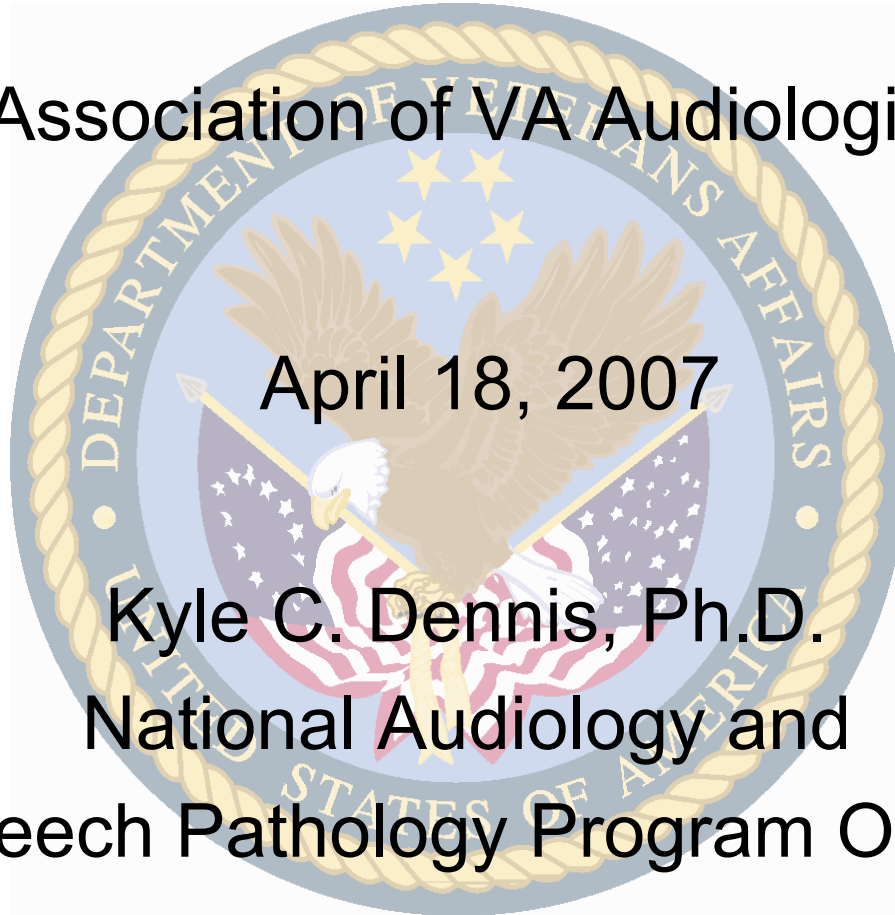


Hybrid Title 38: Lessons Learned

Association of VA Audiologists

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HT38 Implementation

- Professional standards board structure
 - 4 regional audiology boards
 - National Board
 - Audiologist/Speech-Language Pathologist Board
 - Research Board
- Qualification standards released (October 2006)
- Professional Standards Boards established
- About 60 PSB members appointed and trained
- Nearly 1,000 audiologists and speech-language pathologists were boarded.



Special Boarding

- Special, one-time boarding
 - Compare current employees against new standard
 - Consideration for promotion and advancement
 - Special boarding was different than regular boarding
 - One-time review of credentials, education, and assignments
 - Board actions could not be appealed
 - Boards considered facility recommendations, but were not bound by them.
 - Every employee was considered for promotion and advancement.
- Sequence: special boarding, advancement, promotion



Special Boarding

- Review of licensure, education, and current assignment
- Assignment based on:
 - functional statement
 - supervisory or facility letter
 - employee-supplied material
 - HR-supplied material
 - Education and licensure was independently verified whenever possible



Promotions

- Promotion (grades)
 - Regional Boards—GS9-12
 - National Board—GS13 and GS14
 - Research Board—all grades
 - A/SLP Board—all grades
 - Supervisory A/SLP considered by National Board
- Board recommended promotion when supported by material in the boarding packet, whether or not it was supported by the facility.



Advancement

- Special advancement for achievement (SAA)
- Awarded in the form of steps (one to five)
- Boards rarely granted more than 3 steps
- Each step is a permanent pay adjustment (\$3,000 per step)
- Boards followed criteria stated in VA Handbook 5017, Part V.
- Advancement was considered separately from promotion



Criteria for Advancement

- Supervisory certification of higher than fully successful performance
- Potential to assume greater responsibility (waived for special boarding)
- Achievements outside of VA duties and responsibilities
- Achievements since last appointment
- Unlimited reach back (assuming that achievements had not been rewarded or considered during promotion)



Criteria for Advancement

- (1) Professional attainments in health care management, education, research, and patient care
- (2) Attainment of certification by appropriate national certifying body
- (3) Academic achievement by completion of advanced degree
- (4) Election to office of professional organization at state or national level
- (5) Recognition of outstanding and exceptional achievement by a professional or academic organization
- (6) Independently producing research or serving as principle investigator or major contributing member in research resulting in published results
- (7) Appointment to university faculty
- (8) Appointment to State licensing board or national certifying or accrediting body



Problems Encountered

- Boards packets sent to wrong boards
- Packets not submitted
- Missing documentation
- Inadequate information on pay rate, date of appointment
- Inconsistency in opportunities for employees to submit material they were entitled to submit for consideration (e.g. update sheets, vita).
- Lack of independent verification of licensure and education
- Inadequate supervisor training
 - Resulted in obvious weaknesses that affected outcomes
 - Missing or inadequate supervisory support



Functional Statements

- Weak or poorly written functional statements
 - Did not support promotion
 - Did not comply with qualification standard
 - Not supportive of the grade
 - Copied qualification standard without being customized for the employee or the facility
 - Generic statements (not specific to the facility or employee)
 - Not specific to duties or clinical assignments
 - Even a few with other VA medical center name



Problems Encountered

- Local HR may not have received appropriate guidance on how to complete the packets/checklists or were overwhelmed at the complexity of the task.
- Local HR may need more guidance. Many packets were technically incorrect or incomplete.
- Money was not allocated to fund board process (e.g. shipping of packages in a timely manner)



Recommendations for Improvement

- Better, more comprehensive training
 - Training modules need to be developed for the boards that are specific to the charge of that board.
 - Separate training for regional and national boards.
- Online document sharing and signing
- Supervisor training on qualification standards, boarding process
 - Checklist for supervisors with required documents and elements for advancement and/or promotion clearly defined (including assumption of greater responsibility and fully successful performance evaluation).
- VHA guidance on promotion and advancement criteria to improve consistency
- Consistent boarding packet structure (required documents, order)



Recommendations for Improvement

- Additional technical information:
 - Grade at entrance on duty and/or special hiring or pay considerations need to be noted
 - Specific information on pay rate and step (e.g. no 00 or N steps)
 - More information about initial appointments and whether some items that could trigger an SAA had already been addressed at a local level.
 - Better information regarding university appointments and academic duties



How Will Recurring Board Process be Different?

- Employees entitled to annual consideration for advancement and/or promotion
- Employees at GS9-12 entitled to reconsideration (appeal) of local management promotion decisions by the Regional PSB
- Special process for reconsideration of National PSB actions (GS13 and GS14 employees)
- Employees may be recommend for advancement or promotion at any time supervisor deems them qualified.
- Management may promote up to and including FPL (GS-12)
- Employees above FPL or who are considered for promotion above FPL will be considered by National PSB (board action)
- All recommendations for advancement (SAA) go to appropriate PSB



How Will Recurring Board Process be Different?

- Recommendations for promotion must be supported by:
 - Supervisor letter of support
 - Facility position management (e.g. resource board)
 - Assignment (functional statement)
 - Evidence of higher than fully successful performance and potential to assume greater responsibilities



What's Next?

- Transition to permanent (recurring) boards
- National review of PAID records to ensure all current employees have been boarded
- Supervisory and HR staff training
- VHA guidance on promotion and advancement to ensure consistency among boards
- National quality review
 - Actions for appointment and promotion will be reviewed
 - Sample from each local and regional board
 - Review by National Board with reporting to VHA management and union representatives
- Facilities and networks given authority to establish local boards for appointments (new hires) only.



Thanks for Listening!
