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Annual Pay Awards of \$2,000–\$5,000 When Holding ABA Certification Eligible Military Audiologists

By Jeffery L. Young

In February, the Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense, Health Affairs, released new guidelines approving annual pay awards for nonphysician health-care providers who hold board certification or specialty certification from nonphysician specialty boards. Summarized in a memorandum, Assistant Secretary of Defense, Jonathan Woodson, MD, signed Health Affairs (HA) Policy 12-002 (Department of Defense, 2012), which outlines all military occupations that fall within the purview of receiving board certification pay for nonphysician health-care providers within the Department of Defense (DOD). Dr. Woodson is responsible for ensuring the effective execution of the DOD medical mission.

Inclusion of ABA Board Certified in Audiology®, Cochlear Implants Specialty Certification, and Pediatric Audiology Specialty Certification for annual pay awards demonstrates that the assistant secretary of defense has recognized audiologists holding ABA certifications as achieving the highest possible level of knowledge in their profession. This “will help to ensure the highest quality of care is provided

to DOD beneficiaries...and the pay also serves as an incentive to retain sufficient numbers of high-quality health care providers in the Military Departments,” noted the memorandum.

The assistant secretary of defense’s memorandum specifically included ABA board certification and ABA specialty certifications. Providers who are active in the Army, Navy, or Air Force are eligible for annual pay awards that range from \$2,000–\$5,000. The amount of pay depends on years of creditable service. Pay can range from \$2,000 annually if the audiologist has been in the service for less than 10 years to an annual payment of \$5,000 for more than 18 years of military service.

Audiologists must meet eligibility requirements to receive this board certification pay incentive. Besides being an Air Force, Army, or Navy officer they must also be a privileged provider within their military treatment facility. Audiologists must also have postbaccalaureate degrees in their field as well as be certified by a professional board in their clinic specialty.

Those audiologists in the Department of Veterans Affairs are



HEALTH AFFAIRS

THE ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF DEFENSE

1200 DEFENSE PENTAGON
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13 Feb 12

MEMORANDUM FOR ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF THE ARMY (MANPOWER AND
RESERVE AFFAIRS)
ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF THE NAVY (MANPOWER AND
RESERVE AFFAIRS)
ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF THE AIR FORCE (MANPOWER
AND RESERVE AFFAIRS)

SUBJECT: Board Certification Pay for Non-Physician Health Care Providers

This memorandum promulgates policy guidance for the implementation of non-physician health care provider board certified pay for Army, Navy, and Air Force officers designated as Non-Physician Health Care Providers. The Assistant Secretary of Defense for Health Affairs memorandum of March 9, 2009, is hereby rescinded.

Non-physician health care provider board certified pay shall be awarded only to those designated non-physician health care providers (Attachment 1) who are certified in their particular specialty by an approved board (Attachment 2). The Service Deputy Surgeons General have reviewed, validated, and concurred with these revised lists.

The point of contact for this action is Dr. Gary Matteson. Dr. Matteson may be reached at (703) 681-8890, or Gary.Matteson@ha.osd.mil.

Jonathan Woodson, M.D.

Attachments:
As stated

HA-Policy 12-002
HA-Policy 12-002

Audiology/Speech Pathology:
Sponsor: American Board of Audiology
Responsibility: Clinical Certification Board
Boards:
1) Audiology
2) Advanced Certification with Specialty Recognition (various)



ABA Pediatric Audiology and Cochlear Implants Specialty Certification Exam Dates

October 13, 2012

Children's Hospital Colorado—Denver, CO
Hosted by Children's Hospital Colorado and the Colorado Academy of Audiology

APPLICATION DEADLINE: AUGUST 13, 2012

April 7, 2013

Anaheim Convention Center—Anaheim, CA
Directly following AudiologyNOW!® 2013

October 2013

Cincinnati Children's Hospital—Cincinnati, OH
Hosted by Cincinnati Children's Hospital and the Ohio Academy of Audiology

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not likely to receive an increase in pay based solely on board certification. However, specialty board certification may be considered as an example of a "professional accomplishment" that could help justify an advancement above the full performance level as an audiologist with "special clinical program responsibilities." Specialty certification could be used to demonstrate ability to apply advanced audiologic knowledge, theories, and techniques, which is a requirement to be considered as an "advanced practice" audiologist.

In addition to audiologists, there are over a dozen nonphysician providers that are included under the current policy. These include dietitians, occupational therapists, and optometrists among many others. All nonphysician providers fall under the same requirements and pay structure.

Obtaining and maintaining board certification is critical to ensure that an audiologist remains current and up-to-date with current practices and procedures within our scope of care. **AB**

Jeffery L. Young, AuD, is an audiologist at the Naval Hospital Camp Lejeune, ENT/Audiology Clinic, in Camp Lejeune, NC.

Reference

Department of Defense. (2012) *Memorandum for Assistant Secretary of the Army (Manpower and Reserve Affairs), Navy (Manpower and Reserve Affairs), and Air Force (Manpower and Reserve Affairs)*. www.health.mil/Libraries/ha_policies_and_guidelines/board_certification_pay_for_non-physician_health_care_providers.pdf.