

**OPTOMETRY SERVICE  
CONFERENCE CALL**

**AGENDA**

**October 21, 2011**

**3 p.m. Eastern Time**

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

1. Announcements:

- a. Open VA Optometry Staff Positions
  - i. Kathleen Gernhart comment. Please follow the link for more information. The position in Spokane Washington will be closed today.
  - ii. Dr. Townsend comment. The usajobs.gov website has had glitches so if you know of any other optometry jobs, please contact Ms. Gernhart so we can send out that information and let's make sure we update all our websites with that information.
  - iii. [http://www.navao.org/documents/10\\_21\\_2011/Copy\\_of\\_Open\\_Optomety\\_Positions.pdf](http://www.navao.org/documents/10_21_2011/Copy_of_Open_Optomety_Positions.pdf)  
[http://www.va.gov/OPTOMETRY/open\\_VA\\_Optometrists\\_Positions.asp](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.us.hva.gov/Excellence>
- d. National PBM Bulletin: Intravitreal Bevacizumab (Avastin) Therapy
  - i. This guideline is to provide ophthalmologists working within VAMC with evidence based guidelines for the use of intravitreal injections.
    1. [http://www.navao.org/documents/10\\_21\\_2011/VA\\_GUIDE\\_LINES\\_FOR\\_INTRAVIDREAL\\_INJECTIONS\\_Aug\\_2011.docx](http://www.navao.org/documents/10_21_2011/VA_GUIDE_LINES_FOR_INTRAVIDREAL_INJECTIONS_Aug_2011.docx)
    2. [http://www.navao.org/documents/10\\_21\\_2011/Bevacizumab\\_Bulletin\\_090811.docx](http://www.navao.org/documents/10_21_2011/Bevacizumab_Bulletin_090811.docx)
  - ii. Dr. Townsend comment. He wanted everyone to be aware of Avastin use in the VA. For contract care provided outside VA, it's still prohibited. There are special situations you can appeal to central office, but your Chief of Staff/ Chief of Ophthalmology/ Chief of Surgery should be aware of this.
- e. AMSUS Annual Meeting: November 6-9, 2011, <http://www.amsus.org/>
  - i. Dr. Townsend comment. This meeting is scheduled in San Antonio from November 6-9, 2011. There will be a VA session all day on the 8<sup>th</sup> and the optometry section meeting will occur on the 9<sup>th</sup>.
    1. [http://www.navao.org/documents/10\\_21\\_2011/AMSUS\\_Pr\\_eliminary\\_Final\\_Program,11-2011.pdf](http://www.navao.org/documents/10_21_2011/AMSUS_Pr_eliminary_Final_Program,11-2011.pdf)

2. Optometry Service Field Advisory Committee - Dr. Selvin
  - a. Dr. Townsend comment. The Committee had met back in September and they had decided to create an executive decision memo concerning eye techs to be in a different classification system. They also found out that optometrists are woefully short of eye technicians. He believes there are only about 170 eye health technicians for optometrists nationwide and the recommendation is to have at least 1.0 FTE eye tech per 1.0 FTE optometrist or ophthalmologist.
3. Optometric Education Programs - Drs. Messer/Slagle
  - a. Dr. Slagle comment. He discussed the development of the person class code for VA residents. This code is within VISTA CPRS that allows the billing department to identify billable encounters. The biggest impact with this is with medications the residents write. Previously, they were listed as a student so the VA could not bill the co-payment to the third party insurances. Now that there is a person class code, these co-payments can be billed as well as some of the examinations that were missed.
    - i. [http://www.navao.org/documents/10\\_21\\_2011/Optometry-Podiatry\\_Resident\\_classifications\\_sept\\_2011.doc](http://www.navao.org/documents/10_21_2011/Optometry-Podiatry_Resident_classifications_sept_2011.doc)
  - b. The SECO meeting in Atlanta is accepting poster submissions. If anyone is interested, it is open through November 14, 2011. Check out their website for more details at [www.SECO2012.com](http://www.SECO2012.com).
  - c. Dr. Townsend comment. There was an issue about accessing VA privacy and information security awareness and rules of behavior. There has been some confusion about the training that the residents obtain through the office of academic affiliations qualifying for this education. It does, so nothing more has to be completed.
    - i. [http://www.navao.org/documents/10\\_21\\_2011/ISO\\_Privacy\\_Awareness\\_Course.doc](http://www.navao.org/documents/10_21_2011/ISO_Privacy_Awareness_Course.doc)
4. Visual Impairment Prevention Review Board - Dr. Brough
  - a. Dr. Brough comment. All the care coordination agreements have been received in Central Office and there will be another visual impairment prevention review board meeting in the near future. Please move forward with your agreements unless you have heard something negative from central office or leadership already.
5. Eye Clinic Electronic Health Record Request - Dr. Ballinger
  - a. Dr. Ballinger comment. In terms of the electronic health record request that was submitted in May and June for enhancement to the CPRS medical record, it's gone through the approval process and has been assigned a level of importance. In regards to that, it's now been put on hold. They are not planning on advancing it further at this time.
  - b. Given that, there are still a lot of dynamics happening with electronic medical records.
    - i. There are a few sites now working with Medflow EMR. There will be testing coming up with that program. For those who don't

know, this is a program that sits on top of the CPRS platform and integrates with it.

- ii. There are a lot of dynamics happening with a complete reworking of the electronic medical record system within the VA and Do/D. This system is now in beta testing and is being rolled within a few centers. If anyone is familiar with this system or have it at your center and have some interaction with it, please email him so he can get some feedback.
6. Infection Control/Reusable Medical Equipment Reprocessing - Drs. Horn/White
  - a. Dr. Townsend comment. They are working on creating a share-point site to give information about reprocessing reusable medical equipment and links to manufacturers to make sure we all have the most up to date information. He hopes to have that done before the end of this fiscal year.
7. Teleretinal Imaging Screening Program - Drs. Cavallerano/Selvin unavailable for comment.
8. DoD/VA Vision Center of Excellence & Eye Injury Registry - Dr. Barker
  - a. Dr. Barker comment. The Department of Veteran affairs just gave 7 million dollars to the US Olympics to provide recreation and sport activities to veterans and disabled members of the armed forces. One of the priorities at the Vision Center of Excellence is with disabled sport activities with the US Association of Blind Athletes (USABA). There is a need for examiners that will qualify these athletes to compete for each individual sport. Dr. Townsend and Dr. Barker will send out a separate announcement about this early next week.
    - i. [http://www.navao.org/documents/10\\_21\\_2011/Paralympics\\_Grant2011.doc](http://www.navao.org/documents/10_21_2011/Paralympics_Grant2011.doc)
9. TBI Vision Rehabilitation - Drs. Gagnon/J. Kirby – unavailable for comment.
10. Low Vision Rehabilitation EES Program - Drs. Fuhr/Gagnon/Mancil – unavailable for comment.
11. Optometry Quality Improvement - Dr. Norden – unavailable for comment.
12. VA Systems Redesign/Wait Times - Dr. Horn
  - a. Dr. Horn comment. They are putting together a committee to work with central office on productivity. Central office has already been working with productivity among physicians and dentists and now they are starting to look at optometry.
13. VA Optometric Research & Development - Dr. Mancil
  - a. Dr. Townsend. They re-designed the intranet website for research so; hopefully, it is now more user friendly. You can find out how to participate and some of the career activities that are available to those that want to get more involved with research.  
<http://vaww1.va.gov/OPTOMETRY/research.asp>
14. VHA Optometry Service Websites - Drs. Hamilton/G. Singh

- a. Dr. Singh comment. Right now they are working on getting additional recruits to help out with the websites. There are some promising volunteers.
15. VA Optometry Service Directory - Drs. Egusa/Lim/Pewitt
  - a. Dr. Townsend comment. The Optometry Service Directory has now been updated.
16. VA Residency Trained Optometrist Directory - Dr. Wang
  - a. Dr. Townsend comment. He encourages all residents to have their information listed on the VA Residency Trained Optometrist Directory so they can be notified of future VA optometrist positions available.
17. AFOS Report - Drs. Hunter/Wasik
  - a. Dr. Wasik comment. They had a great meeting prior to the academy meeting in Boston and one of the highlights was that one of their own members, Dr. Scott Slagle, was awarded AFOS Optometrist of the Year. Please congratulate him as this is a great honor. This also qualifies him as one of the 51 candidates for the AOA Optometrist of the Year.
  - b. In addition, there was great continuing education provided and they have a new president, Dr. Mike Sunman of the Navy.
  - c. They are looking at reorganizing some of the committees adding potential members so if there is any AFOS member that wants to participate in any committees, please email her and she will forward your name to Dr. Sunman and the committee chair. There should be more information on the website about the various committees.
  - d. The website has been “overhauled” so look for changes on that.
  - e. She is looking forward to the next meeting prior to SECO in Atlanta. More information to come.
  - f. Just a reminder to pay dues because it is the end of the year. The newsletter should be out soon and there should be a dues reminder as well.
  - g. If you were thinking about becoming a member of AFOS, this is the time of year that is the best time to be a member because you will not be charged for being a member the last quarter of the year. Your dues will start in January but your membership benefits would start now. We encourage those that are thinking about joining AFOS/AOA to do so at this time. Any addition information or questions you may have feel free to email Dr. Wasik.
18. NAVAQ Report - Drs. Kawasaki/Storer
  - a. Dr. Storer comment. Please email us if there are any recommendations about the website, please email us.
  - b. NAVAQ recently held another successful annual business meeting and dinner on October 13 at the Sheraton Boston Hotel in conjunction with the AAO meeting. Many thanks to all of our members and distinguished guests in attendance. Our keynote speaker was Dr. Norman Haffner, President Emeritus of the State University of New York College of Optometry and member of Special Medical Advisory Group for the Department of Veterans Affairs for an unprecedented 25 years. His

presentation was entitled “The VA’s Contribution to Optometric Exceptionalism.” Business meeting minutes will be posted to the member’s area of the website soon and a recap of the dinner meeting will be included in our upcoming newsletter.

- c. Officer election results for the 2011-2013 term were announced at the recent NAVAIO Business Meeting. All incumbents were reelected. Many thanks to all of our candidates and members who voted. We look forward to serving our organization and its members for the next two years.
- d. VA Optometrists attending the Academy Meeting in Boston were invited to attend the Presidential Awards Reception 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. Dr. Clifford Scott, President of the New England College of Optometry, presented medals to Dr. Kenneth Myers (Founding Director of the VA Optometry Service), Dr. Charles Mullen (Former Director of the VA Optometry Service), and Dr. Norman Haffner (President Emeritus of the State University College of Optometry and former 25 year member of Special Medical Advisory Group for the Department of Veterans Affairs). A posthumous medal was also presented to Major Charles R. Soltes, Jr., O.D. for whom the new VA Blind Rehabilitation Center in Long Beach, CA is named after. His wife, Dr. Sally Dang, and her family were present to accept the medal. Many thanks to Dr. Scott and the New England College of Optometry for hosting this very special and memorable event.

News Releases: Dr. Townsend.

1. Dr. Townsend comment. There is one on the polytrauma system of care. If you go to [www.polytrauma.va.gov](http://www.polytrauma.va.gov) there are videos that contain service men and women talking about their injuries and rehabilitation.
  - a. [http://www.navaio.org/documents/10\\_21\\_2011/PolytraumaoutreachNR.docx](http://www.navaio.org/documents/10_21_2011/PolytraumaoutreachNR.docx)
2. For the first time, VA is going to be building a joint polytrauma blind rehabilitation center in Palo Alto and a \$98.8 million dollar contract has been awarded.
  - a. [http://www.navaio.org/documents/10\\_21\\_2011/Palo\\_Alto\\_NR.docx](http://www.navaio.org/documents/10_21_2011/Palo_Alto_NR.docx)

Questions/Comments:

1. Rebecca Sterner, Lebanon VA question. Is anyone dealing with phenylephrine that has to be refrigerated?
  - a. Dr. Wasik comment. It has been implemented in her facility for the past 2-3 years, along with the proparacaine and fluress, phenylephrine needs to be refrigerated. At their facility, they have a med unit that is locked so you can retrieve those medications onsite in the mandated refrigerator. Once the bottle is opened it can be kept with the other diagnostic medications you keep in a locked cabinet in your room.

- b. They will try and get guidance about this issue and send this out to everyone sometime next week.