

**OPTOMETRY SERVICE  
CONFERENCE CALL**

**Minutes**

**April 16, 2010**

**3 p.m. Eastern Time**

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

1. Announcements:

a. Open VA Optometry Staff Positions

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

- Dr. Townsend comment. There are full-time positions open in Casa Grande, AZ and San Antonio, TX

[http://www.navao.org/documents/04\\_16\\_2010/Open Optomtry Positions List 2010.pdf](http://www.navao.org/documents/04_16_2010/Open_Optomtry_Positions_List_2010.pdf)

b. VA's Retirement Financial Literacy and Education Program

- Dr. Townsend comment. Employee notice that April is financial literacy month. Consider reviewing your thrift savings plan, credit score, and retirement planning. The links are provided.

[http://www.navao.org/documents/04\\_16\\_2010/Employee Notice-Nat Fin Lit Month-April.pdf](http://www.navao.org/documents/04_16_2010/Employee_Notice-Nat_Fin_Lit_Month-April.pdf)

c. IL 10-2010-007, Under Secretary for Health's Information Letter: Visual Impairment Prevention for Veteran Patients

[http://www.navao.org/documents/04\\_16\\_2010/IL\\_10-2010-007, Visual Impairment Prevention in Veteran Patients.pdf](http://www.navao.org/documents/04_16_2010/IL_10-2010-007_Visual_Impairment_Prevention_in_Veteran_Patients.pdf)

- Dr. Townsend comment. There is a new Undersecretary for Health information letter on visual impairment prevention for veterans that deals with ARMD, DR, and glaucoma. He has charged us to try and improve the services provided and take the lead as a transformational organization in improving the quality of care we provide. There have been several questions in the field about implementation, but details are still being worked out to have this implemented throughout the VA, nationwide. He provided three Eye Quality of Care documents that were evidence-based on PQRI and clinical practice guidelines to assist with the peer review portion for your on-going professional practice evaluations.

[http://www.navao.org/documents/04\\_16\\_2010/EyecareQualityCareReview- AMD, 04-02-2010.doc](http://www.navao.org/documents/04_16_2010/EyecareQualityCareReview-AMD_04-02-2010.doc)

[http://www.navao.org/documents/04\\_16\\_2010/EyecareQualityCareReview- DIABETES, 04-02-2010.doc](http://www.navao.org/documents/04_16_2010/EyecareQualityCareReview-DIABETES_04-02-2010.doc)

[http://www.navao.org/documents/04\\_16\\_2010/EyecareQualityCareReview- GLAUCOMA, 04-02-2010.doc](http://www.navao.org/documents/04_16_2010/EyecareQualityCareReview-GLAUCOMA_04-02-2010.doc)

- Dr. Lalle comment. He had a question pertaining to maintaining a list of patients that is covered at the end of the letter.

- Dr. Townsend comment. They are still in the process of figuring out implementation, but in the meantime you can find out how many patients at your facility have ARMD, DR, and Glaucoma based on the ICD-9 codes; that would give a general idea.
- There was another question about whether or not all patients need to have this review annually. This has yet to be determined. Dr. Townsend initially saw this as part of the on-going professional practice evaluations so you make sure to include ARMD, DR, and Glaucoma in part of that on-going quality assurance.
- Dr. Lalle comment. There was concern over the size of the list they were to generate. Dr. Townsend went over the general size of the veteran population that would be included in the lists that were astronomical. He is going to try and get some additional guidance so they can do something reasonable to meet the intent of the information letter which is really to improve the quality of care so that patients do not “drop through the system”.
- Dr. Norden comment. He wanted to clarify that this letter is an informational letter not a directive. He does not believe there will be an implementation phase of the information letter that will need to review all patients with those diagnoses.
- Dr. Townsend comment. The intent of central office is to improve the system of care we provide. He believes that we will need to sample a large enough population of these diagnoses to show that we are making progress. We need to get further clarification on how we are to proceed as an organization.
- Dr. Norden and Dr. Townsend discussion: Clarification that the information letters intent is not to impact clinical privileges that are in place.
- Dr. Bright comment. He noticed in the information letter the emphasis on primary care providers having service agreements on how they send patients to the eye clinic. With the advent of medical home coming upon us, he is suggesting the medical home team could help in monitoring high risk patients in these key groups in keeping their appointments. He also questions the proper use of the term “peer review” within the letter in which Dr. Townsend will bring up at his next meeting.

d. VHA Pharmacy Benefits Management: High Dose Vitamin Supplementation for Macular Degeneration

- Dr. Townsend comment. Vitamin supplements for smokers and non-smokers are now on the national formulary. Please review these documents on which patients are appropriate for these supplements.

[http://www.navao.org/documents/04\\_16\\_2010/HDVS\\_for\\_A\\_MD\\_comparison.pdf](http://www.navao.org/documents/04_16_2010/HDVS_for_A_MD_comparison.pdf)

[http://www.navao.org/documents/04\\_16\\_2010/HDVS in AMD update feb 1010 final.pdf](http://www.navao.org/documents/04_16_2010/HDVS_in_AMD_update_feb_1010_final.pdf)

- e. VHA Directive 2010-012, Screening and Evaluation of Possible TBI in OEF/OIF Veterans – This directive updates policies and procedures for screening and evaluation of possible TBI in OEF and OIF Veterans (PDF file)  
[http://www.navao.org/documents/04\\_16\\_2010/VHA Directive 2010-012, Screening and Evaluation of Possible TBI in OEF-OIF Veterans.pdf](http://www.navao.org/documents/04_16_2010/VHA_Directive_2010-012_Screening_and_Evaluation_of_Possible_TBI_in_OEF-OIF_Veterans.pdf)
    - Dr. Townsend comment. You may want to be aware of this new directive.
  - f. VHA Handbook 1025.02, Child Care Services on VHA's Property
    - Dr. Townsend comment. There is a push to have child care services on VHA property for the employees as well as the veterans who are utilizing the VA for care. Hopefully this will aid in veterans keeping their medical appointments.  
[http://www.navao.org/documents/04\\_16\\_2010/VHA HANdbook 1025.02, Child Care Services on VHAs Property.pdf](http://www.navao.org/documents/04_16_2010/VHA_HANdbook_1025.02_Child_Care_Services_on_VHAs_Property.pdf)
  - g. VHA Office of Public Health & Environmental Hazards, H1N1 Influenza Advisories: <http://vaww.vhaco.va.gov/pubhealth/swineflu/index.htm>
    - This link is to updates and announcements about the H1N1 Influenza advisories.
2. Optometric Education Programs - Drs. Grimes/Messer – unavailable for comment
    - a. Dr. Townsend comment. As far as he knows, all VA optometry residency positions were matched within a record period. If your residency position is not filled, please contact him or ORMS so it can be advertised on their website as still being available.
  3. Optometry Field Advisory Committee - Dr. Horn – unavailable for comment
  4. Optometry Recruitment Representatives - Drs. Bennett/Gay
    - a. Dr. Gay comment. He has 37 people signed up, but there are several VISNs still unrepresented. He is still looking for representatives to sign up as a contact point for those interested in knowing more about the VA. He also distributed the PowerPoint presentation to everyone on the list, which some have used and some have passed it to the schools to have distributed. The PowerPoint presentation is well done by the recruitment and retention committee and has good information selling the VA. There is still no representation for VISNs 1,2,5,7,12,13,14,17,18,21, and 24. Please contact Dr. Gay or Dr. Bennett if you are interested.
  5. Infection Control/Reusable Medical Equipment Reprocessing - Drs. Horn/White
    - a. Dr. White comment: nothing new to report.

6. Teleretinal Imaging Program - Drs. Selvin/Cavallerano – unavailable for comment
  - a. Dr. Townsend comment. There will probably be some expansion through the rural health initiative for teleretinal screening programs. They also want to look into the future capabilities of using it as a screening device for other eye diseases.
7. DoD/VA Vision Center of Excellence & Eye Injury Registry - Dr. Townsend
  - a. Dr. Townsend comment. More interviews have been performed this week for the research optometrist position within the Vision Center of Excellence. He is hoping a final decision will be made within the next week or two as far as the recommendations from the work group.
8. TBI Vision Rehabilitation - Drs. J. Kirby/Gagnon – unavailable for comment.
9. Low Vision Rehabilitation - Drs. Fuhr/Gagnon/Mancil
  - a. Dr. Townsend comment. There will be an EES series coming out on low vision rehabilitation which should be available within the next few months. At least the initial modules will be available to provide more uniform rehabilitation services nationwide. You can get refresher courses on various aspects of providing low vision rehabilitation care. This is being spear-headed by Dr. Gagnon.
10. Optometry Quality Improvement - Dr. Norden
  - a. Dr. Norden comment. Everything has already been covered earlier.
11. VA Systems Redesign/Wait Times - Drs. Belkin/Ficarra:
  - a. Dr. Cordes comment. Dr Ficarra is unavailable but there is nothing new to report. .
12. VA Research Announcements & Solitations - Dr. Mancil - unavailable for comment. Follow the link for information on research opportunities.  
<http://vaww.research.va.gov/news/announcements/default.cfm>  
[http://vaww.research.va.gov/funding/solicitations/default.cfm#All\\_ORD](http://vaww.research.va.gov/funding/solicitations/default.cfm#All_ORD)
13. VHA Optometry Service Websites - Drs. Cordes/Ficarra/Hamilton
  - a. Dr. Cordes comment. The new website is about 90% completed, but should be live within the next couple weeks.
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. They have confirmation that the new AFOS website will be up and running no later than April 23, 2010. It will be interactive including areas to post photos and discussions as well as all the relevant information to the association.

- b. The host hotel for the FSO meeting before the Academy meeting is at the Westin and you can go to the AFOS website for more information about obtaining the government rate.
- c. She was told by the Executive Director to announce that a wine tour is being planned. Dr. Simpson has set up a wine tour the Sunday before the meeting he reserved a bus that will hold a set number of people on a first come, first serve basis. The payment in advance will be \$50 and Dr. Simpson and his wife will be moderating the tour. If you are interested, there will be more information to come on the AFOS website.
- d. AFOS is also growing in numbers. Dr. Hunter and her membership committee as well as Dr. Simpson have been doing a great job on recruitment. When the new website is up after April 23<sup>rd</sup> you will be able to apply for membership online. They are now in 13<sup>th</sup> biggest state in the AOA hierarchy.

17. NAVAIO Report - Drs. Kawasaki/Storer

- a. Dr. Kawasaki comment. The spring newsletter has been posted to the member's area of the NAVAIO website. Please login to read our latest newsletter.
- b. The NAVAIO strongly encourages all eligible candidates to register for this year's ACMO administration on Friday, June 4, 2010. The NBEO has recently expanded the eligibility criteria for this exam. Please visit their website at [www.optometry.org](http://www.optometry.org) for details. The deadline to register is May 4, 2010.  
[http://www.navao.org/documents/04\\_16\\_2010/ACMO Exam , June 4, 2010.pdf](http://www.navao.org/documents/04_16_2010/ACMO_Exam_June_4_2010.pdf)
- c. Dr. Townsend comment: He wanted to remind everyone there is a discounted fee for the ACMO exam for current residents.