

**OPTOMETRY SERVICE
CONFERENCE CALL**

AGENDA

**February 18, 2011
3 p.m. Eastern Time
1 (800) 767-1750, Access Code: 16019**

1. Announcements:
 - a. Open VA Optometry Staff Positions
 - i. Please follow the link to view open VA Optometry Staff Positions.
 - ii. http://www.navao.org/documents/02_18_2011/Open_Optometry_Positions_List_2011.doc
http://www.va.gov/OPTOMETRY/open_VA_Optomtrist_Positions.asp
or <http://www.vacareers.va.gov/index.cfm>
 - b. VHA Mission & Vision Statements
<http://vaww.ush.va.gov/Excellence>
 - c. VHA Directive 2011-006, Revised Billing Guidance for Services Provided by Supervising Practitioners and Residents
 - i. This Veterans Health Administration (VHA) Directive provides policy for billing insurance carriers for services provided by a health care team, which includes supervising practitioners and residents or fellows (residents).
 - ii. http://www.navao.org/documents/02_18_2011/Open_Optometry_Positions_List_2011.doc
 - d. VHA Directive 2011-007, Required Hand Hygiene Practices
 - i. This Veterans Health Administration (VHA) Directive provides guidance for establishing the basic requirements for hand hygiene practices in VHA facilities.
 - ii. http://www.navao.org/documents/02_18_2011/VHA_Directive_2011-007_Required_Hand_Hygiene_Practices.pdf
 - e. VHA Handbook 1400.06, Foreign Travel
 - i. This Veterans Health Administration (VHA) Handbook revises procedures associated with VHA staff foreign travel in order to increase the efficiency of the approval processes, as well as, maintaining and improving oversight and accountability.
 - ii. http://www.navao.org/documents/02_18_2011/VHA_Handbook_1400.06_Foreign_Travel.pdf
 - f. VERA 2011 Patient Classes Price Groups
 - i. This is a copy of the 2011 VERA Patient Classification Hierarchy and has the reimbursements that will go to VA medical facilities in the future based on various categories of basic vested care or complex care.
 - ii. http://www.navao.org/documents/02_18_2011/Copy_of_vera11_hierarchy.xls

2. Optometric Education Programs - Drs. Messer/Slagle
 - a. Dr. Slagle comment. On Feb 9th, Dr. Petzel, the Under Secretary for Health, released VHA Directive 2011-006 delineating revised billing guidance for services provided by supervising practitioners and residents. As many of you know, the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services provides financial support to teaching hospitals for graduate medical education services by residents and these services have historically been billed by appending the GC and GE modifiers. However, the VA does not receive any such financial support for GME, so in 2006 CMS approved the GR modifier. This GR modifier is defined as service "performed in whole or in part by a resident at a VA Medical Center of Clinic, supervised in accordance with VA policy." The main revision of this directive compared to the prior is addition of the requirement that residents obtain NPI numbers from the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services.
 - b. In review of the purpose of this directive, it is intended to confer a responsibility that the following procedures are implemented:
 - i. When care is provided in whole or in part by a resident and clinical documentation shows the resident was supervised in accordance with VA policy, the modifier "GR" is attached to each CPT code or encounter with professional charges billed on the Health Insurance Claim Form CMS 1500, in order to denote care provided by a resident under the direction of a teaching physician.
 - ii. The GR Modifier is attached to CPT codes or encounters only by properly-trained coding staff, under the supervision of a Health Information Management Service (HIMS) professional as required by VHA Handbook 1907.1, with accuracy monitoring as required by Handbook 1907.1.
 - iii. Clinical encounters to which the GR modifier is attached to the CPT code are billed to third-party payers using the supervising practitioner's name and credentials.
 - c. There are clinics across the country that have their residents who code examinations and append the GR modifier. If you read the directive above literally, it may seem as if this practice pattern is prohibited. By contacting the VHA Chief Business Office for clarification he received an interpretation by Mr. Charles Riley, MBA, CCA indicating that "**The GR modifier is normally appended by the coder, who validates 100% of a progress note prior to coding and adding the applicable modifier ensuring that the resident supervision documentation guidelines have been met. There is no reason why the residents cannot continue to append the GR modifier. They are not really required to add the modifier. Nothing has been mandated with respect to only HIMS adding this modifier.**"
 - d. The ORMS website (www.optometryresident.org/serv03.htm) is now ready to accept Matching Forms from program coordinators. The deadline for submitting your Matching Form is 5 PM PT on March 4th. No Matching Forms will be accepted after that time. Please remember that it

is best to file 1-2 days in advance of the match to ensure your selections are processed. Please watch for a confirmation from ORMS within 24 hours of submission.

- i. Please fill out a matching form even if you are not listing any selections so the program will be included in the ORMS database and you will receive the unmatched applicant pool.
 - e. Lastly, please don't forget to discuss fellowship opportunities with your current residents. This is a wonderful platform for talented optometrists to gain experience in ophthalmic research or clinical specialization in polytrauma/TBI.
3. Optometry Field Advisory Committee - Dr. Selvin – unavailable for comment.
 4. Optometry Recruitment Representatives - Drs. Bennett/Gay – unavailable for comment
 5. Infection Control/Reusable Medical Equipment Reprocessing - Drs. Horn/White
 - a. Dr. Townsend comment. There have been various VA facilities, especially the Dental facility in St. Louis, which had some infection control issues. There is a great deal of attention being paid to insuring that we are properly cleaning and disinfecting our reusable medical equipment. We have information to assist you posted on our intranet website administrative page. Please make use of that to make sure you are in full compliance with our partners in SPD.
 6. Teleretinal Imaging Program - Drs. Cavallerano/Selvin – unavailable for comment.
 7. DoD/VA Vision Center of Excellence & Eye Injury Registry - Dr. Barker - unavailable for comment.
 8. TBI Vision Rehabilitation - Drs. Gagnon/J. Kirby – unavailable for comment.
 9. Low Vision Rehabilitation EES Program - Drs. Fuhr/Gagnon/Mancil – unavailable for comment.
 10. Optometry Quality Improvement - Dr. Norden – unavailable for comment.
 11. VA Systems Redesign/Wait Times - Dr. Ficarra
 - a. Dr. Townsend comment. We are trying to meet more robust wait time measures and we will have more on that on the next conference call.
 12. VA Research Announcements & Solitations - Dr. Mancil
 - a. Dr. Mancil comment. If there are any projects that have been approved, please have the involved optometrist send him an email through Outlook to keep an updated list of active projects.
 - b. Dr. Mancil wanted to thank Dr. Slagle for updating him on a new project that he is working on and that has been approved.
- <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. Ficarra/Hamilton
 - a. Dr. Townsend comment. Our optometry service websites have been *frozen* for nearly a year and got promoted in late December. They are now in the process of updating the various pages. The education and training pages were updated first, then the open optometry position page, and they are in the process of updating the other pages and policies that have expired which will take some time. He is hopeful that they will have the directories promoted in a different format for use in the future.
14. VA Optometry Service Directory - Drs. Egusa/Lim/Pewitt – unavailable for comment.
15. VA Residency Trained Optometrist Directory - Dr. Wang – unavailable for comment.
16. AFOS Report - Dr. Wasik
 - a. Dr. Wasik comment. AFOS is now the 12th largest state affiliate of the AOA. They have moved up from being 29th about 3 years ago. The majority of that is due to the joining of VA optometrists.
 - b. The annual meeting/business meeting will be in Atlanta on March 1st. There is still availability to be accommodated as a walk in. There will be 4 hours of CE provided, the service break out session and the business meeting. There are more details at AFOS2020.org.
 - c. A survey about moving the annual meeting to a time that would increase attendance is also on the website and the proposal is to move the meeting in conjunction with the academy meeting. If you would like to express your opinion on this matter or vote, please go to the website. The survey will be close after one more week to be reviewed during the business meeting.
17. NAVAIO Report - Drs. Kawasaki/Storer
 - a. We have concluded our annual membership drive and want to thank all of our members who renewed, as well as those who joined this year. Expired members and those interested in joining can still do so on our website at the \$55 rate. Please encourage other optometrists at your facility to join NAVAIO or renew their membership if they have not done so already. We appreciate your support of our organization!
 - b. We are constantly trying to improve our website, so if anyone encountered problems joining or renewing online and has not yet notified us, please contact us by email at info@navao.org so we can address any issues with the online registration system.
 - c. For the first time this year, NAVAIO offered a complimentary membership for 2012 to one randomly selected member who joined or renewed before the January 31 deadline. We would like to congratulate Dr. Janet Boschert from the VA in Wichita, Kansas on being selected as this year's winner. Congratulations Dr. Boschert!
 - d. The NAVAIO strongly encourages all eligible candidates to register for the next Advanced Competence in Medical Optometry (ACMO) examination

on Friday, June 3, 2011. Please visit the NBEO website at www.optometry.org for details. ACMO registration was opened several months earlier this year so that candidates would have a better chance of reserving a spot at their desired testing site. The deadline to register for the ACMO exam is May 3, 2011.

- e. Our Newsletter Committee has worked hard on putting together the Winter 2011 edition of the Optimum VA Newsletter. It is now posted on the website. Please login to view it right away.