

OFFICE OF ACADEMIC AFFILIATIONS

- 1. REASON FOR ISSUE.** This Veterans Health Administration (VHA) Directive defines policy for the Office of Academic Affiliations (OAA).
- 2. SUMMARY OF MAJOR CHANGES.** This VHA Directive delineates the authority for the conduct of health professions' clinical training programs within VHA and it:
 - a. Describes the responsibilities and functions of OAA.
 - b. Identifies OAA as providing oversight of policies pertaining to clinical trainees, training program activities, and relationships with VHA's academic partners.
 - c. Reflects the organization of OAA and its major programmatic responsibilities.
- 3. RELATED ISSUES.** VHA Handbook 1400.1 and VHA Handbook 1400.2.
- 4. RESPONSIBLE OFFICIALS.** The Chief Academic Affiliations Officer is responsible for the contents of this Directive. Questions may be addressed to 202-461-9490.
- 5. RESCISSIONS.** VHA Directive 1400, July 31, 2002, is rescinded.
- 6. RECERTIFICATION.** This VHA Directive is scheduled for recertification on or before the last working day of September 2014.

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DISTRIBUTION: E-mailed to the VHA Publications Distribution List 9/16/2009

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1. PURPOSE: This Veterans Health Administration (VHA) Directive delineates the authority for the conduct of health professions training programs within VHA and describes the responsibilities and functions of the Office of Academic Affiliations (OAA). This VHA Directive identifies OAA as providing oversight of policies pertaining to clinical trainees, trainee program activities, and relationships with the Department of Veterans Affairs' (VA) academic partners, regardless of whether these policies originated in OAA.

2. BACKGROUND

a. VHA conducts the largest coordinated education and training effort for health care professionals in the Nation. The primary and overriding rationale for health care education and training activities in VA is improved care of the Veteran. In addition, VHA is directed by statute to "...assist in providing an adequate supply of health personnel to the Nation."

b. VHA has established more than 5,000 affiliations with over 1,700 educational institutions, including most United States (U.S.) medical schools. Through these affiliations, over 100,000 trainees in more than 40 different health professions receive clinical training in VA facilities each year. As a result, OAA has a substantial impact on the current and future VA and national health care workforce. OAA contributes to continued excellence in patient care, to the recruitment and retention of health care staff, and to the enhancement of the learning environment throughout VHA. OAA maintains ongoing relationships with colleges, universities, professional organizations, and accrediting bodies for health professions education.

c. Authority for the conduct of VHA's education and training programs and activities is contained in Title 38 United States Code (U.S.C.) Chapters 73, 74, and 81.

3. POLICY: It is VHA policy for OAA to oversee and improve VA's academic educational programs and partnerships through enhancing communication with internal and external stakeholders; developing strategic alliances that benefit VA's educational programs; increasing the number and mix of clinical trainees to care for Veterans and enter the VA employee pool; fostering excellence and innovation in learning; and ensuring that VA's trainee educational programs enhance its clinical mission. VA partners with academic and professional communities to educate the next generation of health care professionals for the benefit of VA and the Nation.

4. RESPONSIBILITIES: OAA is responsible for:

a. Providing oversight of VA's affiliated clinical training program activities.

b. Providing input regarding all VA policies that affect clinical trainees, affiliated training program activities, and relationships with VA's academic partners, regardless of whether these policies originate within OAA.

c. Developing policies that pertain to clinical trainees, providing direction to all VHA

facilities, Veterans Integrated Service Networks (VISNs), and VA Central Office components for the implementation, coordination, and evaluation of clinical education and affiliated training programs for health professions trainees.

d. Providing advice and consultation to field educational leaders concerning training program policy interpretation and implementation.

e. Managing relationships with external policy, accrediting, regulatory and professional bodies for health professions training.

5. REFERENCES

a. Public Law (Pub. L.) 293, 79th Congress, “An Act to Establish the Department of Medicine and Surgery in the Veterans Administration.”

b. Pub. L. 89-785, “Veterans Hospitalization and Medical Services Modernization Amendments of 1966.”

c. Pub. L. 93-82, “Veterans Health Care Expansion Act,” August 2, 1973.

d. Pub. L. 96-151, “Veterans Health Programs Extension and Improvement Act,” December 20, 1979.

e. Pub. L. 96-330, Veterans Administration Health-Care Amendments of 1980, August 26, 1980.

f. Pub. L. 102-40, “Department of Veterans Affairs Physician and Recruitment Act of 1991,” May 7, 1991.

g. Pub. L. 102-405, “Veterans Medical Programs Amendments of 1992,” October 9, 1992.

h. Pub. L. 106-117, “Veterans Millennium Health Care and Benefits Act,” November 30, 1999.

i. Pub. L. 106-419, “Veterans Benefits and Health Care Improvement Act of 2000,” November 1, 2000.

6. DEFINITIONS: OAA carries out its oversight and policy responsibilities through the following organizational structure:

a. **Chief and Deputy Chief Academic Affiliations Officers.** The Chief and Deputy Chief Academic Affiliations Officers develop vision and strategies for the office; oversee project design and implementation; coordinate policy development; manage external relationships of the office; encourage innovation and scholarship supporting VA education.

b. **Advanced Fellowships and Professional Development.** OAA oversees the advanced

fellowship program of nearly 20 VA-specific fellowships and develops new fellowships in collaboration with Patient Care Services (PCS) and other VHA program offices. OAA develops programs to support the continuing development of field education leaders.

c. **Associated Health Education.** OAA oversees associated health training programs in over 40 disciplines (other than medicine and dentistry), including approximately 20,000 trainees annually. OAA forms liaisons with discipline experts within and outside VA for policy and program development; plans for and supports newly-accredited disciplines and programs.

d. **Medical and Dental Education.** OAA oversees medical (graduate and undergraduate) and dental education, including approximately 50,000 medical and dental students and residents; approves all VA paid positions through the resident allocation cycle, and the Graduate Medical Education (GME) Enhancement Initiative; and monitors field compliance with tools such as the Annual Report on Residency Training Program (ARRTP). OAA forms liaisons with discipline experts within and outside VA for policy and program development; and plans for and supports newly-accredited disciplines and programs.

e. **VA Nursing Academy.** OAA oversees nursing education programs and initiatives, including approximately 30,000 nurse trainees per year. Additionally, OAA oversees implementation and evaluation of the VA Nursing Academy (VANA), a 5-year pilot involving selected VA-nursing school partnerships, and forms liaisons with discipline experts within and outside VA for policy and program development; and plans for and supports newly-accredited disciplines and programs.

f. **Data Management Center.** OAA oversees data functions to support field trainee education offices and OAA staff needs, including database management, stipend allocation processes, reporting requirements, surveys such as the annual Learners Perception's Survey and ARRTP, and OAA's intranet and internet web sites.

g. **Policy and Planning.** OAA executes major national projects; synthesizes background and historical information that informs policy development; writes and updates key policies; and manages the policy development process through concurrence and implementation.

h. **Trainee Operations.** OAA oversees the trainee stipend budget, maintaining control of stipend schedules, disbursement agreements, and field allocation procedures. It works to implement trainee registration, appointment, background screening and identity verification procedures.