

**OPTOMETRY SERVICE
CONFERENCE CALL**

AGENDA

July 16, 2010

3 p.m. Eastern Time

1 (800) 767-1750, Access Code: 16019

1. Announcements:

a. Open VA Optometry Staff Positions

[http://www.navao.org/documents/07_16_2010/Open Optometry Positions List 2010.doc](http://www.navao.org/documents/07_16_2010/Open_Optometry_Positions_List_2010.doc)

<http://www.vacareers.va.gov/index.cfm>

- i. Ms. Gernhart comment. There are 8 optometrist positions open at this time; one is located in Martinsburg WV, Painesville OH, Kansas city /Metro area, The Villages in FL, Salisbury NC, Wisconsin, and LA county.
- ii. There is also a research health science specialist position in the DC/ Metro area that is open. Please visit the link above for further information.
- iii. Clarification about the Los Angeles position on the vacancy listing – there is a new position that is 0.5 FTEE at this time. She expects it to ramp up to 1.0 at about 2 years, but this is flexible. This is associated with the new California Veterans home, at the West Los Angeles Healthcare Center. The applicant:

1. MUST have a CA optometry license with current glaucoma certification.
2. Have the CA license since the home is situated on CA ground, not federal ground, thus the optometrist will be practicing under CA state licensure, not on federal ground with any active state optometry license.
3. Most of the above details are in the posting on USA jobs (except the open-ended increase in FTEE, which depends on an increase in residents to a projected full enrollment in 18-24 months).

b. Major Charles R. Soltes, Jr., O.D. VA Blind Rehabilitation Center

- i. Dr. Townsend comment. Major Charles Soltes, Jr will have the VA Blind Rehabilitation Center in Long Beach, CA named after him as he was on active duty overseas and, unfortunately, the first optometrist killed in the line of duty. They had a nice ceremony for him at the AOA house of delegates in June and his widow and

3 sons were in attendance.

ii. Dr. Townsend comment. There is another initiative that came out from the Secretary's office called ADVANCE. This was created to help develop someone to become a leader within VHA. There will be many different avenues for opportunities in professional development. The secretary has recognized that our employees are our greatest asset and with a lot of senior employees getting ready for retirement, we need to have our future leaders develop to take on the traditions and get the VA ready for the 21st century.

c. IL 10-2010-009

i. This Information Letter reviews the scientific and medical background for the program, elements of the program, and implementation of the medical surveillance program for National Guard Service members who may have been exposed to sodium dichromate (SD) during service in Operation Iraqi Freedom.
http://www.navao.org/documents/07_16_2010/IL_10-2010-009_USH_IL_on_Medical_Surveillance_Program_for_Sodium_Dichromate_Exposure.pdf

1. Dr. Townsend comment. They found that near Montserrat Iraq, between April and November 2003, there were about 600 national guard service members, primarily from Indiana, South Carolina, West Virginia and Oregon, assigned to guard duty at the water treatment facility there. The facility had been contaminated with sodium dichromate. It discusses the issues of carcinogenic, lung, and dermal effects.
2. In Baltimore, MD there was a chromate production plant examined in which they looked at cases where workers were exposed to the chemical between 1950-1974. They found that more than 15% had irritated skin, over 18% had dermatitis, near 32% had ulcerated skin and about 20% had conjunctivitis. If you see something you suspect, please inquire further to see if they were in that area at the time of exposure.

d. VHA Notice 2010-07 and 2010-08

i. Notice 2010-07: This Veterans Health Administration (VHA) Notice announces the opportunity for Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) medical facilities to submit proposals for establishing Rehabilitation Research and Development Service (RR&D) Research Enhancement Award Program (REAP) with focus on research in high-priority areas relevant to the rehabilitation needs of Veterans. It also serves as the announcement for currently funded REAPs to submit their application for competitive renewal.

http://www.navao.org/documents/07_16_2010/VHA_Notify_2010-07_RFP_for_Rehabilitation_R_D_REAP.pdf

ii. Notice 2010-08: This Veterans Health Administration (VHA) Notice announces the opportunity for Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) medical facilities to submit proposals for establishing Rehabilitation Research and Development Service (RR&D) Centers with focus on

research in high-priority areas relevant to the rehabilitation needs of Veterans. It also serves as the announcement for currently funded RR&D CoEs to submit their application for competitive renewal. http://www.navao.org/documents/07_16_2010/VHA_Notice_2010-08_RFP_for_Rehabilitation_R_D_Centers_of_Excellence.pdf

1. Dr. Townsend comment. There is an RFP for rehabilitation research and development centers of excellence and there are quite a few that relate to vision. There is the Vision Impairment and Aging center in Atlanta, the Translational Research for Traumatic Brain Injury and Stress Disorders in Boston, a Brain Injury Rehabilitation center in Gainesville, a Prevention and Treatment of Visual Loss in Iowa City, a Maximizing Rehabilitation Outcomes in Tampa, and the Restoration of Neurological Function in West Haven. Hopefully you can take advantage of these centers.
 2. For all the researchers and future researchers out there, these may be some opportunities for you so please work with your VA medical facilities to have your letters of intent within the deadline dates.
 - e. Implementation of IL 10-2010-007, Under Secretary for Health's Information Letter: Visual Impairment Prevention for Veteran Patients
 - f. VHA Office of Public Health & Environmental Hazards, H1N1 Influenza Advisories: <http://vaww.vhaco.va.gov/pubhealth/swineflu/index.htm>
 - i. Dr. Townsend comment. There is no updates to the H1N1 Influenza advisory, but if you follow the link you will see other advisories they have and other issues involving public health and environmental hazards.
2. Optometric Education Programs - Drs. Grimes/Messer/Slagle – unavailable for comment.
 - a. Dr. Townsend comment. All the residency trained positions have been filled in rural health. He has tried to contact a lot of individual programs and work to try to get ACOE candidacy pending status so new programs can get started. When the announcement comes out in late September/early October, please request the number of residents you would like to be able to train, especially if you would like to start some new programs or augment your existing programs.
 3. Optometry Field Advisory Committee - Dr. Horn
 - a. Dr. Townsend comment. There is going to be the meeting in late September where the optometry / ophthalmology field advisory committees meet together and discuss issues that are relevant to both of the eye care professions. The following day they will have discipline specific meetings. That program is currently in process.
 4. Optometry Recruitment Representatives - Drs. Bennett/Gay – unavailable for comment.

5. Infection Control/Reusable Medical Equipment Reprocessing - Drs. Horn/White-unavailable for comment.
6. Teleretinal Imaging Program - Drs. Cavallerano/Selvin – unavailable for comment.
7. DoD/VA Vision Center of Excellence & Eye Injury Registry - Dr. Townsend
 - a. Dr. Townsend comment. He wanted to make the announcement that they have recommended the appointment of Dr. Felix Barker, at the Salisbury VA, to serve as the initial Assistant Director of Research for the Vision Center of Excellence. His paperwork is currently being processed at VA Central Office undergoing the background checks and he will be a virtual VACO employee in Salisbury. Hopefully the paperwork will be complete early next month and he will be able to start in his new role.
8. TBI Vision Rehabilitation - Drs. Gagnon/J. Kirby – unavailable for comment.
9. Low Vision Rehabilitation - Drs. Fuhr/Gagnon/Mancil – unavailable for comment.
10. Optometry Quality Improvement - Dr. Norden
 - a. Dr. Townsend comment. He wanted to mention that there will be a visual impairment prevention review board. Dr. Gary Brough and himself will represent optometry and Dr. Chomsky and Dr. Orchid will represent ophthalmology as they review the action plans that were submitted to VA Central Office. They hope to accomplish this at the end of the month.
11. VA Systems Redesign/Wait Times - Drs. Belkin/Ficarra – unavailable for comment.
 - a. Dr. Townsend comment. When looking at the performance measures and wait times in May, we are not meeting them in combined eye care in VISN 8,16,7,9,10,22,6,23,1, and 17. He understands that everyone is working harder than ever, caring for our nations veterans who are coming to obtain their health care services and we are all doing the best that we can with the resources we have.
12. VA Research Announcements & Solitations - Dr. Mancil – unavailable for comment.

<http://vaww.research.va.gov/news/announcements/default.cfm>
http://vaww.research.va.gov/funding/solicitations/default.cfm#All_ORD
13. VHA Optometry Service Websites - Drs. Cordes/Ficarra/Hamilton
 - a. Dr. Townsend comment. We are still waiting for the intranet website to be fully operational.
14. VA Optometry Service Directory - Drs. Egusa/Lim/Pewitt
 - a. Dr. Pewitt comment. The VA Optometry Service Directory has been updated. If you see any mistakes or omissions, please let them know and it will be updated as soon as possible.

- b. Dr. Townsend questioned whether or not the directory was promoted on a regular basis so the most recent versions are visible online. Dr. Pewitt commented that she believes that is the case according to Dr. Ficarra.
 - c. Dr. Townsend also wanted to remind everyone to give updates about those who have moved or have changed numbers.
15. VA Residency Trained Optometrist Directory - Dr. Wang
- a. Dr. Wang comment. She will be sending out the current residents' information in August. They are still advertising the positions that are on the website which are going to over 700 residency trained optometrists through the Google groups email.
16. AFOS Report - Dr. Wasik
- a. Dr. Wasik comment. The website has been up and running since April and has been revamped. They are trying to get all their members to go to the website and, in the member log-in, there is an issued temporary username and password in the paper newsletter distributed to everyone, on the back above the address label and that is how you access your account to change your username and password. When you do that you will start getting email alerts and more information that is more electronic than on paper.
 - b. On Friday, July 23rd at 3pm EST, there is an AOA/ VA WebEx. It's a VA policy discussion and there is more information about this on the AFOS and NAVAIO websites.
 - c. Dr. Wasik wanted to remind everyone about the upcoming meeting in San Francisco, prior to academy, which is the annual FSO meeting. This will take place on Monday and Tuesday, November 15th and 16th. The highlight after the Monday meeting will be the keynote speaker, Tom Sullivan. There is more information about this on the website and she encourages everyone to register.
17. NAVAIO Report - Drs. Kawasaki/Storer
- a. Dr. Kawasaki comment. Please mark your calendars for our annual dinner meeting which will be held the evening of Thursday, November 18, 2010 at the InterContinental Hotel in San Francisco in conjunction with the American Academy of Optometry meeting. Please stay tuned for more details as the date gets closer. Registration will be online through the NAVAIO website as usual.
 - b. Residency & Research Fellow Coordinators: Please consider encouraging your Residents and/or Research Fellows to join the NAVAIO. All Resident and Research Fellow Members have a discounted membership rate of \$25 and receive special pricing for the annual NAVAIO dinner meeting.