

LIONS SERVICE IN THE OPERATION AND ADMINISTRATION OF THE LIONS LOW VISION REHABILITATION NETWORK (LOVRNET)

Background

The Lions LOVRNET is a community-based healthcare network, governed and operated by local Lions, that is dedicated to the expansion, improvement, and use of local low vision rehabilitation services. The Lions LOVRNET promotes, facilitates, and coordinates care of people in the community who have chronic vision impairments and are in need of low vision rehabilitation. Most low vision is caused by age-related eye diseases such as macular degeneration, diabetic retinopathy, and glaucoma, so nearly all low vision patients currently are, or recently have been in the care of ophthalmologists. For a variety of reasons, most low vision patients are never informed about or referred for low vision rehabilitation by their ophthalmologists, a problem the American Academy of Ophthalmology has unsuccessfully tried to address for the past decade. Also, other than inaccurate and harmful stereotypes, the general public has little knowledge of the potential capabilities of blind and visually impaired people and is largely unaware of the nature, benefits, or even existence of low vision rehabilitation services.

The Lions LOVRNET, in partnership with low vision rehabilitation experts at the Lions Vision Research and Rehabilitation Center of the Johns Hopkins Wilmer Eye Institute, will recruit and train eye doctors (optometrists and ophthalmologists) and occupational therapists in the community to add basic low vision rehabilitation to their practice repertoire and accept referrals from LOVRNET of low vision patients. Through their work with the Vision Council, the Lions LOVRNET will loan a diagnostic kit containing Lions LOVRNET-branded low vision devices to each new service provider who joins the network. The Lions LOVRNET Community Outreach Taskforce, will organize and train Lions to engage and educate local ophthalmologists about low vision, low vision rehabilitation, and the Lions LOVRNET and persuade them to refer their patients with low vision to LOVRNET. The Community Outreach Program also will educate the public about blindness, low vision, and low vision rehabilitation and implement LEHP age-related eye disease and vision screening of seniors.

Trained Lion volunteers will conduct computer-assisted telephone interviews of low vision patients referred to LOVRNET to obtain detailed patient health and functional histories for the doctors and therapists. The Lions LOVRNET Patient Interview Taskforce will develop the policies and procedures and oversee the Patient Interview Program. The data acquired from patient interviews that are conducted prior to service and again after discharge from service will be used to calculate outcome measures that will be shared with the patients' service providers. The LOVRNET system will enable service providers to compare summaries of their patient outcomes to those of their peers. These outcome measures will serve as the basis for continued professional education to improve the quality and effectiveness of low vision rehabilitation services.

The Lions LOVRNET system will match referred patients to local participating doctors and therapists and facilitate referrals to the service providers chosen by the patients. LOVRNET will match patients who require assistance with transportation, assistance with problems using low vision devices, or assistance with home modifications with trained Lion volunteers in their community. The Lions LOVRNET Direct

Services to Low Vision Patients Taskforce will develop the policies, procedures, and training programs for the Direct Services to Low Vision Patients Program.

In collaboration with the Vision Council, the Lions LOVRNET system will provide participating doctors with a shopping cart for online ordering and drop shipping low vision devices they have prescribed to their patients. The Lions LOVRNET system also will provide a shopping cart to patients and the public to order daily living aids for the vision impaired. The Lions LOVRNET will negotiate wholesale pricing of shopping cart items to provide a gross profit for LOVRNET and a gross profit for dispensing practices from the sales margin. Also, low vision device and diagnostic equipment manufacturers and vendors will be able to purchase advertising space on the Lions LOVRNET website. Thus, the Lions LOVRNET will have to manage revenue streams from shopping cart sales and advertising.

During follow-up patient interviews, evaluations of doctor and therapist services, as well as evaluations of patient interviews and Lion volunteer direct services, will be elicited from the patients as part of a quality assurance program. LOVRNET also will elicit online evaluations of LOVRNET education programs and network services from the participating doctors and therapists. These results will be shared with the LOVRNET Taskforces and the low vision rehabilitation service providers and will be used to drive quality initiatives.

Lions LOVRNET Administrative Office

The LOVRNET Administrative Office is located at the BISM headquarters and staffed by a full-time project administrator. A full-time administrative assistant will be added to the staff at the end of 2014. The LOVRNET Administrative Office is responsible for the day-to-day operation of LOVRNET and for providing staff support to the Executive Committee, the Steering Committee, and the LOVRNET Taskforces.

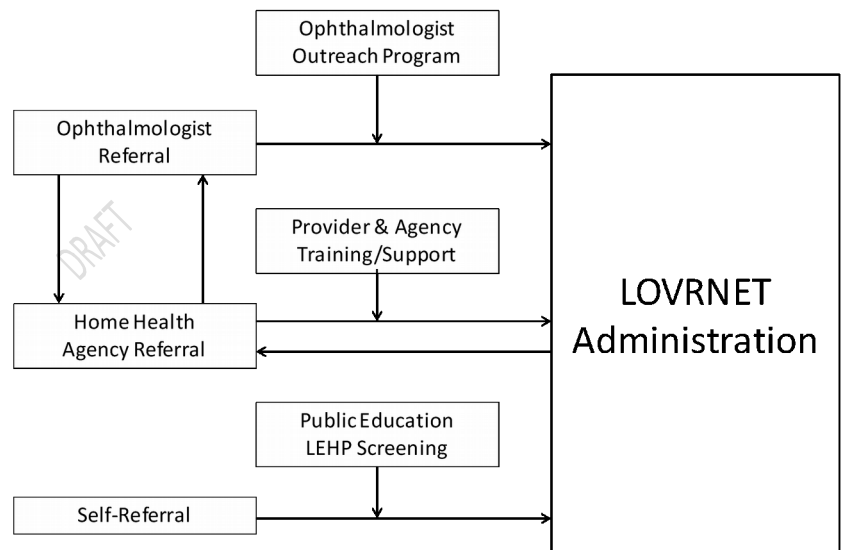
The LOVRNET online system is managed by the Administrative Office with system development and IT support provided by a contractor. The online system consists of a learning management system (LMS), which is used to present online professional education and Lion volunteer training and compliance courses; a secure content management system (CMS), which is used to serve the interactive LOVRNET website, including shopping carts, schedule manager, and resource manager; a secure HIPAA-compliant low vision patient management system (LVPMS), which is used to enroll patients, conduct patient interviews, transfer patient information between service providers, and manage patient data; and a collaborative project management system for use by the LOVRNET Taskforces and LEHP committees.

The Administrative Office is responsible for oversight and management of HIPAA compliance, including Business Associate Agreements between the Lions LOVRNET and doctors, therapists, and their employers. The Administrative Office also is responsible for assuring HIPAA compliance by, and training and certification of, Lion volunteers. It is responsible for management of retail operations associated with the shopping cart. It also is responsible for managing website advertising, website content, and website user support. The Administrative Office will oversee and manage the low vision diagnostic kit loaner program, will enroll low vision service providers and Lions in online courses.

Lions LOVRNET Logistics

The Lions LOVRNET is a new program. It is being developed, tested, and demonstrated by the Lions of Multiple District 22, with the support of a LCIF SightFirst grant, in partnership with low vision experts at the Lions Vision Research and Rehabilitation Center at the Johns Hopkins Wilmer Eye Institute, who are supported by a Reader's Digest Partners for Sight grant. The Lions LOVRNET is a complex system that requires the recruitment, training, coordination, scheduling, performance evaluation, and recognition of Lion volunteers throughout the Multiple District. Three of the LOVRNET Taskforces are responsible for developing content and procedures for the Community Outreach Program, the Patient Interview Program, and the Direct Services Program, respectively. The fourth LOVRNET Taskforce, LOVRNET Operations and Administration, coordinates the activities of these three Lion volunteer programs by developing operational and administrative procedures, implemented by the LOVRNET IT System and the LOVRNET Administrative Office, for recruiting, training, scheduling, evaluating, and recognizing Lions LOVRNET volunteers for all three programs and for volunteer administrative services. In short, the three program taskforces are responsible for creating the volunteer programs, whereas the LOVRNET Operations and Administration Taskforce is responsible for the logistics of implementing and operating the programs.

The LOVRNET Administrative Office will be the point at which patients enroll in LOVRNET. Low vision patients are identified and referred to LOVRNET in three ways: 1) referred by the patient's ophthalmologist, 2) referred by a home health agency, or 3) self-referred. As shown in the figure, the ophthalmologist outreach portion of the Community Outreach Program is designed to facilitate referrals from ophthalmologists to LOVRNET. LOVRNET professional training of occupational therapists and home



health agency administrative personnel (on Medicare billing) will facilitate patient referrals from home health agencies to both LOVRNET and to ophthalmologists in the community. Similarly, ophthalmologists will be encouraged to refer their homebound patients in need of home health care to the agencies. Going the other direction, LOVRNET will refer patients to home health agencies for occupational therapy services. The LEHP public education and vision screening of seniors portion of the Community Outreach Program will facilitate self-referrals to LOVRNET. The Operations and Administration Taskforce will identify areas of need in MD22 and monitor the impact of the Community Outreach and professional training programs on patient referrals to LOVRNET.

The patient referral to the Lions LOVRNET will occur by calling the LOVRNET Administrative Office or online on the LOVRNET website. In either case, the patient's name, telephone number, and email address will be entered into the LVPMS, assigned a temporary identification number, encrypted, and stored. If the patient self-referred by telephone, then the patient could be enrolled immediately by the

LOVRNET employee or Lion volunteer who took the call. For all other types of referrals, the patient will be assigned to an *enroller* (HIPAA-trained employee or Lion volunteer) who will call the patient and obtain enrollment information over the telephone.

The LOVRNET patient enrollment process consists of eliciting and entering the patient's personal and contact information into the LVPMS, which is encrypted and stored. The enroller then reads a script describing the LOVRNET process and solicits oral consent from the patient to be interviewed over the telephone by a trained and certified Lion volunteer. The patient is then assigned a LOVRNET ID number and matched to participating low vision doctors close to the patient. Based on availability of appointment times and patient preferences, one of the doctors is chosen and the patient is scheduled for a first visit appointment (this process requires each participating LOVRNET practice to share and update available appointment slots with the LOVRNET system).

If the patient agrees to be interviewed, the enroller makes a computer-assisted match to a Lion volunteer patient interviewer and schedules the date and time of the interview, prior to the scheduled appointment with the low vision doctor (this process requires each patient interviewer to keep and update his or her own online calendar indicating which days and times are available to schedule interviews). The patient interviewer is then automatically notified by email of the scheduled interview appointment.

At the time the doctor appointment is made, the enroller will ask the patient if they have transportation. If the patient needs assistance with transportation, a trained and certified Lion volunteer to the Direct Services Program will be scheduled with the online system Lion volunteer calendars to provide the patient with a ride to and from the doctor's office.

Development of the Manual of LOVRNET Operations and Procedures (MOP)

The LOVRNET Operations and Administration Taskforce will be responsible for developing and maintaining MOPS for the Community Outreach Program, the Direct Services Program, the Patient Interview Program, patient enrollment and scheduling, scheduling volunteers, HIPAA compliance training and oversight of Lion volunteers, tracking Lion volunteer service hours, monitoring and evaluating quality of Lion volunteer services, and recognizing Lions' service. The Operations and Administration Taskforce will work collaboratively with the other Taskforces to develop the respective Program MOPs and coordinate the planning of the other Taskforces to develop a unified LOVRNET approach to recruiting, training, scheduling, evaluating, and recognizing Lion volunteers.