

**OFFICE OF ACADEMIC AFFILIATIONS**

**1. REASON FOR ISSUE:** This Veterans Health Administration (VHA) Directive delineates the authority for the conduct of affiliated training programs for health care professionals within VHA and describes the responsibilities and functions of the Office of Academic Affiliations (OAA).

**2. SUMMARY OF MAJOR CHANGES:** This VHA Directive identifies OAA as providing oversight of the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA)'s affiliated training program activities. OAA's stated mission statement is "OAA leads VHA's health professions education mission that enables VHA to provide excellent care to veterans; to attract and retain high quality professional staff; and to enhance the learning environment. VHA partners with academic and professional communities to educate the next generation of health care professionals for the benefit of VA and the Nation."

**3. RELATED ISSUES:** VHA Handbook 1400.1 and VHA Handbook 1400.2.

**4. RESPONSIBLE OFFICIALS:** The Office of the Chief Academic Affiliations Officer is responsible for the contents of this Directive.

**5. RESCISSIONS:** VHA Manual M-8, Parts III, and IV are rescinded.

**6. RECERTIFICATION:** This document is scheduled for recertification on or before the last working day of July 2007.

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Robert H. Roswell, M.D.  
Under Secretary for Health

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## OFFICE OF ACADEMIC AFFILIATIONS

**1. PURPOSE:** This Veterans Health Administration (VHA) Directive delineates the authority for the conduct of affiliated training programs for health care professionals within VHA and describes the responsibilities and functions of the Office of Academic Affiliations (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 VHA is improved care of the veteran. VHA is directed by statute to "...assist in providing an adequate supply of health personnel to the Nation. This is accomplished in large measure by Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) participation in the clinical care component of affiliated training programs for health care professionals. **NOTE:** *The basic foundation for VA's partnership with academic health care programs is espoused in VHA Manual M-8, Part I, Chapter 2, Appendix 2D.*

b. OAA provides oversight of VA's affiliated training program activities. OAA's stated mission statement is "OAA leads VHA's health professions education mission that enables VHA to provide excellent care to veterans; to attract and retain high quality professional staff; and to enhance the learning environment. VHA partners with academic and professional communities to educate the next generation of health care professionals for the benefit of VA and the nation."

c. VHA has established 5,000 affiliations with over 1,200 educational institutions, including 107 medical schools. Each year, over 80,000 trainees receive clinical training in VA facilities. In this capacity, OAA has a substantial impact on the current and future health workforce of the VA health care system and the Nation. Through these affiliations, OAA contributes to continued excellence in patient care and to the recruitment and retention of VA health care staff. OAA maintains ongoing relationships with colleges, universities, professional organizations, and accrediting bodies for health professions education.

d. The basic authority for the conduct of these education and training programs and activities in VHA is contained in Title 38 United States Code (U.S.C.) Chapters 73 and 81, which include the enabling legislation for such activities.

**3. POLICY:** It is VHA policy that OAA is responsible for initiating policy and providing direction to all VHA facilities for the implementation, coordination, and evaluation of affiliated training programs for health care professionals.

**4. ACTION:** OAA is responsible for:

a. **Graduate Medical Education.** Through its affiliations with United States medical and dental schools, OAA develops, monitors, and manages education and training programs for medical students, physician residents, dentists and VA Special Fellows within VA. To achieve its goals, the Office performs the following functions:

- (1) Formulates and integrates policy governing affiliations between VA health care facilities and medical dental schools.
- (2) Assures medical students and residents receive professional supervision.
- (3) Maintains relationships with government agencies and private-sector interest groups in relation to preparation of the future physician and dental workforce.
- (4) Monitors the activities of Affiliation Partnership Councils to assure their favorable impact on VA academic affiliations.
- (5) Sponsors post-residency VA Special Fellowship Programs that focus on future VA workforce needs in emerging medical and dental areas.
- (6) Allocates positions and funding for physician residents, dentists and VA Special Fellows in over one hundred medical disciplines and fifteen VA Special Fellowships.

b. **Associated Health Education.** OAA develops, monitors, and manages education and training programs for all associated health professions in VA. Associated health professions are defined as all clinical professions other than allopathic, dentistry and osteopathic medicine. These education programs are either affiliated with United States associated health education schools or are independently accredited as VA residency programs. To achieve its goals, the Office performs the following functions:

- (1) Formulates policy governing affiliations between VA health care facilities and associated health programs and schools.
- (2) Maintains relationships with government agencies and private-sector interest groups in relation to preparation of the future associated health professions workforce.
- (3) Monitors the activities of Affiliation Partnership Councils to ensure their favorable impact on VA academic affiliations.
- (4) Allocates positions and funding for trainee support in the following professions: audiology and speech-language pathology; blind rehabilitation; dietetics; health services research and development; maxillo-facial prosthetics; medical records; nurse anesthesia; nursing; occupational therapy; optometry; pharmacy; physical therapy; physician assistant; podiatry; psychology; social work, etc.
- (5) Provides support for special programs in interprofessional areas of particular interest to VA, such as: Geriatric Research, Education, and Clinical Centers (GRECC); Mental Illness Research, Education, and Clinical Centers (MIRECC); Health Services Research & Development (HSR&D); Substance Abuse Clinical Fellowships; Post-traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD); Primary Care Education (PRIME); and Palliative Care.

c. **Administrative Operations.** OAA is responsible for the formulation and administration of VHA's Health Professions Education Budget; it:

- (1) Provides management and administrative support for OAA including financial and personnel activities.
- (2) Formulates and administers VHA's Health Professions Education Budget.
- (3) Manages the funding allocation for all health professions trainees.
- (4) Develops and maintains OAA's educational databases, Web site, and management information system.
- (5) Manages the disbursement agreement process and establishment of stipend schedules.
- (6) Supports development of VHA's indirect education Veterans Equitable Resource Allocation (VERA) adjustment.
- (7) Administers the VA Health Professional Scholarship Program.
- (8) Develops policy for and promotes formation of Education/Research Nonprofit Corporations.
- (9) Evaluates health professions education training programs including a system-wide survey of clinical trainees' perceptions of their VA clinical training experience.
- (10) Publishes evaluative study results in various journals and at a variety of national meetings.

## **5. REFERENCES**

- a. Public Law (Pub. L.) 293, 79<sup>th</sup> 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.

j. M-8, “Academic Affairs,” Parts II and I.

k. VA Directive 5021, April 15, 2001.

l. VA Handbook 5007, dated April 15, 2002.