

The Standard-Bearer

APRIL 2009



National Accreditation Council
for Agencies Serving People with Blindness or Visual Impairment

www.nacasb.org

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J. Graham Strong, O.D

THE NEW NAC

**A Message from the President of the NAC Board,
R. Tracy Williams, OD**

Greetings to our NAC membership and our many supporters.

As Spring time begins to brighten our spirits with new blooms and a sense of excitement for many good times ahead, I am also moved by the hard work and progress made by our talented NAC Board members and staff.

The "NEW NAC" is gaining more recognition and support thanks to our diverse Board membership which includes leaders from optometry, ophthalmology, occupational therapy, numerous rehabilitation professions (including O&M specialists, low vision therapists, rehabilitation educators, rehabilitation administrators), representatives from national support groups and associations including blinded veterans, and most importantly, service consumers with vision loss.

This team of dedicated people is focused in an on-going review process to establish evidenced based standards that inform agencies and programs serving people with vision loss seeking to provide "best practice" services. We have learned that "best practice" results are best achieved when consumers and professionals partner together in the best interests of people with vision loss. The majority of our NAC Board members are distinguished individuals with permanent vision loss who have advanced degrees in rehabilitation education.

On-site NAC review teams help member agencies recognize and commend areas of service strength, as well as areas where

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THE NEW NAC

A Message from the President of the NAC Board, R. Tracy Williams, OD

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improvements are possible. This peer-review process promotes better and more effective services within accredited agencies. Successful NAC accreditation represents a tangible validation of the quality and consistency of an agency's services.

The "New NAC" is now growing and our insert article by Board member Dr. Graham Strong is just one example of the quality of work applied to the new NAC standards. We are proud to be a partner to the NEI/NEHEP (National Eye Institute/National Education Program), a member of Vision Serve and to have the support of the BVA (Blinded Veterans Association). We care about children and adults with vision loss.

Feel free to contact us. Have a wonderful Spring!

Best regards, R. Tracy Williams, OD

R. Tracy Williams OD obtained his Doctorate of Optometry from the Illinois College of Optometry in 1979 under the mentorship of Alfred Rosenbloom, O.D. Dr Williams was selected to participate in a low vision rehabilitation externship with Eleanor Faye MD of the NY Lighthouse (now Lighthouse International). After his training he received an appointment as assistant professor at the Illinois College where he served 4 years and was twice honored as "Faculty Member of the Year." Dr Williams served 10 year as the director of the low vision services at the Chicago Lighthouse and received awards for outstanding services.

Dr. Williams is currently the Executive Director of the Spectrios Institute for Low Vision at the Deicke House (1986-present) and is a Clinical Associate Professor of Ophthalmology and Director of Low Vision Rehabilitation Services at Loyola University (1998-present).

He is the immediate Past Chairman of the American Optometric Association's Low Vision Rehabilitation Section.

He is also a Co-Chair of the National Eye Institute (NEI)/National Eye Health Education Program (NEHEP) Low Vision Subcommittee as well as a Governor appointee to the Illinois Blind Services Planning Committee (since 1994)



EXECUTIVE DIRECTORS REPORT

by Steven K. Hegedeos

Accreditation is an activity long accepted in the United States but generally unknown in most other countries. Unlike the United States, other countries rely on governmental supervision and control of rehabilitation and educational institutions.

NAC considers the characteristics of each individual institution in its entirety when they apply for accreditation and gives appropriate attention to the services offered, to their student and/or clients, to the personnel providing services, to prevailing financial conditions, and to the institutions administrative strengths. A NAC accreditation review includes:

- a. An examination of the appropriateness of the purposes;
- b. An identification of the resources needed to accomplish its purposes;
- c. An evaluation of the method of monitoring accomplishment; and
- d. A listing of the expectation that the agency/school will accomplish its purposes.

The value of accreditation is that the service providers can be confident in their own performance because their services have been reviewed by peer-professionals measured against a set of quantitative and qualitative national standards. Accreditation assures government entities, donors and private citizens that the value of their tax dollars or private donations is used in the best possible manner.

The process of a NAC accreditation is aimed at the primary objective of qualifying the rehabilitation services that result in preventing disability, impairment and handicap! There is a long history of the discussions and issues contrasting the value of the 'medical model' compared to the 'rehabilitation model' of treatment (The rehabilitation model is fundamentally an "educational" model.) Obviously, both are important models of care. While the medical model is based on a proper diagnosis followed by treatment leading to an expected cure, the rehabilitation model aims at teaching or providing modifications that result in increased functions to eliminate the disability, impairment and handicap that might remain in the absence of a medical cure. In short, a person with vision loss can and should be able to live life to their fullest ability, yet surely would need to learn certain modifications that the rehabilitation process offers.

The relevance of NAC is based on its involvement in every issue affecting people with vision loss. NAC's standards are relevant particularly because of the expected outcome emphasizing the prevention of disability, impairment or handicap. For example, Orientation and Mobility (O&M) training or low vision training prevents the disability of traveling with a degree of independence just as Braille teaching or computer skills prevents illiteracy and enhance communications.

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EXECUTIVE DIRECTORS REPORT

by Steven K. Hegedeos

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The eight (8) page scientific article insert, written by the Vice President of our Board, Dr. Strong, illustrates the importance of the notion of "prevention" with regard to service standards. NAC standards setting method has become an unprecedented feature that is sure to be followed by others. Dr. Strong's article speaks for itself but the notion that 'an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure' becomes glaringly obvious.

NAC's prevention-based standards are in accordance with the World Health Organization (WHO)'s definitions of "prevention, disability and impairment".

The Pennsylvania Association of the Blind (PAB) and its members have collectively embraced NAC accreditation standards based on the "prevention" model because it is relevant to their individual missions and purposes. As we are still working on the accreditation of over two-dozen agencies in Pennsylvania, NAC membership will increase significantly in the coming year.

Incidentally, please note that NAC relocated to a new office that is more accessible and convenient to its operations, including proximity to the Cleveland Hopkins International Airport, post offices and hotels.

We are looking forward to the coming years with optimism about NAC's future as a viable, relevant and uniquely designed national standard setting organization in the field of vision rehabilitation.

Steven K. Hegedeos,

NAC Executive Director



NAC HAS MOVED!
Please make a note of it.

We are pleased to inform you that the National Accreditation Council's main office has relocated from Fairview Park to Middleburg Heights within the Cleveland, Ohio area. Our new home is on the first floor of a modern easily accessible office building conveniently located close to the Cleveland Hopkins International Airport:

**7017 Pearl Road
Middleburg Hts., Ohio 44130
Phone: 440-545-1601**

If you or your representative happens to be in the Cleveland area, the welcome mat is there for a visit.

Please note our e-mail and web-site addresses have remained the same.





2009 NAC BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Mrs. Marie Amerson, MEd, Public Member

Term: 7/01/06 to 6/30/2009

Vision Education Consultant

Macon, GA

Larry Belote LCSW, Representing BVA

NAC Treasurer

Term: ad hoc

Past-President, Blinded Veterans Association (BVA)

San Antonio, TX

Stephen S. Barrett, MEd, Member Agency,

Term: 7/1/2007 to 6/31/2010

President, Blind and Vision Rehabilitation Services of Pittsburgh

Homestead, PA

Ms. Denny Bettenhausen, BS, COTA, SCLV, Member Agency

Term: 7/1/2007 to 6/31/2010

Executive Director, Ensign Skill Center

Fort Collins, CO

Ms. Sheryl Bray, Parent/Consumer

Term: 7/01/06 to 6/30/2009

St. Augustine, FL

Mark Broaddus, Esq. Consumer

Term: 01/01/ 2009 to 12/31/2011

Attorney-At-Law, Chuhak & Tecson, P.C.

Chicago, IL

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Ms. Tara Cortes, RN, PhD, Public Member
Term: 1/1/2008 to 12/31/2010
President and CEO, Lighthouse International
New York, NY

Ronald Cole, MD, Public Member
Term: 01/01/ 2009 to 12/31/2011
Private Practice, Med Vision Technology and Clinical Professor,
University of California
Sacramento, CA

Jerry Davidoff, O.D. Representing American Optometric Association
Term: ad-hoc
Optometrist, Owner, Jerry Davidoff & Associates
Broomall, PA

Paul Edwards, BA Consumer
Term: 1/1/2003 to 6/30/2009
Director of Access Services, Miami-Dade College
Miami, FL

Ms. Darla (Saunders) Fowers, RN, MA, Public Member
Term: 7/01/06 to 6/30/2009
Director of Utah Deaf/Blind Project
Utah Schools for the Deaf and Blind
Ogden, UT

Joseph W. Heniff, Esq. Consumer
Term: 01/01/ 2009 to 12/31/2011
Attorney-At-Law, Private Practice
La Grange, IL

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2009 NAC BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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John Kelly, MEd, CAS, Representing AER

Term: ad-hoc

President, Association for Education & Rehabilitation of the Blind
and Visually Impaired
Chester, NY

Ms. Roxann Mayros, MA, Public Member

Term: 1/1/2003 to 6/30/2009

CEO, VisionServe Alliance, (formerly: NCPABVI)
St. Louis, MO

Steven Obremski, MEd, Consumer Member

Term: 1/1/2008 to 12/31/2010

Regional Development Officer, Guide Dog Foundation for the Blind,
Inc., Ashville, NC

Richard P. Oestreich, PhD, and Public Member

NAC Past-President

Term: Continuous

Consultant, Chillicothe, OH

Lee W. Robinson, EdD, , Consumer Member

NAC Secretary

Term: 1/1/2008 to 12/31/2010

Educational Consultant

Pleasant View, UT

William A. Robinson III, CPA, Consumer Member

Term: 01/01/ 2009 to 12/31/2011

Business Advisor, Private Practice

Chattanooga, TN

OUR MISSION...

- ¥ To develop standards which promote effective, sound, and publicly accountable programs of service, which help visually disabled children and adults achieve their full potential
- ¥ To ensure, through the accreditation process, that the standards are being met by programs of service which seek accreditation
- ¥ To give public recognition to those agencies and schools, which operate in compliance with the national standards for accreditation

**The Fiscal Year 2008 NAC Audit Report
was compiled by
George Csatory CPA, Inc.**

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