

**OPTOMETRY SERVICE
CONFERENCE CALL**

MINUTES

September 16, 2011

3 p.m. Eastern Time

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

1. Announcements:

- a. Open VA Optometry Staff Positions
 - i. http://www.navao.org/documents/09_16_2011/Open_Optometry_Positions_List_2011.doc
 - ii. http://www.va.gov/OPTOMETRY/open_VA_Optometrists_Positions.asp or <http://jobsearch.usajobs.gov/>
- b. VA Core Values and Characteristics (I CARE)
<http://vaww.va.gov/default.asp>
- c. Under Secretary for Health (USH) VHA Mission & Vision Statements
<http://vaww.ush.va.gov/Excellence>
- d. National PBM Bulletin: Intravitreal Bevacizumab (Avastin) Therapy
 - i. Recent events, such as infectious endophthalmitis and sterile endophthalmitis with severe toxic reaction, have brought attention to the preparation process of bevacizumab. Please review this bulletin as well as the VA guidelines for Intravitreal Injections.
 - ii. Dr. Townsend comment. If the ophthalmologists or pharmacist at your facility is unaware of this bulletin, please forward this information to them.
 - iii. http://www.navao.org/documents/09_16_2011/Bevacizumab_Bulletin_090811.docx
 - iv. http://www.navao.org/documents/09_16_2011/VA_GUIDELINES_FOR_INTRAVITREAL_INJECTIONS_Aug_2011.docx
- e. VA News Release: VA Launches Open Source Custodian
 - i. OSEHRA, the open source electronic health record agent, has begun operations and will serve as the central governing body of a new open source Electronic Health Record community.
 - ii. http://www.navao.org/documents/09_16_2011/OSEHRA_Launch_NR,08-30-2011.docx
- f. VHA Directive 2011-033, Income Thresholds and Clinical Criteria, etc.
 - i. This Veterans Health Administration (VHA) Directive provides the Calendar Year (CY) 2011 income thresholds to be used in identifying Veterans who are exempt from co-payment requirements that apply to the receipt of extended care services. This Directive also provides the income threshold to be used in determining a Veteran's eligibility for beneficiary travel benefits, exemption of co-payment for outpatient medications furnished on an outpatient basis and clinical criteria for determining whether a Veteran is in need of the Aid and Attendance (A&A) of another person, or is housebound.

- ii. http://www.navao.org/documents/09_16_2011/VHA_Directive_2011-033_Income_Thresholds_and_clinical_Criteria_Used_in_Identifying.pdf
 - g. AMSUS Annual Meeting: November 6-9, 2011, <http://www.amsus.org/>
 - i. Attached is the AMSUS program for review for those interested in attending.
 - ii. http://www.navao.org/documents/09_16_2011/AMSUS_Preliminary_Final_Program,11-2011.pdf
- 2. Optometry Service Field Advisory Committee - Dr. Selvin – unavailable.
 - a. Dr. Townsend comment. The Optometry and Ophthalmology Field Advisory Committees met earlier this week, on Tuesday, for the 4th annual joint meeting. The separate meetings were conducted the following day at VA Central Office. There were a few initiatives discussed. One was creating executive position memos looking at the use of eye techs in VA and another initiative will consider using a proprietary EMR and some pilot's lights.
 - b. Dr. Slagle comment. There are 12 new associated health professional positions this year which resulted in about an 8% growth in VA optometry residencies. There was also a report on the effectiveness of VA optometric education programs to inspire new O.D.'s to work in the VA. Approximately 70% of employed VA O.D.'s had some experience training in the VA.
 - c. The data from the learner's perception study shows that, initially, only 23% of optometry students would consider VA employment, but after clinical training in the VA, approximately 70% would. This is a positive reflection on our education program. Dr. Slagle wanted say "Great Job" to those in the field with training programs and your effective mentorship.
 - d. The education subcommittee continues to work with the Office of Academic Affairs to improve its programs.
- 3. Optometric Education Programs: FY 2013 Trainee Support for Associated Health Professions Program Announcement - Drs. Messer/Slagle
 - a. Dr. Slagle comment. The Office of Academic Affiliations has announced the release of the program announcement for the next academic year. Your request for training physicians, such as residency along with the standards of excellence, must be entered online by October 14, 2011.
 - b. The ACOE has posted the call for comments to the optometric residency standards. They are proposing a modification to standard 2.2 and substandard 2.2.1. Historically, substandard 2.2.1 has received attention because it mandates a record of the resident's encounters be maintained and that record must maintain a level of case complexity. In the edited version, this record of case complexity has been deleted. The new standard reads that the resident involvement in patient care must fulfill goals and objectives and must lead to competency beyond entry level. Any comments you may have, please email them to ACOE@AOA.org.

The comments will be considered at the next ACOE meeting October 21-23rd.

- c. Dr. Townsend comment. This is the annual call for residents that will start the next fiscal year starting July 1, 2012. If you are interested in starting a residency training program, you will want to use the trainee support announcement for associated health professionals programs (see link below for attachment). You will need to contact your associate chief of staff for education to get support to get that program started at your facility.
 - i. http://www.navao.org/documents/09_16_2011/2012-13_AH_Program_Announcement-110831.docx
 - ii. http://www.navao.org/documents/09_16_2011/2012_Allocations_Memo-110831.doc
4. Visual Impairment Prevention Review Board - Dr. Brough – unavailable for comment.
5. VA IDRPs Eye Clinic Electronic Health Record Request - Dr. Ballinger – unavailable for comment.
6. Infection Control/Reusable Medical Equipment Reprocessing - Drs. Horn/White
 - a. Dr. Townsend comment. During the joint field advisory committee meeting, the suggestion was that the SOP's (standard operating procedures) for disinfection of reusable medical equipment should be put on a SharePoint drive. They are working on samples of SOPs and may take awhile to get them online. This should provide a framework for those who have to create these at their facility.
7. Teleretinal Imaging Screening Program - Drs. Cavallerano/Selvin – unavailable for comment.
 - a. Dr. Townsend comment. There were a record number of veterans screened during this year and the numbers are up about 8% from July 2010 to July 2011. From the report during the joint meeting, the teleretinal program is now at 450 sites and members have created some preliminary templates to screen for macular degeneration and optic nerve disorders in the general population of veterans. More to come on integrating these screeners.
8. DoD/VA Vision Center of Excellence & Eye Injury Registry - Dr. Barker
 - a. Dr. Townsend comment. Last month they had a very successful Vision Center of Excellence meeting in Las Vegas in conjunction with the Blind Veterans Association meeting. Many subject experts were on hand to look at algorithms of care for patients who have had eye and brain injuries with vision sequelae. They are trying to put together some best practices for what testing should be done at the varying levels of polytrauma rehabilitation centers, network sites and team based polytrauma sites.
 - b. Dr. Mancil comment. It was a great meeting that gave opportunity to understand the DoD side of how the equation works. There is already some follow up activities, coordinated by Dr. Barker.

9. TBI Vision Rehabilitation - Drs. Gagnon/J. Kirby – unavailable for comment.
10. Low Vision Rehabilitation EES Program - Drs. Fuhr/Gagnon/Mancil
 - a. Dr. Mancil comment. There has been a lot accomplished with continuum of care clinic roll outs at the field advisory committee meeting. Gail Watson, the director of blind rehabilitation services in Central Office, reported that there are efforts underway for creating common templates for record keeping and reporting by the rehabilitation staff. The EES online course developed for low vision training is up and running and there are monthly conference calls taking place to keep communication open.
11. Optometry Quality Improvement - Dr. Norden
 - a. Dr. Norden comment. We have attracted attention with the clinical practice handbook – particularly with the OPPE reviews of care. Other credentialing bodies have become interested in these programs and are starting to look to optometry/ophthalmology as to implementation guidance. We should expect to get some attention in our quality review programs in the future. There are guidelines presented on criteria for doing individual record reviews and you can obtain current copies from Dr. Townsend’s office, Dr. Norden, or Dr. Horn.
 - b. He has heard from risk management advisors at the university level, if you do peer reviews, it is not a good idea to indicate this on a patient’s record. If you made reference in a medical record that you performed a peer review on that record it would make the process discoverable in court proceedings. Please be aware.
12. VA Systems Redesign/Wait Times - Dr. Horn
 - a. Dr. Townsend comment. This year’s target goal for missed opportunities was 10% but we have not been able to meet that goal. Out of the 50 top clinics, only 3 made the goal and we did better than the average of all the clinics. We are set to see a record number of veterans in eye care this year.
13. VA Optometric Research & Development - Dr. Mancil
 - a. Dr. Mancil comment. He wanted to direct everyone’s attention to the updates on the VA optometry intranet under the research tab. There are updates and information if and when you are ready to pursue research at your site.
<http://vaww1.va.gov/OPTOMETRY/research.asp>
14. VHA Optometry Service Websites - Drs. Hamilton/G. Singh
 - a. Dr. Townsend comment. There was a massive update to the links recently. They should all be current and working.
 - b. We now have some openings for those interested in taking the websites to the next level. We would like to reorganize it to make it more user friendly. Dr. Singh is now the acting webmaster. If you are interested in helping or joining this team, please email Dr. Singh, Dr. Townsend and Ms. Gernhart.
15. VA Optometry Service Directory - Drs. Egusa/Lim/Pewitt

- a. Dr. Townsend comment. He would like everyone to look at the optometry service directory and contact Dr. Egusa/Lim/Pewitt for any updates to keep this directory current.
16. VA Residency Trained Optometrist Directory - Dr. Wang
 - a. Dr. Wang comment. She is still working to keep things current since the website was under construction.
17. AFOS Report - Drs. Hunter/Wasik
 - a. Dr. Wasik comment. Reminder that the AFOS annual meeting is October 10th – 11th prior to the academy. There is also a pre-meeting event which is a tour of the USS Constitution and a Harbor Cruise on Sunday. It is \$75 for members. This is more of a memorial cruise for Dr. Dave Simpson, former executive director, who encouraged the start of these pre-meeting events for camaraderie in membership. All information is on the website at www.AFOS2020.org.
 - b. This is the first time the business meeting will be conducted prior to the academy meeting instead of prior to SECO. The FSO meeting will now be prior to SECO. You can still register for the meeting online or on site in Boston.
 - c. If you have already registered for the AFOS meeting as well as the academy meeting, the academy will have representatives during registration time for AFOS to have the packets available to those members that did not receive them in the mail.
 - d. Last quarter dues are due soon and the newsletter will be released shortly.
 - e. If you are attending the NAVAIO meeting on Thursday, Dr. Wasik, Dr. Pattison (interim executive director), and Dr. Sunman (President) will be in attendance to meet with anyone interested in becoming a member of AFOS or to meet with any current members who may have any issues or comments to share.
18. NAVAIO Report - Drs. Kawasaki/Storer
 - a. Officer elections for the 2011-2013 terms are now closed. Many thanks to our candidates and all members who voted. Results will be formally announced at the NAVAIO Business Meeting in Boston.
 - b. Just a reminder that the annual NAVAIO business meeting and dinner which will be held the evening of Thursday, October 13 at the Sheraton Boston Hotel in conjunction with the AAO meeting. Our keynote speaker this year will be Dr. Norman Haffner and his presentation is entitled "The VA's Contribution to Optometric Exceptionalism." More details about the dinner are posted on the NAVAIO website. Please note that today is the last day to register.
 - c. The Finance Committee wishes to announce that it is currently working on the 2012 NAVAIO budget. The annual Treasurer's Report will also be presented at the upcoming NAVAIO Business Meeting.
 - d. VA Optometrists attending the Academy Meeting in Boston this year are invited to attend a special event hosted by the New England College of Optometry on Friday evening, October 14, in honor of the VA Optometry

Service's thirty-five years of excellence in patient care, research, and optometric education. It will be held at the Fairmont Copley Plaza Hotel. Please contact Mary Fitzgerald at the New England College of Optometry at 617-587-5647 if you have not yet received an invitation.

19. Dr. Townsend comment. This is the year that VA hosts the AMSUS meeting. There is a link to the preliminary program under the announcements section of the notes. Stacia Yaniglos, a VA optometrist, will be the recipient of the 2011 AMSUS training and education award – congratulations! Her involvement has really improved the quality of these training programs, nationally.

20. Concerns?

- a. Dr. Storer comment. Question about the 14 day wait times. The 14 day wait time goals are different for the established vs. new patients.
 - i. Dr. Townsend comment. More information about this can be found on the intranet website. Go to the administrative page – Veterans Equitable Resource Allocation Report and Information – VSSC website. You can access clinic wait times under systems redesign. You can also access VSSC under “quick links” on the homepage.