

APN News

Summer, 2004

Newsletter for APNs within the Veterans Health Care System

APN ADVISORY GROUP (APNAG)

By: Carol Einhorn, RN, MS, CURN, GNP

This group has been in existence since 1994. In our 1st newsletter, Deborah Antai-Otong, Chair of the group gave a brief overview of the history of the group. This article will give more the organizational structure.

The purpose of the group according to its charter is to establish, implement and evaluate the strategic plan for advanced practice nursing in the VA. The group will serve in an advisory capacity to the National Nursing Executive Council (NNEC) for strategic planning, issues, and activities of VHA organizational impact related the advanced practice nursing. It acts in advisory capacity to the Chief Nursing Officer, Office of Nursing Service (ONS). Members represent specific APN roles, (e.g., nurse practitioners and clinical nurse specialists and diverse practice including primary care, geriatrics, women's health, acute care, occupational health, and psychiatric-mental health). They also represent a group of VISNs. One member is a Nurse Executive, preferably who supports the APN role. The term of membership is minimum three years with option of 3 years extension with a maximum of six years. Three members rotate off and add at least 3 new members every two years. When openings occur, there is a call for candidates who must submit their resume and a letter of support from their Nurse Executive. The APNAG reviews candidates and submits its nominee to NNEC for approved. Another member of the APNAG is appointed by the CNO. This individual liaisons with the APNAG and the ONS. Until recently, Audrey Drake was the liaison for the ONS and had been appointed since 1994. Anna Alt-White has been recently appointed as the liaison for the ONS. She is also the liaison for Research Advisory Group and plans to work with both groups and develop evidence-based research.

Current APN Advisory Group Members

1. Chair Deborah Anti-Otong, MS, CNS and NP, Psychiatric-Mental Health -VISN 17-18

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What is APNAG Group

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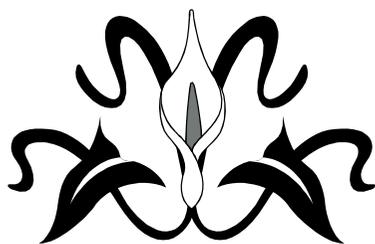
APN Advisory Group (continued)

2. Co-Chair Carol J. Einhorn, GNP, Geriatrics- VISN10-12
3. Isabel Duff, MS, Nurse Executive, Prescott VA
4. Charlotte DePew, MS NP, Extended Care- VISN 13,14,23
5. Holly M. Stapley, MS, CNS Neurology- VISN 3-4
6. Mary S Lovelady, MS, NP, Primary Care- VISN 7-9
7. April Gerlock, PhD, NP, CS, Mental Health- VISN 18-20
8. Kathleen White, MS, FNP, Occupational Health, Outpatient- VISN 21-22
9. Joan Knox, MS, FNP, Women's Health- VISN 5-6
10. Name will be submitted to the NNEC for approval in June - from VISN 1-2.

There are monthly conference calls to address current issues and concerns as well as reviewing the progress in working towards completion of projects to meet the Strategic Plan. The Chair of the APNAG is a member of the NNEC (the NNEC is composed of one nurse executive representative from each VISN and the CNO staff) to represent the concerns and views of APNs. Many of the issues brought before the group, come from the APN Network Liaison Group. An appointed member of the APN Advisory Group chairs this group. Each VISN has a representative and an alternate. These members are selected by the VISN APN group with a supporting recommendation by the VISN Nurse Executives. This group also has a monthly conference call to discuss common issues brought forth from the facility representatives in hospital and to provide information from the top down via the APN Advisory Group. The members of the APN Liaison Group are appointed for a three-year term with a maximum of six years. Each facility should have an APN representative who represents and presents their concerns upward.

This flow of information is to provide communication from the grass root level to the top and back down. A good example of the flow of information is this newsletter that was developed to provide communication amongst the advanced practice nurses. In beginning the newsletter, I was given our Editor's name from talking with the APN Liaison Group. I then asked this same group to send out call for volunteers who would be interested in working on this project. You see their names as those responsible for various sections.

The above groups represent the advanced practice nurses in the VHA. Currently, there are about 3400 of us. Let our voices be heard. Be proactive and constructive. Utilize all the groups and individuals to answer your questions and voice your concerns.



Editor's Rambling :

As a fellow APN within VHA, I would like to again say welcome to "your" APN newsletter. I hope you enjoy reading it. I also appreciate the letters you are sending, though I am at a loss as to how to answer some of your questions about system-wide practice parameters. Neither could I find an answer as to why APNs at one facility are grade III vs. grade II at another facility. However, Carol Einhorn from both our editorial board and as co-chair of the APNAG (see her informative article in this issue) shares that an APN needs to look at the "qual standards" and she how to meet all the domains for the required level. The "qual standards" for a Nurse II speaks of activities and behaviors the APN performs within her unit and are more service-based (not a bad thing) and interacting well with others. Meanwhile, the Nurse III "qual standard" speaks more to a leadership role-taking responsibility for initiating, developing programs, etc. When writing proficiencies the

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Editorial Board

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Joan Knox, RNC, MSN, WHCNP, FNP

Women's Health Center-VAMC
Richmond, Virginia

Continuing Education Offerings:

(Note: please send your upcoming announcements to Joan Knox-
e-mail:Joan.Knox@med.va.gov. Please send your reviews of
Continuing Education offerings to editor, address is on page 2).

Women's Health Update

Date: September 20-22,2004

Location: Flamingo Las Vegas Hotel & Casino

Contact Hrs: 15.25- Physicians and 18.3-Nurses

4.3hrs in Pharmacology

Target Audience: MD's, NP's, Nurses, PA's

Topics: PCOS, Pelvic Pain, Contraception, Breast CA

Adolescent Gyn

Cost:560.00(MD's) 460.00-residents, NP's PA's

www.symposiamedicus.org

2004 Nurse Practitioner Update

Date: September 16-17

Location: Crowns Plaza Downtown at Jackson, MS

Contact hours: TBA

*Limited to first 225 participants; call or e-mail (below) for
information to be sent to you; no on-site registration.

CHEP: G.V. Montgomery VA Medical Center

Target Audience: NP, APN

Topics: evaluation of acute abdomen, peer review, hematology,
narcotic update, wound care, peripheral neuropathy, more.

Cost: TBA (VAH-\$155) Contact: Ann H. Demrow-

601-368-3870 or ann.demrow@med.va.gov

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Awards, Presentations and Publications, by VISN

Hanna Hermanowski, NP reports for VISN 1-3:

VISN 3:

Katen Moore, APN, Radiation oncology- East Orange, New
Jersey. Ms. Moore participated in retreat of the Oncology
Nursing Society/ONS Foundation APN retreat in Phoenix, AZ
held in March 2004. Worked on development of evidence based
symptom management guidelines and nursing outcomes
evaluation for fatigue, chemo induced nausea, prevention of
infection and return to usual activities.

Katen Moore, Marilyn Haas, PhD (Mountain Radiation,
Ashville, NC), **Peter Goyer**, radiation safety officer EO, to study
chemo safety in radiation oncology departments are currently
conducting a survey of radiation nurses in radiation oncology
settings to learn what safety measures are in place regarding
intravenous chemotherapy, since so much is now given
continuously and out-patient. There is virtually no data on this

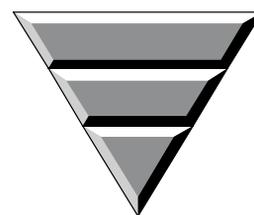
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Editor's Rambling, (Continued)

APN must document how she meets these (higher) standards. Then, if one does not agree with the decision of her hospital's Professional Standards board (i.e. not recommending promotion to Nurse III) she can ask for a repeat review while providing additional documentation. If she is still not satisfied with the board's decision, she can request an appeal to the VA Central Office board for a review. Remember, it behooves us (all) to do our self-evaluation and to give our supervisors the materials they need to know what we are doing and have done. Then, talk with your supervisor specifically about meeting the "qual standards" for promotion from grade II to III. Also, see the item beginning on page 5 about the National Commission on VA Nursing. Thanks! to all the writers, the editorial staff and other volunteers. Again, I would like to solicit your input- please consider sharing your research, tips or other knowledge by writing something for APN News. Remember, this is your newsletter. As such, all issues related to APN practice within the VHA system are open for discussion. No doubt, you are busy, but if this newsletter is to serve a practical purpose, your experiences, questions, tips, ideas, thoughts need to be shared.

We appreciate your comments and feedback; let us know what you think.

Thanks, Paul Shepard.



Awards, Presentations and Publications, by VISN

Tele-mental health steering committee whose responsibility is to develop and implement Tele-mental health services in VISN 17.

VISN 20 reported by Sherry Olar, APN

Judy Ozuna, ARNP- Neurology- VA Puget Sound Health Care System- Ms. Ozuna co-authored "Gifts to Health Care Professionals from the Pharmaceutical Industry" a report by the National Ethics Committee of the Veterans Affairs Health Administration.

Kristine Theis, NP -Behavioral Health- Boise Idaho VA Medical Center- Ms. Theis has worked with the Nurse Practitioners of Idaho for eleven years and has been the chair, legislative chair, and education chair. She has created brochures, videos, and newspaper articles to educate the public about the profession of nursing. Ms. Theis was instrumental in organizing Advanced Practice Nurses, which led to the passing of new Idaho State laws. These laws addressed needed changes in licensure, practice and prescriptive privileges for Advance Practice Nurses. She was nominated and received the Boise and VISN 20 2004 Nurse Excellence Award.

Christine Ashburn-Locke, Surgical CNS with Portland VAMC had the following abstracts and posters accepted at recent Conferences. 1. *RN PICC Team Improving Patient Outcomes*. Western Institute of Nursing Conference; and 2. *Implementation of a Dedicated RN PICC Team*. Summer Institute on Evidence-Based Practice.

Busch, Ann, APN, Liver Transplant CNS with Portland VAMC was awarded "Best Poster Presentation" at the International Transplant Nurses Society October 2003 Symposium in Scottsdale, AZ. The poster presented her research conducted with Estes, Stolpman, Olyaei, Ham, Schwartz, and Orloff, *Fulminant Hepatic Failure: High Incidence of Herbal Supplementation Use*.

Janet Nickolaus, PMHNP with Portland VAMC was awarded the CEO—excellence in action award—for researching the "IDITA_WALK Motivational" program and for implementing a walking program in the day treatment program.

Jeanine Swygman, CNP with Portland VAMC, Cardiology - developed the OPTIMIZE-HF (Organized Program to Initiate life-saving treatment in hospitalized patients with Heart Failure), which is a hospital-based program (essentially a HF registry).

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APN Job Satisfaction Survey!

Coming Fall 2004:

A group of advanced practice nurses at the VA Palo Alto Health Care System will be conducting a research study on Job Satisfaction among APNs in the VHA. The survey, which will be up and running this fall, is open to nurse practitioners and clinical nurse specialists in the VA system. Please keep an eye out in this newsletter and in your VA e-mail for further information on how to participate!

National Commission on VA Nursing

has released its report titled, "Caring for America's Veterans: Attracting and Retaining a Quality VHA Nursing Workforce". It can be found at URL: <http://www1.va.gov/ncvan/> The final report can be downloaded for viewing (approximately 1.7MB "PDF" file). There are records of the hearings (there is an interesting question brought before the commission by an APN about the latest qualifications for nurse IV grade. The point being that it appears to limit advancement of APNs from Grade III to Grade IV unless

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Charlotte,
 I have just finished reading the Spring APN newsletter with great interest. It is so great to find the group and links. I have been looking for this for some time. I would like to offer to do an information/educational article on Hepatitis C or any other liver disease that would be of interest. Hepatology CNS's are few and far between, and I would love to share information. My favorite Hep C website is www.hcvadvocate.org, which is a great basic info primer for pt's and health care professionals who need information. Of course, the VA web site has great Vet info also www.va.gov/hepatitisc.

As a practitioner, I usually use MDConsult, for most of my handouts for patient information and to find info on a subject with which I am not familiar.

Thanks
 Suzanne Opperman, RN MSN, BC, M-S CNS
 Harry S Truman VA Hospital-Columbia, Missouri 65201

(Suzanne: we mean to take you up on your offer- Editor)

Paul, I received the VA (APN) News - interesting interviews, easy format, and useful information. Just one question- on average are NPs (masters prepared) credentialed and/or certified as Nurse II, III, or IV with the VAH system? I realize this is a difficult question, but I am interested in any statistics.

Thanks, Darcy Kaberna, MS, NP

(Darcy: I have shared your inquiry with others on the editorial board, but cannot provide an answer beyond what I shared with you privately from personal experience. Let me suggest reading the notes from Carol Einhorn in the "Editor's Rambling" column beginning on page 2. You might also try contacting the APN network representative from your VISN. - Editor).

Dear Mr Shepard,
 We nurse practitioners at the VAHA in New Jersey are looking to establish a peer review program. To begin our process are reaching out to obtain any information on existing programs which we might be able to build on or adapt to our situation. If you are able to provide us with any help or know someone we could contact, we would be most appreciative.

Thank you, Inge Faust, RN, APN-C
(Inge: Sorry for delay- I hope you got your answer; if not, try searching the VAH APN site or contact Dr. Gerlock- see page 2).

(Mini- Editorial: This newsletter is dependent upon APNs within the VA system to succeed. Please thank your colleagues below for volunteering. Better yet, send them some materials!)

Legislative Issues:
 Peter.Mitchell@med.va.gov (Minneapolis)
 Indra.Peters@med.va.gov (Syracuse)

Books or Web Reviews:
 Aleen.Golis@med.va.gov (Hot Springs, ND)
 Brenda.Ligon@med.va.gov (Shreveport)

Educational Opportunities:
 Eva.Belmontedevega@med.va.gov (Cleveland)
 Cindy.Rasmussen@med.va.gov (Minneapolis)

Awards, recognitions, and people you should know:

VISNs 1,2,3—
 hanna.hermanowski@med.va.gov (NJ HCS)

VISNs 4,5,6-
 Vivian.Dee@med.va.gov (NJ HCS)

VISNs 8,9,10,11,12-
 Karen.Clark@med.va.gov (Hines VAMC);

VISNs 19,20,21,22,23-
 Cathy.Goddard@med.va.gov (Fresno VAMC).

VISNs 7,15,16,17,18-
 Sherry.Olar@med.va.gov (Waco VAMC).



the seek appointment in nursing management at the medical center level or beyond. The APN was arguing, I assume, that there merit to APNs practicing in roles as expert clinicians and researchers by using the Nurse IV grade as an incentive to retain these nurses within the VHA system. Also, one CNS from either Georgia or Alabama was pointing out the discrepancy between CNS clinicians being paid at the RN pay scale in one state while at the APN pay scale (higher rate) at a nearby state within another state or VISN. Go figure? I even found someone from my own medical center who had submitted testimony. All in all, it is a fascinating read. Some problems I have never thought of are pointed out. Meanwhile, the things that drive me nuts are apparently unique to me (I did not see much discussion of my qualms with practicing within VHA, in other words). Finally, There is the hope that if the commission's report is fully implemented it could help to retain and attract nurses to our unique system. After all, there is the not-so-insignificant problem of all of us retiring in droves in the not-so-distant future as the average age of VA nurses is 49, according to the report.

(Anyone up to the challenge of reading and distilling this report/topic for the rest of us? We can put your name in print – write me- Editor).

VISN 23 reported by Karen Clark, GNP

Suzanne Lee, APRN-PMH, BC, of Minneapolis VAMC has recently had her article, *Barriers to Collaboration Between Mental Health Professionals and Families in the Care of Persons With Serious Mental Illness* published in the *Issues in Mental Health Nursing*, December, 2003 issue, Vol. 24, pp 741-756. It was written along with her colleagues, Merrie Kaas and Carol Peitzman.

Peter Mitchell, MSN, CNP, of Minneapolis VAMC has recently been appointed Community Health Educator by the University of Minnesota's School of Nursing. He also has been elected Minnesota delegate to the American Nurses Association convention and elected an officer of the Minnesota Nursing Association Assembly of Practice and Education Leaders.

Carolyn Robinson, MS, RN, CANP, CVN, (adult nurse practitioner at Minneapolis VAMC) and her colleague Diane Treat-Jacobson ,PhD, RN (assistant professor at University of Minnesota School of Nursing) received a large grant from the Geriatric Clinical Scholars Partnership Program to conduct their study *Upper Extremity Aerobic Training for Critical Limb Ischemia*.

VISN 12 reported by Karen Clark, GNP

Jenny A. O'Donahue, NP, Chicago VA, is involved in the implementing of MOVE (Managing Overweight Veterans Everywhere) pilot program at VA Chicago, one of the 14 sites participating. Ms. O'Donahue participated on a panel discussion on MOVE at the VA Preventive Medicine Conference May 12, 2004 in Langdon, Virginia.

VISN 6 reported by Joan Knox, WHCNP

Trish Via, APN -The Public Health Strategic Health Care Group of the Department of Veteran Affairs awarded one of the 41 awards of \$1,000 for Osteoporosis Education.

Beverly Ross, MS, CNS, Psychiatric Nurse Specialist and Women's Health Program Manager and **Joan Knox**, RNC, MSN, WHCNP, FNP were awarded Outstanding Nursing Leadership awards by Chi Eta Phi Sorority, Inc. Zeta Chapter on May 2, 2004 at the Sheraton Hotel, Richmond, VA.

VISN 19 reported by Cathy Goddard, APN

Jamie Clinton, MSN, APRN, NP
Manager and Supervisor for the Midlevel Providers in Primary Care
Awards: 2002 AANP State (Utah) Award for Excellence
Presentations:

An Interdisciplinary Approach to Patient-Centered Primary Care presented at the Patient Centered Care Symposium in St. Albans, NY - December 4, 2003.
Welcome! A Personal Orientation to the VHASLCHCS presented at the Patient Centered Care Symposium in St. Albans, NY - December 4, 2003.
Full Circle: The Evolution of Preconception Health Promotion in America.
Poster was displayed at the Utah Perinatal Conference in Salt Lake City, Utah, October 2003.

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Jamie Clinton, MSN, APRN, NP (continued)

Co-authored the article, *About Those Men: Keeping the Guys in Your Life Healthy*. This article was published in the September, 2003 edition of Every Woman, (journal with close to a million readers in the U.S. and Canada. Clinton, J. (2003, in press). *Peripheral Vascular Disease*. In Preusser (Ed.) A Case Study Approach (3rd ed.) Mosby: NY.

Penny Kaye Jensen, MS, APRN, FNP-C

Director, Non-Surgical Erectile Dysfunction Clinic
Awards: 2003 American Academy of Nurse Practitioners National Award for Nurse Practitioner Excellence (Utah)
2003 Sigma Theta Tau, Iota Iota Chapter, Excellence in Clinical Practice
Publications: *Improving Erectile Function: Incorporating the New HCC Erectile Dysfunction Guidelines and New Treatment Options into Clinical Practice*, Advance for Nurse Practitioners, April 2004
Jensen, P.K. (in press). Erectile Dysfunction. Critical Thinking in Medical-Surgical Settings: A case study approach (3rd ed.) St. Louis: Mosby
Posters Accepted: *APN's in Utah: A Survey on Membership and Demographics*, AANP National Conference 2003

Co-author: *Erectile Dysfunction Treatment Options: Pills, Pellets, Potions and Pumps*. and *Nurse Practitioners in the Spotlight During the Salt Lake 2002 Winter Olympics*. AANP National Conference 2003

Speaker: *Sexual Dysfunction In Patients with Kidney Disease and New Guidelines for Erectile Dysfunction Management*, National Kidney Foundation, Chicago, April 2004
Expert Panel Member, *Formulation of Health Care Clinician Guidelines for the Management of Erectile Dysfunction*. Published under: Albaugh et al. Urologic Nursing 22(4), 217-232.

VISN 21 reported by Cathy Goddard, APN

Kathleen White, RN, MSN, NP-C, Clinic nurse manager CBOC Atwater
Publication: Buccheri, R., Trygstad, L., Dowling, G., Hopkins, R., White, K. Griffin, J., Henderson, S., Suci, L., Hippe, S., Kaas, M., Covert, C & Herbert, P. *Do you hear what I hear?: Managing auditory hallucinations in schizophrenia*. Journal of Psychosocial Nursing. 2004 January, 42(1):19-27.

VISN22 reported by Cathy Goddard, APN

Jenice Guzman, RN, MSN, GNP- West Los Angeles GRECC
Publication: Guzman J, Sohn L, Harada N. *Living alone and outpatient care use by older veterans*. Journal of the American Geriatrics Society, 52(4): 617-622; April 2004.

VISN 23 reported by Cathy Goddard, APN

Jean Lewis, BSN, RN, CNP

Urology NP/Coordinator of ED clinic Minneapolis VAMC
Presentations: Speaker in Eau Claire, WI on *ED: What You Need to Know 2/20/03*
Speaker at (SUNA) Society of Urologic Nurses and Associates Annual Conference, San Antonio, TX on *Sex Is Not A Four Letter Word*, the comprehensive review course for certification symposium, and dinner symposium *Improving Erectile Function: Incorporating the new HCC erectile function guidelines and new treatment options into nursing practice 3/26/03*.
Received the Ian Marc Thompson Lectureship for *Sex is Not a Four Letter Word*.

Readers can expect to be informed about law and the rules and regulations governing advanced practice nursing in the Veterans Health Administration, a division of the Department of Veterans Affairs. Contributions are welcome and feel encouraged to respond or help in any way.

License to practice professional nursing remains the jurisdiction of states, so entry into advanced practice nursing and the means to sustain oneself varies by location. Consequently, some topics won't be addressed here.

A useful primer on our work in the Veterans Health Administration can be found in Hickey's et. al. *Advanced Practice Nursing: Changing Roles and Clinical Applications* (2000); specifically, a fine piece by Nancy M. Valentine and colleagues: *Advanced practice Nursing in the Department of Veterans Affairs: A model for the future* provides an overview. The American Nurses Association *Code of Ethics for Nurses with Interpretive Statements* is another basic text worth regular review.

The 108th second-session of the U.S. House officially ends today, while the U.S. Senate was scheduled to finish April 28, according to congressional calendars. Conference committees will continue working. Let us strive toward impartiality—indeed we must in our duty to serve the veterans.

Please explore the following internet sites of interest. See especially the sidebar of Thomas site of the Library of Congress for an overview of the legislative process.

Library of Congress-
www.loc.gov/executive
Vote Smart-
www.vote-smart.org/resource_govt101_02.php
National Council of State Boards of Nursing- www.ncsbn.org
Department of Veterans Affairs-
www.va.gov.
U.S. House of Representatives Committee on Veterans' Affairs-
<http://veterans.house.gov>
Library of Congress' legislation information- <http://thomas.loc.gov>
U.S. Senate Committee on Veterans' Affairs- www.senate.gov/~veterans/
Veterans News Hour Daily-
www.veteranshour.com/