**Task Force on Third-Party Coverage for Specialized Services**

**Report**

This task force considered what would be involved to achieve third-party funding for the specialized services provided by the following vision rehabilitation professionals: Orientation and Mobility Specialist, Vision Rehabilitation Therapist and Low Vision Therapist. It was hoped that Third-Party Reimbursement would provide the funding and facilitate referrals to enable us to reach all those who need our services, and help ensure that only qualified professionals would provide that service. This would strengthen our professions and the universities that prepare them, increasing recognition that our professions are the ones which are qualified to provide vision-related services.

Our discussions revealed that third-party reimbursement isn’t what many of us had imagined it would be, and accessing it has a cost and risks. It won’t solve the funding problems that we hoped it would – it would only fill in some gaps, and it would require us to change the way that we provide service. For example, we would need to have evidence-based assessments and outcome measurements, which have not yet been developed.

Therefore, the consensus of the Task Force is that we should suspend our pursuit of third-party reimbursement for now, and instead put our resources into initiatives that we are more confident can promote and strengthen our professions and provide our service to all those who need it. In the meantime, we should become better prepared to show evidence of the value of our services in such a way as to be accountable to funding sources.

To that end, we plan to organize a teleconference to share these results and start the conversation and invite ideas to consider other strategies for achieving our goals.

**Third Party Reimbursement Task Force**

 ***Co-Chairs:***

  Cathy Holden (Senior VP of Rehabilitation/Clinical Operations, NewView Oklahoma)

  Dona Sauerburger (Certified O&M Specialist, Maryland)

 ***Members:***

  Bill Boules (Chair, AER Vision Rehabilitation Therapists Division)

  Lauren Branch (President, NewView, Oklahoma)

  Joe Catavero (President, AER)

  Kim Charleston (President, ACB)

  Anisio Corriea (New York Vision Rehabilitation Association)

  Neva Fairchild (Chair, AER Aging Division)

  Justin Kaiser (Chair, AER O&M Division)

  Kelly Lusk (Chair, AER Low Vision Division)

  Lester Marks (Administrator, New York Lighthouse Guild)

  Roxann Mayros (CEO & President, VisionServe Alliance)

  Nancy Miller (Executive Director/CEO, New York Vision Rehabilitation Association)

  Mark Richert (Governmental Relations, AFB)

  Tony Stevens (Governmental Relations, ACB)

  Lou Tutt (Executive Director, AER)

  Kathy Zieder (Executive Director, ACVREP)