry or transport blood or tissue samples or test results. Since the applicant bears full financial responsibility for testing, USCIS has no objection to that person receiving a copy of the test results from the laboratory or panel physician. It is imperative that the same facility tests both the alleged child and the alleged parent(s). Where the petitioner is physically present in the U.S., a U.S.-based lab must conduct the tests and relay the results. Instructions usually require the participation of a witness, identification taken from all (adult) parties involved, and photographs taken of all parties.

2. The *AFM* currently contains Appendix 21-3, entitled "American Association of Blood Banks." The "Editor's Note" and "Part A" (revision date 02/28/2005) of Appendix 21-3 are revised as follows:

Appendix 21-3 American Association of Blood Banks

Editor's Note: The following information was obtained from:

American Association of Blood Banks
8101 Glenbrook Road
Bethesda, MD 20814-2749
Phone: (301) 907-6977
Fax: (301) 907-6895
Website: www.aabb.org
Email: aabb@aabb.org

Part A: Accredited Parentage Testing Laboratories. A current list of the AABB accredited parentage testing laboratories can be viewed at: [http://www.aabb.org/About the AABB/Std and Accred/aboutptlabs.htm](http://www.aabb.org/About_the_AABB/Std%20and_Accred/aboutptlabs.htm). You must access the AABB website set forth above to obtain current laboratory information. The USCIS office is no longer providing a paper list of the AABB facilities due to the transient nature of this information.

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Please be advised that the AABB website lists only the headquarters or primary location for each AABB laboratory. In fact, many of the laboratories listed have multi-state and/or multi-site locations despite being listed under only one state. Therefore, it is necessary to go to the selected laboratory's website to identify all locations and contact information for that particular laboratory.

- ☞ 3. The *AFM* Transmittal Memoranda button is revised by adding new entries, in numerical order, to read:

AD 10-05	Chapter 21-2, Section	This memorandum replaces Chapter 21-2,
[INSERT	(d)(1)(G);	section (d)(1)(G) of the <i>Adjudicator's Field</i>
SIGNATURE	Appendix 21-3, Editor's	<i>Manual (AFM)</i> and replaces Appendix 21-3
DATE OF THIS	Note and Part A	of the <i>AFM</i> .
MEMO]		

cc: CIS Headquarters Directors
Bureau of Immigration and Customs Enforcement
Bureau of Customs and Border Protection