Responding to the Demand: SLPs in the VA

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Responding to the Demand

- 246 clinical SLPs
- 10 research SLPs
- 58 audiologists/ speech language pathologists
- Staffing levels have been fairly stable for the past five years
National SLP Statistics (FY05)

- Outpatient visits – 88,318 (down 3% from FY04)
- Number of unique patients – 24,476 (no change from FY04)
- Visits per unique – 3.27 (down 3% from FY04)

Note: SLP inpatient utilization data is not available (reported by DRG or treating specialty. Inpatient data is now included in National Care Database. Source: KLF Workload Report
Speech-Language Pathology
Outpatient Visits

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>VISITS</th>
<th>UNIQUES</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
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<td>FY05</td>
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Areas of Practice

- Dysphagia
- Cognitive-communication: geriatrics, stroke, TBI, polytrauma
- Voice: laryngectomy, vent dependent
- Assistive devices: AAC, CPD
- Education: patients, families, providers
Traineeships

- 19 Clinical Fellowships
- 42 Masters Traineeships
- Competitive site selection using automated standards of excellence
- Training to full scope of practice
- Staffing, workload, facilities, EBP, outcomes
## Quality of SLP Student Training

### SPEECH-LANGUAGE PATHOLOGY SCORES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Measure</th>
<th>2005</th>
<th>2006</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Overall (Goal=85)</td>
<td>91</td>
<td>89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rated Excellent or Very Good</td>
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<td>90</td>
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<tr>
<td>Recommend to Others</td>
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<td>93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Choose Training Again</td>
<td>91</td>
<td>89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>As good as Other Training</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>89</td>
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### VA-WIDE SCORES

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<td>78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>88</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
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<td>85</td>
<td>87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>As good as Other Training</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>85</td>
</tr>
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</table>
Trainees Considering VA Employment

- SLP trainees considering VA employment
  - 45% before training
  - 78% after training

- VA-wide
  - 33% before training
  - 66% after training

Source: 2006 Learner perception survey, Office of Academic Affiliations
Hot topics

- VA Dysphagia Directive
- Polytrauma System of Care
- Hybrid Title 38
VA Dysphagia Directive

- VHA Directive *Management of Patients with Feeding and Swallowing Problems in Veterans Health Administration Facilities* Released 5-17-06
  - “It is VHA policy that all patients with swallowing or feeding disorders must be appropriately assessed, referred for diagnostic evaluation, monitored, treated, managed, and followed throughout the continuum of care including hospitalization, outpatient care, and when discharged.”
  - SLP had lead role on the multidisciplinary task force charged with developing the directive
  - SLPs have lead role on multidisciplinary task forces at local facilities charged with developing local policies and procedures to implement the National Directive
Polytrauma Defined

- Trauma to several body parts and organ systems
- Occur at the same time
- Cause physical, cognitive, or psychosocial impairments and functional disability
VA Polytrauma System Of Care (PSC)

Specialized sites for rehabilitative services
- Geographically distributed
- Integrate care at one location
- Coordinate life-long care across a continuum of services
- Interdisciplinary rehabilitation teams
- Polytrauma Telehealth Network
- Proactive case management
Organization of the VA Polytrauma System of Care

- **Regional**
  - Polytrauma Rehabilitation Centers (PRC)
  - Regional referrals for acute comprehensive rehabilitation

- **Network**
  - Polytrauma Network Sites (PNS)
  - VISN level referrals for post acute rehabilitation

- **Facility**
  - Polytrauma Support Clinic Team (PSCT)
  - Polytrauma Point of Contact (PPOC)
Comprehensive Care for the Polytrauma Patient

- Blast Injury Patient
  - Hearing Loss & Tinnitus
  - Head Injury
  - Emotional Shock
  - Orthopedic & Soft Tissue Trauma
  - Amputations

- Audiology Program
- Traumatic Brain Injury Rehab
- Blind Rehabilitation
- PTSD Treatment
- Amputee Rehabilitation
- Wound and Physical Medicine Care

Emotional Shock: Head Injury
Orthopedic & Soft Tissue Trauma: Amputations
Hearing Loss & Tinnitus: Blast Injury Patient
Blind Rehabilitation: Vision Loss
PTSD Treatment: Traumatic Brain Injury Rehab
Amputee Rehabilitation: Wound and Physical Medicine Care
Wound and Physical Medicine Care: Blast Injury Patient
Role of SLPs in Polytrauma Rehabilitation

- SLP is core discipline in interdisciplinary team
- Supplemental funds to support SLP positions at PRCs and PNSs
- Participate in program development
- Educational activities as providers and beneficiaries
Audiologists and SLPs added to Hybrid Title 38 as of December 6, 2003 (PL 108-170)

New qualification standards approved

Special one-time boarding of all employees during FY06

Professional standards boards have been implemented, one national and four regional boards

Goal: Improved recruiting and retention
Productivity

- Joint Audiology and SLP Task Force
- Collaboration with ACA and Physician Productivity Group
- Productivity model development
- Alpha testing at selected sites
Thanks for Listening