

December 30, 2009

TO: Leah Muasau

FROM: Teresa Parsons, SPHR
Director's Review Program Supervisor

SUBJECT: Leah Muasau v. Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS)
Allocation Review Request ALLO-09-022

On October 22, 2009, I conducted a Director's review conference at the Department of Personnel, 600 South Franklin, Olympia, Washington, concerning the allocation of your position. In addition to you, Pamela Pelton, Classification & Compensation Manager also attended the conference on behalf of DSHS.

Director's Determination

This position review was based on the work performed for the six-month period prior to March 17, 2009, the date your request for a position review was received in the Human Resources (HR) Office. As the Director's designee, I carefully considered all of the documentation in the file, the exhibits presented during the Director's review conference, and the verbal comments provided by both parties. Based on my review and analysis of your assigned duties and responsibilities, I conclude your position is properly allocated to the Administrative Assistant 3 classification.

Background

On March 17, 2009, your local HR Office received your Position Review Request (PRR) asking that your Administrative Assistant 3 (AA 3) position (#TB39) be reallocated to the Program Specialist 3 (PS 3) classification. On March 27, [2009], Ms. Pelton determined your position was properly allocated as an AA 3. Specifically, Ms. Pelton concluded the purpose of your position is to assist the organized medical staff at Western State Hospital (WSH) in performing privileging and credentialing functions for its members. As such, Ms. Pelton determined that you assist in facilitating your supervisor's and/or staff members' own work, relieving them of the day-to-day administrative support functions.

On April 27, 2009, the Department of Personnel received your request for a Director's review of DSHS's allocation determination. The following summarizes your perspective as well as your employer's:

Summary of Ms. Muasau's Perspective

Ms. Muasau asserts her position has organization wide responsibility as the Medical Staff Coordinator performing privileging and credentialing functions in accordance with the Joint Commission, state, medical staff, hospital, legal, and CMS [Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services] standards. In that capacity, Ms. Muasau contends she obtains, analyzes, and verifies all pertinent information regarding medical staff applicants and reviews for membership, privileges, and reappointment. Ms. Muasau further contends that she monitors and tracks participant eligibility and participation in program activities by ensuring physicians are current with medical licensing and privileging. Ms. Muasau states that she plans, evaluates, consults with staff to identify and resolve problems, and she assists in developing and establishing procedures and policies relating to the Medical Staff By-laws. Ms. Muasau indicates that she assists the Chief of Medical Staff by coordinating all aspects of these responsibilities and that her position is the only one assigned these tasks at WSH. In addition, Ms. Muasau asserts she organizes and attends peer review committees bi-monthly, and she works with program participants and outside reviewers to coordinate, assign, and track peer review cases. Ms. Muasau believes the level of responsibility assigned to her position fits the Program Specialist 3 classification.

Summary of DSHS's Reasoning

DSHS asserts Ms. Muasau's position exists to assist the organized medical staff of WSH in performing privileging and credentialing functions for its members. DSHS further indicates Ms. Muasau assists with and coordinates recruitment of medical staff members, serves as a hospital liaison for consulting physicians, assists the Chief of Medical Staff to ensure medical staff bylaws compliance, and assists the medical staff in completing peer review activities, including arranging meetings of selected medical staff committees and monitoring and tracking action items. DSHS acknowledges Ms. Muasau's work tracking and verifying physicians' credentials at WSH is very essential. However, DSHS contends the functions assigned to Ms. Muasau's position are not discrete or considered specialized program functions within DSHS institutions. DSHS further contends Ms. Muasau's duties and responsibilities do not consist of specific, unique components distinguished from the main mission of the Division of Mental Health, Health and Recovery Services Administration or DSHS as a whole. Instead, DSHS points out Ms. Muasau's role of overseeing and reviewing licenses and certifications is conducted by other positions throughout DSHS's Administrations. DSHS believes Ms. Muasau's position is appropriately classified as an Administrative Assistant 3.

Rationale for Director's Determination

The purpose of a position review is to determine which classification best describes the overall duties and responsibilities of a position. A position review is neither a measurement

of the volume of work performed, nor an evaluation of the expertise with which that work is performed. A position review is a comparison of the duties and responsibilities of a particular position to the available classification specifications. This review results in a determination of the class that best describes the overall duties and responsibilities of the position. Liddle-Stamper v. Washington State University, PAB Case No. 3722-A2 (1994).

Duties and Responsibilities

During the Director's review conference, you indicated that you completed both the Position Description Form (PDF) and the Position Review Request (PRR) for your position. The PDF indicates that the current classification for your position is Administrative Assistant 3, and your working title is Medical Staff Coordinator. You propose the Program Specialist 3 as a better fit. In the summary of the position's scope of work, you describe your position as a Program Specialist 3. You further describe your position's scope of work as performing audits, recruitments, and ensuring compliance for WSH with little support from the Chief of Medical Staff, Dr. Roger Jackson, who is also your supervisor. Dr. Jackson reports to the Medical Director, Dr. John Chiles (Exhibit B-1-a).

The following summarizes the majority of work you describe as 55% on the PDF (Exhibit B-1):

In accordance with the Joint Commission (TJC), state, medical staff, hospital standards, and legal requirements, this position performs the following:

- Obtains, verifies, and analyzes all information on medical staff applicants for membership and privileges and for reappointment;
- Facilitates review by medical staff and hospital leadership;
- Interfaces with medical staff officers and leaders, hospital leadership, and the medical executive staff committee to assure issues requiring action are reviewed in a timely manner and results documented and disseminated for further review or action;
- Oversees the completion and adequacy of privileging and ensures the physician privileges granted are based on adequate documentation of background, training, experience, and current clinical competence;
- Tracks and follows up to ensure medical staff have maintained current medical licensures and certifications.

You signed the PDF on March 25, 2009. Dr. Jackson and Dr. Chiles also signed the PDF on the same date, indicating that the job duties identified above as 55% of your assigned work were an accurate reflection of the work to be performed by your position.

The Position Purpose stated on the PRR, as well as the job duties described as 55%, includes many of the functions identified on the PDF. Additionally, you referenced your position's need to recruit psychiatrists and medical doctors by magazine and online advertisements, as well as coordinating, tracking, and reporting peer review audits. The Job Duties section of the PRR identifies your work relating to the Morbidity & Mortality Peer Review Committee and Patient Care Committee as 30% of your overall work. In addition,

10% of your duties include attending Medical Executive Committee and 5% compiling quarterly audits and reporting to the Peer Review Committee monthly (Exhibit A-6).

In the Supervisor Review section of the PRR, Dr. Jackson did not agree that the information on the PRR was accurate and complete. While Dr. Jackson agreed that you receive little supervision, he clarified that your position's purpose "is to assist the organized medical staff of Western State Hospital in performing the privileging and credentialing function for its members . . ." He also indicated that the role of your position is to assist and coordinate recruitment for medical staff, serve as a liaison for consulting physicians and practice groups, assist in ensuring medical staff bylaws compliance, assist in completing peer review activities, and maintain confidential records. Dr. Jackson also clarified that with the previous classification of your position as a Program Specialist 3, the incumbent "concurrently served as the hospital's volunteer services coordinator," a function no longer assigned to your position (Exhibit A-6).

During the Director's review conference, you explained that as the Medical Staff Coordinator, you handle all aspects of participant eligibility for the physicians and psychiatrists at WSH, as well as consulting physicians and practice groups, such as Tacoma Radiology. You explained that you place advertisements for recruiting in professional magazines or online publications, send out applications, and set up orientation for those selected. In the process, you perform background, residency, and data bank checks and verify licenses, which may be from any state or at an international level. You stated that the background checks and verification processes can be very lengthy.

Once you have all of the necessary information for an applicant you compile the information and bring it to the Medical Executive Committee, an internal committee at WSH. You indicated that the medical staff position's supervisor, Dr. Jackson, and Dr. Chiles all have a role in signing off on a prospective candidate and that the final signature comes from a governing body that meets quarterly. After medical staff is hired, you monitor and track the credentialing process, which needs to be repeated every two years. In preparation for subsequent re-privileging, you email medical staff and go through the process of verifying information once again. By tracking, monitoring, and verifying information, you ensure there is compliance with the medical staff bylaws and other regulations. These duties account for the majority of your work, which has been identified as 55%.

Class Specifications

When comparing the assignment of work and level of responsibility to the available class specifications, the class series concept (if one exists) followed by definition and distinguishing characteristics are primary considerations.

The **Program Specialist** class series concept reads as follows:

Positions in this series coordinate discrete, specialized programs consisting of specific components and tasks that are unique to a particular subject and are separate and distinguished from the main body of an organization. Positions

coordinate program services and resources; act as a program liaison and provide consultation to program participants and outside entities regarding functions of the program; interpret, review and apply program specific policies, procedures and regulations; assess program needs; and develop courses of action to carry out program activities. Program coordination also requires performance of tasks and application of knowledge unique to the program and not transferable or applicable to other areas of the organization.

Examples of program areas may include, but are not limited to: business enterprises, fund raising, volunteer services, community resources, election administration and certification, juvenile delinquency prevention, recreational education and safety, energy education, aeronautic operations and safety, student housing, financial aid, and registration.

At the **Program Specialist 3** level, the definition includes the following:

Positions at this level work under general direction and typically have organization-wide program responsibility. . . . Programs include but are not limited to voter registration programs; boating, concession, or winter recreation programs; minority and women's business enterprise programs; and aeronautics programs. Program components are comprised of specialized tasks (e.g., reservations, administration, and budget coordination) within a specialty program. Incumbents assist higher-level staff by coordinating all aspects of program services, providing technical assistance and specialized, consultation to program participants, staff and outside entities, and recommending resolution for complex problems and issues related to the program. Incumbents assess program participants' needs and develop specialized services and training unique to the program and are responsive to the needs of participants.

The emphasis on the Program Specialist series, as stated in the class series concept and definitions, is on specialized programs consisting of specific components and tasks that are unique to a particular subject and are separate and distinguished from the main body of an organization. In addition, a program has been defined, in part, as "[a] specialized area with specific complex components and tasks that distinguish it from other programs (or the main body of an organization)" and "specific to a particular subject and has a specific mission, goals, and objectives."

<http://www.dop.wa.gov/CompClass/CompAndClassServices/Pages/HRProfessionalTools.as>

While I recognize that in a broad sense you may perform certain aspects of work similar to the typical work examples given in the Program Specialist classes, the examples of typical work identified in a class specification do not form the basis for an allocation. Rather, typical work examples lend support to the work envisioned within a classification. When determining allocation, the work assigned to a position must first meet the class series concept and definition. I understand your position has responsibility to oversee and coordinate the functions associated with the verification process of critical information that

medical directors, the executive committee, and governing body need to make decisions about hiring, contracting, and continuing eligibility for medical staff positions at WSH. However, the functions you perform are not unique with regard to DSHS institutions or services. As a result, the Program Specialist 3 is not the best classification for your position.

The class series concept for the **Functional Program Analyst 3** discusses, in part, examination and evaluation of insurances practices, which is not within your scope of assigned work. Therefore, this is not the correct match for the duties and responsibilities assigned to your position. Although I reviewed the **Secretary Senior** classification, the level and scope of responsibility assigned to your position extends beyond this classification.

Although there is not a specific class series concept for the Administrative Assistant classes, I reviewed the **Administrative Assistant 1** definition to gain a greater understanding of the work assigned to this series. In part, the definition states that positions provide staff assistance to a professional supervisor by reviewing, controlling, prioritizing and coordinating the work of the supervisor's professional staff or performing technical work which is directly delegated from a professional position. The distinguishing characteristics include coordinating the professional staff's work within an agency, and technical work is distinguished by a professional position fully delegating a technical portion of the position's duties which in turn encompasses the majority of the Administrative Assistant's work (Exhibit C).

At the **Administrative Assistant 3 (AA 3)** level, positions "perform varied administrative and secretarial support duties or positions are responsible for one or more major program activities under a second line supervisor." Your position fits within the AA 3 definition because you have the delegated responsibility to assist the Chief of Medical Staff and ultimately the Medical Director in performing the necessary reviews, verifications, checkpoints, and continued compliance necessary for medical staff to perform work at WSH.

Further, your assigned duties and responsibilities are consistent with the distinguishing characteristics of an AA 3, which include higher-level administrative support duties of a substantive nature delegated to you by the Chief of Medical Staff and responsibility for one or more major program activities that would be performed under a second-level professional supervisor, manager or administrator. In addition, the typical work examples of an AA 3, which lend support to the work performed by your position, include establishing procedures and interpreting and applying administrative policies; assisting in devising standards/procedures to ensure adherence to policies and contract administration; coordinating, organizing, and/or directing the operation of a program or major program activity; representing management and serving as the primary contact in assigned program areas; coordinating personnel issues such as recruitment and selection; and serving as a liaison for your supervisor.

It is clear the duties you perform are very important and that your work is highly valued. A position's allocation is not a reflection of performance or an individual's ability to perform higher-level work. Rather, it is based on a comparison of duties and responsibilities to the available job classifications. The Administrative Assistant 3 classification best encompasses the overall scope of work and level of responsibility assigned to your position (#TB39).

Appeal Rights

RCW 41.06.170 governs the right to appeal. RCW 41.06.170(4) provides, in relevant part, the following:

An employee incumbent in a position at the time of its allocation or reallocation, or the agency utilizing the position, may appeal the allocation or reallocation to . . . the Washington personnel resources board Notice of such appeal must be filed in writing within thirty days of the action from which appeal is taken.

The mailing address for the Personnel Resources Board (PRB) is P.O. Box 40911, Olympia, Washington, 98504-0911. The PRB Office is located at 600 South Franklin, Olympia, Washington. The main telephone number is (360) 664-0388, and the fax number is (360) 753-0139.

If no further action is taken, the Director's determination becomes final.

c: Pamela Pelton, DSHS
Lisa Skriletz, DOP

Enclosure: List of Exhibits

LEAH MUASAU v DSHS

ALLO-09-022

Exhibit List

A. Leah Muasau Exhibits

1. Letter of Request for Director's Review April 27, 2009
2. DSHS allocation determination, dated March 27, 2007 [the date is incorrect and should read 2009]
3. Position Description Form (March 25, 2009) for TB39 with supervisors signatures
4. Position Description Form (March 31, 2005) for TB39 with supervisors signatures
5. Medical Director Organizational Chart
6. Position Review Request with supervisor signature and attached statement (March 17, 2009)

B. DSHS Exhibits, including letter of explanation.

1. Position Description Form Dated 3/25/09
 - a. Organizational Chart
2. Position Review Request Dated 3/17/09
 - b. Supervisor's attached comments sheet
3. Reallocation Decision Letter – Dated 3/17/08
4. Previous Updated PDF – Dated 3/30/05
5. Class Specification: Administration Assistant 3 (105G)
6. Class Specification: Program Specialist 2 (107I)
7. Class Specification: Program Specialist 3 (107J)
8. Class Specification: Secretary Senior (100T)

C. Class Specification: Administration Assistant 1 (105E)

D. Email correspondence between Leah Muasau and Teresa Parsons after the Director's review conference