

Dear SCN Colleagues,

I am writing on behalf of a joint working group of VA psychologists who are collaborating with the American Board of Professional Psychology (ABPP) to ask you to encourage VA psychologists (and others) to apply for board certification by one of ABPP's fifteen specialty boards covering the fullest range of psychological specialties. ABPP is the most widely recognized organization sponsoring certification of advanced competencies in psychological practice. The VA recognizes attainment of ABPP board certification as an accomplishment eligible for special advancement for achievement and as a qualification equivalency to having an APA/CoA accredited internship.

But why would this be of special interest to Training Directors? One most important reason rests with the fact that VA psychology training prepares the rising psychologists of tomorrow, shaping professionals with quality preparation as well as an indelible influence on what they see as their professional development trajectory. You are making their future, and their vision for attainment of marks of professional growth and progress. In this regard, few things would seem to be more important than objective and rigorous individual validation of their competence in their chosen area of professional practice and interest.

Health service organizations are increasingly moving towards the requirement of not just verified educational and licensure qualifications, but actual objective demonstration of advanced professional skills for independent providers such as physicians and psychologists. This has been ABPP's mission since 1947, serving America's practicing psychologists with a "board certified" status recognized in a manner that parallels medical board certification in those specialties. In other ways, ABPP board certification also makes psychologist mobility among jurisdictions more smooth.

However, the attainment of board certification is equally important for VA psychology training faculty and leaders. Psychologists have increasing numbers of clinical leadership roles in mental and behavioral health which make board certification more meaningful and relevant.

To connect you and your training communities to the full features of board certification, a select working group of colleagues (please see the undersigned) has partnered with VA to produce a VA Pulse "VA/ABPP Community of Practice" site which will provide a very easy to digest overview of ABPP and its processes. We have also produced the attached flyers for you and your trainees that have links to the Pulse page, a survey, scholarship information for you and them, etc.

The American Board of Professional Psychology (ABPP) is the oldest and best-recognized form of board certification for psychologists in the United States. ABPP is seeking to expand the number of board certified specialists among highly qualified psychologists in key training positions. Accordingly, the ABPP Foundation is announcing the availability of awards up to \$1,000 to defray the costs of the board certification application process, including costs of travel and lodging to take the exam. As the director of training at your internship or post-doctoral program in professional psychology, we invite you to apply for this award and proceed with an application to become ABPP board certified.

The award is not limited to a particular specialization, so we invite you to apply for the award to pursue specialization with the ABPP board most congruent with your own work. Those applying must meet ABPP criteria for that particular specialization, including current licensure as a psychologist. For a description of ABPP and its specialty boards to pass on, please see <http://www.abpp.org/>.

This award would be in addition to the waiver of the \$125 ABPP application fee. This waiver was recently approved by ABPP as it applies to training directors.

I urge you to not only encourage your trainees – past and present – to pursue this professional recognition of advanced skills; but also, to promote staff and support faculty in applying for this process as well.

If you have questions about this process, please feel free to get in touch: kmadams@umich.edu

We can also connect you with a specialist in your area of interest if you wish.

Sincerely,

Erin L Patel, Psy.D., ABPP

Board Certified Geropsychologist
Assistant Chief, Psychology Section
VA TN Valley Healthcare System
Nashville, TN
(615) 873-6827
Erin.Patel@va.gov

Alina Suris, PhD, ABPP

Clinical Professor of Psychiatry
UT Southwestern Medical Center, Dallas, TX
Senior Research Psychologist VANTHCS (retired)
Past President, American Board of Clinical Psychology
American Board of Professional Psychology, Trustee
amsuris@hotmail.com

Kenneth Adams, Ph.D., ABPP

Professor of Psychiatry and Psychology
University Michigan
VA Ann Arbor Health Care System (Ret)
kmadams@med.umich.edu

Lianna Evans, Psy.D.

Clinical Psychologist, Primary Care Mental Health Integration
Fresno, CA VA Medical Center
2615 E. Clinton Avenue, Fresno, CA 93703
559-225-6100 x 5740

Lianna.Evans@va.gov

Samuel R. James, Ed.D., ABPP

American Board of Professional Psychology, Trustee
Past President, American Board of Group Psychology

sjames@srjames.com