

September 2019



HCE Newsletter

Division Chief message

The Hearing Center of Excellence (HCE) was established to collaborate with the VA, DoD and other public and private entities. At the core of what we do, HCE strives to ensure Service members retire or separate with the same level of hearing that they entered the military. Collectively we strive for excellence in auditory and vestibular care and research.

HCE focuses efforts on prevention and surveillance, clinical support, information management and research coordination. We have worked hard this year to support prevention efforts among the Services and VA. Prevention efforts include improving hearing protection selection and availability. Page 2 and 3

of this newsletter highlight our prevention programs and training opportunities. Clinical support includes dissemination of the audiology clinical coding document (see Page 3). In addition to the coding document, several trainings such as the Military Vestibular Assessment and Rehabilitation (MVAR) course and continuing education opportunities through AudiologyOnline are available for DoD and VA hearing health professionals. Research coordination is key to prevention and clinical support. The Collaborative Auditory Vestibular Research Network (CAVRN), highlighted on page 3, is an annual meeting that connects auditory and vestibular research across sev-

eral entities. Lastly, the Joint Hearing Loss and Auditory System Injury Registry (JHASIR) will fulfill one of our congressional mandates and connect hearing records across the DoD and VA.

We believe it is important to provide current information to you on upcoming training opportunities to assist with your specialty/profession. We all play an important role in the mission and vision of the HCE and we must work together on this effort.

For more information, please contact me at:

LaKeisha Henry, Colonel, USAF

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Overview of programs/trainings available

Over the next few months and ahead to 2020, there will be training opportunities available.

- Joint Hearing Loss and Auditory System Injury Registry (JHASIR) was developed to address the congressional mandate to combine VA and DoD records. With JHASIR nearing completion, training will be offered to help users gain access to the registry.
- The Evaluated Products List (EPL) utilizes the updated ANSI standards for evaluating hearing protection. Training on the EPL will be provided at the 2020 NHCA National Hearing

Conservation Association (NHCA) conference in February.

- The Military Vestibular Assessment and Rehabilitation (MVAR) Advanced Course will take place in 13-16 Jan. The announcement will be posted on Facebook and the application link sent via the Services.

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Projected Training Opportunities to watch for in FY'20:

| | |
|---|-------------------|
| JHASIR | Starting Jan 2020 |
| EPL | NHCA Feb 2020 |
| MVAR Advanced Course | 13-16 Jan 2020 |
| Coding Training | Ongoing |
| AudiologyOnline Training | Ongoing |
| JIF Hearing Technician Preceptor Training | JDVAC Feb 2020 |

Joint Hearing Loss and Auditory System Injury Registry (JHASIR)

JHASIR combines clinical encounters from the DoD and VA. It includes DoD occupational audiograms, DoD/VA clinical audiograms, theater trauma and non-trauma data, and deployment data.

The purpose is threefold. First, JHASIR will provide the longitudinal data needed to determine and document best practices in hearing and injury assessment of personnel who have incurred hearing injuries including noise-induced hearing loss, sudden hearing loss, and tinnitus. This will also enable longitudinal analysis of Service members and Veterans with service-related hearing and auditory-vestibular system injuries and related conditions. Second, JHASIR will provide hearing status in

medical readiness monitoring processes, raising awareness of auditory injury, and potentially allowing earlier, more effective interventions to prevent or reduce the severity of auditory injuries. Finally, JHASIR will improve data exchange with the VA, to support clinical care and determination of duty-related injury status.

JHASIR includes hearing-related data from active duty Service members, Reserves and National Guard members, and Veterans since 2001. The data is identified by a hearing loss or acoustic related injury clinical diagnosis code.

Training will be provided by the HCE Information Management team when the registry reaches full operat-



ing capability (targeted Fall 2019). Sessions will be conducted via Adobe Connect or DCS (Defense Collaboration Services) and will be approximately one hour.

For more information please contact the HCE, Information Branch:

Ms. Trina Morrisette,

trina.l.morrisette.civ@mail.mil

CHHP and HEAR information/outreach

The Comprehensive Hearing Health Program (CHHP) consists of three major components: Educate, Protect, and Monitor. The goal of CHHP is to increase understanding of hearing loss prevention across the DoD and to encourage healthy hearing behaviors in Service members and their families. Local CHHP implementation includes the use of HCE-developed materials (posters, pamphlets, fact sheets) and offers standardized hearing health education at hearing protection fittings and patient visits. The CHHP materials are

available at no cost to military and VA facilities through HCE's website.

In collaboration with the Army Game Studio and subject matter experts from all Services, the HCE developed the Hearing Education and Readiness (HEAR) course, which consists of standardized hearing loss prevention education to Service members, commanders, supervisors and noise-exposed DoD civilians. There are three formats for this training: Joint Knowledge Online (JKO), CD and through a mobile app.

For more information on CHHP and HEAR please contact the HCE, Prevention Branch:

Mr. Brian Shearer,

brian.t.shearer.civ@mail.mil

CHHP: hearing.health.mil/Prevention/Comprehensive-Hearing-Health-Program-Info-and-Materials

HEAR: hearing.health.mil/Resources/Training/Hearing-Education-and-Readiness-Course-or-HEAR

AudiologyOnline trainings

The Hearing Center of Excellence offers free subscriptions to Audiology Online for up to 200 audiologists within the DoD. These can be provided for military audiologists (Active Duty and Reserve/Guard), civilians, and contractors. Past webinars covered topics including wide-band tympanometry, evaluation and treat-

ment methods for auditory processing disorder, state-of-the-science for hidden hearing loss, and use of cochlear implants in DoD and Veteran populations. DoD audiologists receive access to the content provided by the HCE, including all past webinars. The subscription also offers access to the wide variety of con-

tent programmed by the AudiologyOnline editors.

To request an account, please contact the HCE, Clinical Branch:

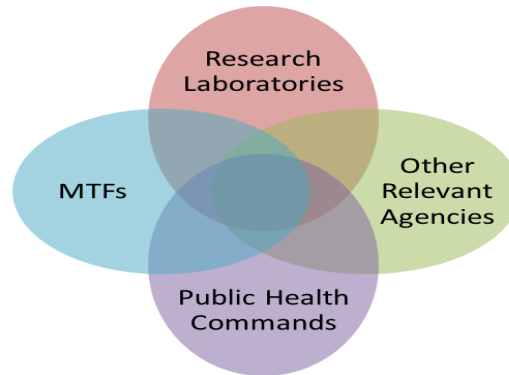
Dr. Amy Boudin-George,

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Collaborative Auditory Vestibular Research Network (CAVRN) update

The HCE held its 8th annual CAVRN meeting in Lexington and Boston, Massachusetts, June 12-14, 2019. The theme for this year was "Addressing Auditory and Vestibular Disorders and Readiness: Planning for the Road Ahead." This was the largest CAVRN meeting to date, with over 100 auditory and vestibular research stakeholders from the DoD, VA, Federally Funded Research and Development Centers (FFRDCs), and academia in attendance. Over the course of three days, the group attended sessions led by CAVRN stakeholders as well as the HCE team on topics ranging from hearing injury prevention and clinical rehabilitation to the opera-

tional impacts of auditory processing deficits on Service members. The HCE provided an introduction to its new research



roadmapping efforts and stakeholders presented their ongoing

work at the leading edge of: hearing protection strategies to include hearing health education, protective devices, and device training; auditory readiness and performance evaluation; clinical best practices in auditory, vestibular, and tinnitus care and hearing injury risk and noise measurement.

For more information, contact the HCE, Research Branch:

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Hearing Protection Evaluated Products List (EPL)

The goal of the EPL is to ensure the Service member has the correct hearing protection to perform their jobs considering hearing critical tasks (HCT), noise reduction, spatial awareness, and communication needs. This is transitioning from the traditional method of recommending hearing protection based on noise reduction ratings that must be de-rated. It also requires a more thoughtful approach to selecting hearing protection. The EPL enables selection of hearing protection eval-

uated according to the updated ANSI standards for continuous and impulse noise as well as situational awareness factors. Choosing devices for specific noise environments and tasks will keep people less isolated and more engaged in their workplace activities. Trainings will focus on helping hearing health professionals use the guidebook and poster to select the correct form of hearing protection. There will be an opportunity for training at the NHCA conference in February 2020. The

team is currently working on developing training materials to support the implementation of the EPL within the DoD.

For more information, contact the HCE, Prevention Branch:

Dr. Theresa Schulz,
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Ms. Kari Buchanan,
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Audiology Coding Guidance

The Audiology and Hearing Conservation Current Procedural Terminology (CPT) Coding Guidance Document was distributed in early 2019, with approval from the Defense Health Agency Coding Work Group. The document is meant to guide DoD audiologists and technicians in proper procedural coding for all encounters. You can locate the guidance document on your Service portal along with training slides, up-

dates, and frequently asked questions. The training webinar, which can be found on AudiologyOnline, provides support to navigate the document, ways to get more value for your encounters, and pitfalls to avoid.

For more information, contact your Regional Consultant or Specialty Leader or the HCE, Clinical Branch:

Dr. Amy Boudin-George,
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Link to AudiologyOnline training:

<https://www.audiologyonline.com/ce/departement-of-defense/events/details/32732/departement-defense-cpt>



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What's ahead in 2020:

JIF Hearing Technician Training:

In 2019, the HCE and the VA received Joint Incentive Funds (JIF) to work with each Service Component and develop a virtual hearing technician certification course. This initiative will develop standardized DoD and VA hearing technician training materials for use in a virtual classroom environment. The Council for Accreditation in Occupational Hearing Conservation (CAOHC) approved the trial of a virtual course and anxiously awaits the results of this effort.

For this initiative to be successful, military and VA audiologists from around the world will be asked to serve as preceptors and provide hands-on training and evaluation for students enrolled in this virtual training experience. Preceptors will provide the

hands-on training and evaluation of skills that are difficult to recreate in a virtual environment and ensure the hearing technician has the skills to perform their duties. Preceptors will focus on otoscopy, hearing protection fitting, and manual/microprocessor audiometry. A training is planned during the Joint Defense Veterans Audiology Conference (JDVAC) in February 2020.

NOISE study:

In collaboration with the VA's National Center for Rehabilitative Auditory Research (NCRAR), the HCE will continue participant recruitment for the Noise Outcomes in Service members Epidemiology (NOISE) study to evaluate the

Vision

Trusted Source.
 Better hearing, Stronger force.

Mission

Provide support to enhance operational performance, medical readiness, and quality of life through collaborative leadership and advocacy for hearing and balance health

New Staff:

Welcome **Dr. Theresa Schulz**, HCE's new Prevention and Surveillance Branch Chief! Prior to joining the HCE, Dr. Schulz served in both the US Army and US Air Force for over 21 years. Dr. Schulz leads a team specializing in prevention and military hearing health who manage initiatives with the goal of preventing hearing loss in SMs. Her team promotes hearing health through the development of best practices, tools, materials and standards of care in partnership with the other HCE branches, DHA, DoD, academia, government agencies and other stakeholders.

long-term effects of noise-induced hearing loss, tinnitus, and numerous comorbidities. The HCE research team has recruited and enrolled more than 300 participants into the DoD cohort.

Centralized HPD procurement:

The HCE and the Services are part of a working group to develop a centralized acquisition strategy for VA and DoD hearing protection devices. The ultimate goal of developing a cost-effective procurement strategy will result in Service members, Veterans, and DoD noise-exposed personnel receiving the best hearing protection to meet their mission and/or communication needs. The group is working to establish a budget and course of actions in 2020.