

Psychology Conference Call

October 28, 2010

Moderators:

Dr. Antonette Zeiss

Acting Deputy Chief Patient Care Services Officer for Mental Health

Dr. Jeffrey Burk

National Mental Health Director, Psychosocial Rehabilitation and Recovery

A. VACO

1. APA Clinical Practice Guidelines project. Dan Kivlahan is a member of the steering committee for the APA Clinical Practice Guideline project. The chair of the group is Steve Holland. The group will oversee APA's process to develop clinical treatment guidelines.
2. WARTORN 1861-2010. This documentary will be shown on HBO at 9:00 PM Eastern time on Veterans Day, November 11, 2010. A pre-screening was held on October 28, with a press conference on October 29. The documentary shows the effects of combat and resulting PTSD throughout the history of the United States as told through a series of vignettes from Service members, Veterans, and their family members. Although treatment for PTSD is not addressed in the documentary, a list of resources will be shown at the end. Because of the potential impact of the documentary on Veterans and their families, VISN Mental Health leaders have been advised about this documentary, as has the staff of the Suicide Prevention Hotline. At this time, HBO is not releasing the video to VA. More details will be forthcoming as they develop.
3. Licensed Professional Counselors and Licensed Marriage and Family Therapists. The qualification standards for these professions have been completed and disseminated to the field as Hybrid Title 38 professions. OMHS was involved in developing the qualification standards, as was the Office of Care Management and Social Work. The qualification standards for both positions are based on the qualification standards of Social Work, and qualified applicants must have been graduated from appropriately accredited programs. The following questions were raised:

Question: If no new positions are authorized, will LPC/LMHC staff need to come out of existing positions?

Answer: Yes. When an existing position becomes vacant, mental health leadership may decide to redefine the position as an LPC or LMFT position.

Question: Has there been any thought at all on how these positions will be integrated into the structure in the field?

Answer: Since the Uniform Mental Health Services Handbook specifies that there needs to be a discipline leader for each mental health discipline, there will need to be an identified leader for LPCs and LMFTs. These professionals are licensed independent providers and will not operate under the license of another mental health professional.

Question: If the number of LPCs and LMFTs coming into the system is minimal, might we see a quota expected, and what would that do for the concept of choosing the best qualified person?

Answer: Congress believes that these are important professionals who should be in VA, so a push for a quota could happen. OMHS' position is that the number and type of clinicians are determined locally based on the needs of the facility and the Veterans and that, when a given position might be filled with more than one type of

mental health professional, applicants for those positions will be competed fairly from among all qualified mental health professionals.

Question: Universities have been asking if VA would provide training for LMHC students. Is that possible?

Answer: Dr. Bob Zeiss from the Office of Academic Affiliations responded. He noted that OAA will not encourage or allow affiliations with any program that are not accredited by the appropriate accrediting organization. In addition, it is unclear who would provide the supervision of the LPC/LMFT trainees, especially if there were not sufficient numbers of LPCs/LMFTs employed at the facility. He asked the participants in the call to consider whether or not they want to provide such a training experience and to what extent VA is interested in hiring LPCs/LMFTs, as that will help to determine whether OAA devotes resources to training programs for them.

Question: If a facility already has LPCs on staff and has placed them organizationally under Psychiatry, do they need to be taken out of Psychiatry and placed in their own department and appoint a lead?

Answer: No. The decision on where to place them organizationally is for the local facility to make. There does need to be an LMFT and LPC leader, and they need to be included on a Mental Health Executive Committee just as the other discipline leads are. Keep in mind, however, that existing LPCs or LMFTs are hired under an older job series (e.g., Social Science Specialist, Health Technician) and not under a new LPC or LMFT job series. For existing staff to be recognized under the qualification standards for LPCs or LMFTs, specific HR procedures must be followed. We expect that HR will send some guidance to the field.

B. Psychology Leadership Meeting: Dr. Lisa Kearney.

The conference will be May 18-21, 2011. The theme for this year's conference is "Advancing VA's T-21 Initiatives: Innovation Through Leadership, Research, Service, and Advocacy." Those who are planning to attend may currently contact the Hotel Contessa to reserve a room, identifying "VA Psychology Conference" as the name for the conference. Please contact Dr. Kearney for further information.

C. AVAPL: Dr. George Shorter.

AVAPL is currently undergoing its membership drive. Please visit the AVAPL website at <http://www.avapl.org> to join or renew membership. AVAPL is also soliciting content for its web-based newsletter. Please contact Dr. Shorter for more information. Finally, AVAPL sent a representative to the recent APA Board of Educational Affairs (BEA) meeting. Dr. Jody Rubenstein will submit a report about the meeting for the newsletter.

D. VA Psychology Training Council: Dr. Robert Goldberg.

1. VAPTC has established a liaison relationship with the Board of Educational Affairs. Advocacy activity at the September BEA Educational Leadership Conference has resulted in \$7 million for graduate psychology education being included in the House version of the GPE bill. At this time, however, there is no provision for psychology in the Senate version of the bill. If funded, VA training programs would be eligible for funding from this source. Dr. Goldberg attended the October 22-24 BEA meeting. BEA voted to establish a task force for psychology training in primary/integrated health care and will appoint a group of experts to craft a conference proposal. Dr. Goldberg discussed with BEA Chair Dr. Janet Matthews about inclusion of a VA psychologist in this group in view of our leadership role in providing this type of care and training.

2. On behalf of VAPTC, Dr. Goldberg (Chair) and Dr. Steve McCutcheon (Chair-Elect) attended the October 21 CCTC meeting. VA was hailed for having established 40 new internship positions. Contact information was provided for all our newly established internship and postdoctoral programs to the training councils at the meeting. There will be a major Professional Psychology Education and Training Conference which potentially could recast all of psychology training.
3. The VAPTC conducted a “nuts-and-bolts” telephone conference training for the directors of newly established internships on October 19. VAPTC provided contact information to National Matching Services to facilitate their registration in the APPIC Match as non-APPIC Members.
4. The VAPTC will conduct analogous telephone conference training for the directors of newly established postdoctoral fellowships on November 3.

E. APA Division 18, Section: Anne Klee

On behalf of the VA section of Division 18, Dr. Klee thanked everyone for the response to an email message for reviewers for Division 18's symposium at the next APA Convention in Washington, DC. There was much interest from the membership, and it looks like only four reviewers of the fifteen people who offered to review proposals will be needed. This is a good sign that VA psychologists want to get more involved in Division 18 and are exploring ways to engage them in division activities. The VA Section of Division 18 continues to be involved in the planning of the VA Psychology Leadership Conference in San Antonio. Everyone is encouraged to attend.

F. Office of Academic Affiliation: Dr. Robert Zeiss

A total of 90 new psychology training positions have been allocated for 2011-2012. Also, nine new internship programs and 16 new post doctoral programs were allocated. Thanks to the VA Psychology Training Council for coordinating a role in educating, consulting, and mentoring activities for the new training directors. OAA is anticipating having a face-to-face meeting in the spring for new training directors.

G. Questions/Comments/Issues?

Question: Is there any additional information on the Disability Benefit Questionnaire and when they might be distributed for PTSD and other MH disorders?

Answer: No further information at this time.