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The Journey to Certifying the First Audiologists with Pediatric Audiology Specialty Certification

By John A. Coverstone, AuD

As the profession of audiology grows and matures, there is an increasing need for specialists in audiology to become highly trained in working with specific populations, as well as a continuing need for general practitioners. The American Board of Audiology (ABA) is an organization that develops certifications for all audiologists desiring to accomplish a higher level of training than that required by licensure, whether in general practice or specialty practice. Following AudiologyNOW!® 2011 in April, a group of audiologists sat for the inaugural examination in pediatric audiology. In doing so, the ABA and

audiology celebrated years of work by the Pediatric Audiology Specialty Certification (PASC) Task Force, the ABA Board of Governors, and subject matter experts in the profession.

The reasons for taking this examination were as varied as the audiologists who elected to sit for it. Some wanted to recognize or promote their pediatric specialty. Some wanted to set an example for their colleagues, who they are encouraging to become certified. Some felt it was an important step forward for the profession and wanted to be a part of it. No matter the reason, the ABA applauds and thanks all those who took the examination,

Next Pediatric Audiology Specialty Certification Exam

Thursday, November 3, 2011 – 8:00–11:00 am

The next pediatric audiology examination will be administered prior to the Academy of Doctors of Audiology Convention, Hyatt Regency Coconut Point Resort, Bonita Springs, FL.

To obtain an application, visit www.americanboardofaudiology.org.

Exam applications are due October 3, 2011.

★ ADA CONVENTION 2011 ★

and commends the audiologists who passed the exam and have now received the Pediatric Audiology Specialty Certification.

This exam and certification, as with the Cochlear Implant Specialty Certification, was created with tremendous effort and dedication on the part of hundreds of pediatric audiologists who volunteered their time, resources, and expertise to this endeavor. The examination was first framed by the creation of subject areas, which are available on the ABA Web site at www.americanboard-of-audiology.org. These areas were further delineated into sub-specialty areas and then weighted according to importance of knowledge for a pediatric audiologist.

Once the subject areas were finalized, additional subject matter experts (SMEs) were recruited to write, edit, and revise (and edit, and revise!) exam questions. A few hundred exam questions were drafted so that future examinations could draw from a large pool and vary from any other exam that had been provided. The first group of candidates took the inaugural examination, after it had been Beta tested, with 150 questions so that each could be rated for performance and a cut score (percentage of typical pediatric audiologists who would correctly answer each question) be calculated.

Finally, additional SMEs were recruited—along with existing experts—and the exam was reviewed. Every SME rated each question according to how he or she believed it should perform and weighted that against how it did perform, with the benefit of discussion among the SMEs. A final rating was given with a cumulative cut score calculated by the psychometrician assigned to this project.

As you can see, the process was very involved, with each of the steps requiring months of work and many meetings and workshops. The result is a comprehensive and rigorous examination that truly tests the knowledge of a pediatric audiologist. It has become apparent that Pediatric Audiology Specialty Certification is meaningful and useful for identifying audiologists who have chosen to make pediatrics their specialty area and have achieved additional training in this area.

Although only a handful of audiologists currently hold pediatric certification, it is already become the standard in this specialty area. Employers have begun to look at pediatric certification for an upcoming standard for their audiologists. Primary care audiologists have already expressed interest in using pediatric certification as their standard for making referrals to pediatric specialists. Physicians and other health-care providers are sure to follow. With the ABA's commitment to maintaining the rigor of this examination and the high standards for maintaining pediatric certification, there is no doubt that this will become the standard for pediatric specialists in audiology.

If you are interested in becoming a candidate for certification in pediatric audiology or cochlear implants, or would like to join the growing ranks of board certified audiologists, visit www.americanboardofaudiology.org or contact the ABA office at 800-881-5410 or aba@audiology.org. Join the ranks of audiologists who hold themselves to a higher standard. Become certified today! 🎉

John Coverstone, AuD, is a member of the ABA Board of Governors.

Join us in extending our congratulations to the inaugural class of Pediatric Audiology Specialty Certification certificants!

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