

## The VA National Quality Scholars Fellowship *Facilitating a Bridge to Practice for DNPs*

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## Objectives

- ▶ Introduce VA National Quality Scholars Fellowship
- ▶ Describe goals of the Fellowship
- ▶ Identify senior scholars and their work
- ▶ Discuss DNP fellows
- ▶ Outline the transition from student to fellow

## VAQS Overview

- ▶ Established in 1999 by the Veterans Health Administration in collaboration with Dartmouth Institute for Health Policy and Clinical Practice, Hanover, NH.
- ▶ Inter-professional (Physicians and Nurses)
- ▶ 8 sites nationwide, each affiliated with a VA Medical Center, a Medical School, and a School of Nursing offering doctoral programs

## New England Region VAQS Program

- ▶ **VA Site:** White River Junction VAMC, WRJ, VT
- ▶ **Nursing School Academic Affiliate:** MGH Institute of Health Professions School of Nursing (MGH IHP SON), Boston, MA
- ▶ **Medical School Academic Affiliate:** Geisel School of Medicine at Dartmouth, Hanover, NH

## Goals of the VAQS Fellowship

- ▶ Design and lead interprofessional efforts for healthcare quality improvement (QI)
- ▶ Teach health professionals about healthcare QI, improvement science, and related health services outcomes research
- ▶ Fellows may focus specific areas: (1) applied healthcare improvement science; (2) leadership; (3) education; (4) outcomes research.

## Goals of the VAQS Fellowship

- ▶ Design and conduct research or improvement projects and publish in peer reviewed literature
- ▶ Develop new knowledge for ongoing improvement of the quality and value of health care services ([www.VAQS.org](http://www.VAQS.org))

## VAQS Faculty Senior Scholar

*Faculty mentor & bridging agent*



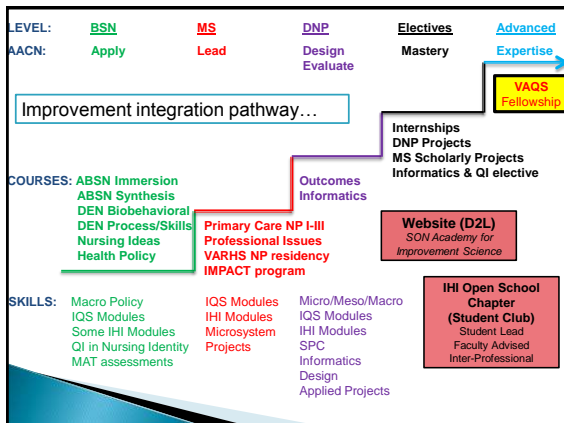
- ▶ **Brant J. Oliver, PhD, MS, MPH, APRN-BC**, Assistant Professor in the SON, appointed one of 16 VAQS Faculty Senior Scholars in the country in 2013.
- ▶ As a VAQS fellow (2011–2012), developed *Academy for Collaborative Education (ACE)* program to provide quality and safety skills training for front-line nurses in VA settings.

## Faculty Senior Scholar & VAQS Fellows

- Developing Capacity - Driving Innovation in SON

Facilitate healthcare improvement science curriculum integration and redesign in the undergraduate, graduate, and doctoral nursing programs:

- Develop core improvement faculty within SON
- Focus on applied healthcare quality improvement education.
- Fellows “leading and learning,” directly engaged in this work.



**Cathy Alexander, DNP, RN (1<sup>st</sup> Year Fellow)**  
 Primary Interest: Leadership  
 Curriculum Projects: Interprofessional IMPACT program, Informatics & Applied Quality Improvement elective, VARHS residency leadership track development



**Connie Cowley, DNP, RN (1<sup>st</sup> Year Fellow)**  
 Primary Interest: Education  
 Curriculum Projects: DEN generalist level program curriculum pathway, Master of Health Professions Education Program Evaluation course, VARHS residency program improvement track

## Making a Difference: Nursing fellows engaged in curriculum innovation



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## Facilitating Transition to Practice

- ▶ DNP students who have an interest in quality, safety, improvement science, leadership and education.
- ▶ **First course in DNP curriculum:** Introduction to the Clinical Practice Doctorate
- ▶ **Outcomes Measurement:** Includes applied improvement methods plus improvement measurement.
- ▶ **Survey of Informatics:** Integrates with quality and safety perspective and emphasize linkage between informatics, quality and safety.

## Mentoring, Networking, Collaboration



*Faculty and fellows identify resources and make connections, creating developmental pathways...*

WRJ VAQS nursing and physician fellows and senior scholars at 2015 Summer Institute in Nashville, TN

VAQS develops healthcare quality and safety skills through multiple pathways...

1. Hands on experience– at local VA, regional level, and national level
2. Course work – weekly national virtual meetings to cover 4 courses
3. 1:1 mentoring with senior scholar
4. Experiences at academic affiliate institutions
5. National collaborations and networking

## VAQS Coursework

1. Foundations
  - ▶ Overview of basic QI and Patient Safety Theory
2. QI Methods and Skills
  - ▶ Scientific methods and practical application skills

## VAQS Coursework

3. Professional Development
  - ▶ Guidance on career advancement and professional goals
4. Fellows' Forum
  - ▶ Facilitates national networking and support

## National and Regional Collaborations

- ▶ Faculty and fellows participate in the annual Summer Institute – annual conference
- ▶ Opportunity to build and strengthen networks with fellows and faculty across sites (VAQS Welcome Document, 2015).
- ▶ VAQS Fellows involved in development and evaluation of VISN-1 (New England Region) nursing leadership development (Boston VA)

## Examples of Opportunities for VAQS Fellows

- ▶ Lean 6 Sigma training
- ▶ Training in improvement coaching
- ▶ IHI – Institute for Health Improvement
- ▶ Participate in regional level projects (VISN – Veteran's Integrated Service Networks)
- ▶ Participate in national level projects
- ▶ Participate in VA grants, e.g. VARHS program (VANAP-GE)
- ▶ Collaborate with other programs, e.g. VA National Center for Patient Safety

# VAQS "Crossover Opportunities"

VAQS nursing fellows to help lead and mentor in program development, implementation, and evaluation of new 5 year, 3.4 million VA grant to prepare NP "clinician-leader-improvers" in an academic-clinical partnership including a new NP residency program ...

IHP press release, July 2015

With New Grant, MGH Institute Nursing Students to Work with Veterans in Rural Vermont and New Hampshire



Oliver Park and Dawn McIndoo at the White House

Assistant Professor David Oliver of the MGH Center for Health Performance Research and the MGH Center for Health Systems Research and Analysis, and Dawn McIndoo, MGH Institute for Nursing Education and the MGH Center for Health Systems Research and Analysis, were honored with the 2015 National Rural Health Care Award for their work in preparing and providing care to veterans who live in rural areas across the U.S. and Canada.

The VA rural health strategy plan is a major collaborative effort between the VA and the academic health care system. The goal is to improve the quality of care for rural veterans and their families. The grant will allow leading experts in the clinical and educational fields to work together to address the unique needs of the VA. IHP will provide a core of programmatic support for these activities. The program will have been jointly conducted for several years and will continue.

The program will also include training and practice, as well as research, and will continue to be a major focus of the VA's efforts to improve the health of rural veterans. The program will also include training and practice, as well as research, and will continue to be a major focus of the VA's efforts to improve the health of rural veterans. The program will also include training and practice, as well as research, and will continue to be a major focus of the VA's efforts to improve the health of rural veterans.

