



National
Accreditation
Council for
Agencies
Serving People
With Blindness or Visually Impairment

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Members Communications March 2004

Highlights from the December 2003 NAC Board meeting in Tucson Arizona:

- The meeting was attended by several organizational representatives who are to begin their service on to the NAC Board starting January 2004. These included Carol B. Allman, Ph.D. representing the Association for Education and Rehabilitation of the Blind and Visually Impaired; Neil Appleby representing the Blinded Veterans Association; Paul Edwards, a current Board member but also past-president of the American Council for the Blind; David Ekin representing the National Council of Private Agencies Serving the Blind and Visually Impaired; and Marjorie Kaiser, Ed. D., representing the Council of Schools for the Blind. It is expected that an additional four or five national organizations will join the NAC Board during 2004.
- The entire Board met with the leadership of CARF (The Rehabilitation Accreditation Commission) to discuss areas of common interest. Areas of common interest between CARF and NAC will be on the agenda at the next NAC Board meeting.
- Several modifications of the NAC accreditation process and the on-site review process were accepted by the Board. These included the notion that an on-site reviewer for NAC represents not only the NAC Standards, but also provides a measure of consultation regarding programs and administrative procedures within their respective expertise.
- Two organizations were approved for re-accreditation: the Visually Impaired Persons of Charlotte County, Inc., and the Georgia Academy for the Blind. It is noteworthy that the Georgia Academy was reviewed by both NAC and The Commission on Secondary and Middle Schools of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS) under a new agreement between the two organizations.
- The revision of the NAC Standards, a project with a panel of judges led by Richard Hyer, EdD., was accepted for implementation for the 2004 on-site reviews.
- Finally, a new policy was implemented: Members of the Board of Directors will not participate on any accreditation on-site review team during their tenure. The members accepted the task to recruit additional on-site reviewers from the field. As an addendum to this report about the December meeting, the NAC office has

received over 20 reviewer applications to date from well qualified vision education and rehabilitation professionals.

The NAC Executive Committee meeting on March 10, 2004 (teleconference) resulted in the following:

1. The Executive Committee determined that the next NAC Board and Membership meetings will be in Orlando, Florida on July 11-12, 2004 in coordination with the 2004-AER International Conference July 13-17.
2. Lighthouse International was visited by Steven Obremski and Steve Hegedeos February 25, 2004. Items discussed were:
 - The “Coop” which includes the Iris Network, Miami Lighthouse, and other NAC accredited organizations.
 - Information on the Electronic Vision Rehabilitation Record (EVRR) and the application to the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ).
 - The revised NAC Standards.
 - The expanded NAC Board and organizational representation.
 - The Lighthouse’s rejoining NAC, either as an entire agency or by selected programs such as the Low Vision Services.
 - Medicare reimbursement and accreditations/certifications requirements.
 - Mutual interest including possible NIH/NEI grants and fundraising.

The outcome of a very good meeting was that Betty Bird, EdD (Senior Vice President for Rehabilitation Programs and Services) and Martin Yablonski, (Vice President for Direct Service Administration) are invited to present the EVRR system to the NAC Board in July. In addition, Dr. Barbara Silverstone (President and CEO) indicated that the Lighthouse is considering reaccreditation by NAC for its Low Vision Division.

3. 2004 OSR’s and related issues. Two out of the scheduled 15 OSRs in 2004 are extended until 2005, leaving 13 OSRs for this year. Responses from the current reviewers are good and all OSRs will have qualified reviewers assigned.
4. During the NAC Board and Membership meeting to be held July 11-12, 2004, the session for the preparation of the Strategic Plan will be facilitated by Dick Oestreich, Ph.D.

A final note: the next NAC meeting will be in Orlando Florida and it is a combined meeting of the Board and the Membership. NAC is grateful to Mark Richert, President/CEO of AER for including NAC in its preparation of their International Conference to be held July 13 thru17, 2004 at the Hilton within the Disney complex.

Thank you for your participation in the NAC accreditation program.

“An acknowledged measure of comparison for qualitative and quantitative values” is the definition of a STANDARD. All the NAC accredited organizations can be proud of the measured value they provide to the persons served..

Steven K. Hegedeos
Executive Director
March 25, 2004