



January 10, 2012

Dear VA Psychologist:

Please make plans to join us for the 15th annual VA Psychology Leadership Conference, which will be held in San Antonio, Texas, April 11-14, 2012. The conference is co-sponsored by the Association of Veterans Affairs Psychologist Leaders (AVAPL), the American Psychological Association (APA) Practice Directorate, and APA's Division of Psychologists in Public Service (Division 18). The Office of Mental Health Services and Office of Mental Health Operations at VA Central Office also provide collaborative support for the conference.

The theme of this year's conference is "VA Psychology Advancing the Transformation: New Directions and Technologies for Care." Consistent with that theme, the presentations will highlight innovative strategies to improve the provision of mental health care to our Veterans, including expansion and new directions in Telemental health and new informatics and technologies used to compliment mental health care. Presentations on effective strategies for assessment and treatment of complex clinical presentations and current activities in VHA regarding mental health outcome and performance measures are also planned. Based on their success at last year's conference, some of this year's topics will allow opportunities for smaller group discussions through the use of small group breakout sessions. We have two Saturday workshop options planned for this year, one focusing upon ethics and one focused on developing and implementing a Telemental health program. We will have key leaders from the Department of Veterans Affairs and APA in attendance, including a keynote address from the APA President. In addition to the presentations listed above, we will have updates from the Offices of Mental Health Services, Mental Health Operations, and Academic Affiliations. A draft agenda is attached to this letter. The committee is still working on additional topics and finalizing the agenda, so be sure to visit the AVAPL conference website regularly to see the most updated agenda. (<http://conference.avapl.org>).

The poster session theme is "Innovative Practices in VA Psychology," but other poster topics will be considered. Our poster sessions have proven to be a popular feature of the conference with more presenters every year. We are encouraging all individuals involved in developing and implementing innovative practices and technologies to submit posters. Abstracts for the poster sessions are to be sent by email to Manny Garcia, Ph.D., Chair, VA Psychology Leadership Conference Planning Committee (manuel.garcia@va.gov), by February 27, 2012 (see attached submission form).

All VA psychologists and trainees are invited to this conference. Conference activities will commence on Wednesday, April 11th, with the informal social hour that evening from 5:30-7:30 pm. The social hours have always been an ideal time to reconnect and network with fellow

psychologists. Participant should plan to arrive on Wednesday in time for the social hour. The formal conference agenda starts first thing Thursday morning, April 12th, and goes through the end of the day on Friday, April 13th. Our Saturday Workshops will be held from 8:00 a.m. – Noon on April 14th. A social hour will follow each of the Thursday and Friday sessions.

We will again be offering two \$300 scholarships to a VA pre-doctoral intern and a VA post-doctoral resident who is planning to pursue a career in the VA and who are willing to assist in some of the behind-the-scenes tasks of running the conference. Selection for these will be done randomly among those who indicate on the conference registration form that they would like to be considered for the scholarship.

This year's conference will be held at The Westin Riverwalk hotel located at 420 West Market Street, San Antonio, TX 78205 (Phone: 210.224.6500.) The cost of registration for AVAPL and Division 18 members will be \$250, non-members-\$330, Pre-doctoral interns-\$115, and Post-doctoral fellows-\$150, while the post-conference workshop will be \$75. The conference registration fee covers food and refreshment on Thursday and Friday. In addition, you will receive 12 APA-approved CEUs for attending the Thursday and Friday portion of the conference. Those staying for the Saturday workshop will receive a continental breakfast and 4 additional APA-approved CEU's. The cost of the hotel will be \$106/night + 16.75% tax, but they will honor tax exempt forms for federal employees so please make sure to bring these with you. When you call the hotel, please note that you are calling as part of the "VA Psychology Leadership Conference."

Please share this information with all VA psychologists (administrators, clinicians, and researchers) and trainees at your station. Information on how to join AVAPL or APA Division 18 prior to the conference (to receive the price break for registration) and additional conference information can be obtained from Manny Garcia, Ph.D., Chair, VA Psychology Leadership Conference Planning Committee (manuel.garcia@va.gov).

We are looking forward to seeing you in San Antonio!

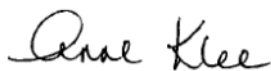
Sincerely,



Pam Fischer, Ph.D.
President, Association of
Veterans Affairs Psychologist Leaders



KATHERINE NORDAL, PH.D.
Executive Director, Practice Directorate,
American Psychological Association



Anne Klee, Ph.D.
Chair- VA Section, Division 18
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