

Minutes
Psychology Call
June 23, 2011
1-800-767-1750; access code 17400

1. VACO – OMHS Update: Dr. Antonette Zeiss
 - a. Recent Ruling by the Ninth Circuit Court
 - OMHS is working closely with Office of General Counsel (OGC) and Department of Justice to determine whether VA will appeal the ruling.
 - Several volumes of information have been given to OGC and the Department of Justice to reflect the current state of VHA Mental Health Services.
 - b. Congressional interests
 - The House Veterans Affairs Committee (HVAC) and Senate Veterans Affairs Committee (SVAC) are both interested in the Ninth Circuit Court decision. OMHS has provided testimony to both groups.
 - Dr. Zeiss' testimony is available on the HVAC website.
 - OMHS will be providing regular updates on mental health to VA leadership, starting with the vacancy survey.
 - c. Supplemental Funding From OMHS
 - Funding has been sent from OMHS to the VISNs to support VA training, travel for training, and contracted expansion for C&P exams (including contract, fee basis, and overtime for staff).
 - The original allocation provided a baseline amount of money plus a supplemental based on the number of mental health staff in the VISN. The VISNs made the final decision about how to disperse the money.
 - The money can only be used as outlined in the memo without approval from OMHS.
 - OMHS has been asked about using the money to reimburse travel that has already taken place. This can only be done if the money that is freed up is used for other mental health purposes.
 - d. Vacancy Survey
 - This survey is complete and has gone forward to the Deputy Secretary for review.
 - e. Psychology National Professional Standards Board. New members have been appointed.
 - Three year terms:
 - Loren Wilkenfeld, who continues as co-chair (with Wayne Siegel)
 - Ken Adams
 - Steve Herman
 - John Beauvais
 - One year terms:

- George Shorter
- Lisa Kearney

f. Evidence-Based Practice – Dr. Brad Karlin

- A new evidence-based psychotherapy training program, CBT for insomnia, has been launched, and training is underway.
- The first group has successfully completed the training including the ongoing consultation. Ninety percent of the clinicians who participated have successfully completed the training, and seventy-five percent of the patients completed the protocol or achieved early symptom relief. Of those who have completed the treatment, eight-six percent had either a remission of symptoms or had mild insomnia symptoms at the completion of treatment.
- A full year of training is scheduled for next year.
- There is also a new initiative to implement Motivational Interviewing (MI). This is a competency-based training program that will be an intensive learning experience for clinicians and will be implemented very broadly in mental health. Initial training efforts will focus on mental health staff, with the first training beginning in July and the second training occurring later this summer. There will be more training in the next fiscal year.
- Primary Care/Mental Health Integration (PCMHI) staff might be eligible to participate in this training. Please note there is MI training being offered by the National Center for Health Promotion and Disease Prevention (NCP), but that is not specifically designed for mental health settings.
- The current MI training is not intended for the Substance Use Disorder (SUD) setting. There is another MI training being developed that will be launched early next fiscal year, Motivational Enhancement Therapy, which will be specific to SUD settings.

2. AVAPL – Dr. George Shorter

- Election for President and Treasurer (four candidates for President, and two candidates for Treasurer) is currently underway.
- Through the AVAPL listserv, the schedule for the upcoming APA Convention has been published. The schedule is also published on the AVAPL website (<http://www.avapl.org>).

3. Psychology Leadership Conference – Dr. Lisa Kearney

- Dr. Manny Garcia is the new chairperson and is leading the planning for next year's conference.
- There were over 200 participants at this year's meeting.
- The planning committee is analyzing the feedback from the meeting. There was positive feedback concerning the breakout sessions.
- Please provide any feedback, questions or concerns to Dr. Kearney or Dr. Garcia.

4. Training

- a. Office of Academic Affiliations (OAA) – Dr. Robert Zeiss
- The deadline for proposals for rural internships is June 30.

- An additional three postdoctoral fellowship positions will become available June 28. Information on this will be sent to the group.
- There will be another opportunity to request additional trainees. Information concerning this is posted on the OAA website.
- Questions have been raised about benefits for trainees and about how psychology interns and post doctoral fellows are appointed. Before 2001, interns and postdocs were not eligible for medical or life insurance benefits during their training years. Congress later changed this, but the trainee's appointment must be more than a year in order to be eligible for benefits. General guidance to the field states that trainees can be appointed for 3-6 years, which then makes them eligible for benefits. Those facilities that do not want to appoint trainees for 3-6 years can appoint them for one year and a day, which also makes them eligible for benefits. New OAA guidance will be written on this; with any luck, this guidance will be available by the time of the next Psychology conference call.

b. Training Council Update – Dr. Robert Goldberg

- In the last six weeks, the Executive Committee has been organizing and conducting training and educational activities for training directors.
- The annual Open Forum will be held Saturday, August 6, 9AM-11AM, at the Division 18 Hospitality suite at the APA Convention.
- The annual business meeting of the VA Psychology Training Council will be in the morning on August 22, just before the National Mental Health Conference in Baltimore. There will also be an afternoon continuing education forum for training directors the same day.
- The VAPTC is conducting a series of conference calls for postdoctoral training directors on COA requirements to facilitate their accreditation. There will also be a call concerning prospective programs on July 13 at 2:00 Eastern.
- Tips for training directors are uploaded once a month on VA SharePoint site.
- Steve McCutcheon has been elected chair of the council.
- The Commission on Accreditation proposed implementing regulation on types of data that programs need to present in order for them to demonstrate effective outcomes. A public comment will be posted on the APA website on behalf of the committee.

5. Division 18 – Dr. Ann Klee

- VA Section meeting will be held on Friday, August 5, at noon during the APA Convention.
- Division 18 will be hosting the VA Psychology Training Council on August 6, 9-11 AM. Following the meeting there will be an internship fair with a focus on new programs.
- Division 18 is hosting quarterly conversations to speak with psychologists on different topics. Information has been sent out, and calls will be held in September and December.

- **Congratulations to Dr. Toni Zeiss honored by the Association for Behavioral and Cognitive Therapies (ABCT) with the Career Lifetime Achievement Award.**

6. Questions/ Comments/ Issues