

NERVANA

Embrace a New Vision of Academic Nursing

The Northeast Region VA Nursing Alliance (NERVANA) was established in March 2007 in response to a federal grant funding the establishment of academic and clinical practice partnerships. The Boston/Bedford VA Healthcare System, Boston College, Northeastern University, Regis College, Simmons College, University of Massachusetts, Boston and University of Massachusetts, Lowell were denied two application cycles stating that the proposal was too complex. Nursing Leadership of the eight entities involved chose to pursue the partnership without the funding. NERVANA was established. The alliance has never looked back.

NERVANA holds key leadership stakeholder meetings on a regular basis including the Steering Committee, Academic Advisory Board, and the Residency Advisory Board, as well as guest appearances at key stakeholder meeting within the academic and clinical practice settings. Members from both the academic and clinical affiliates participate in these meetings to review the mission and vision of the partnership. The roles of Associate Chief of Nursing Service/Academic Affiliations and Academic VA Nurse Scientist have been established to facilitate the partners' efforts to ensure collaboration on initiatives including clinical nursing rotations, novel nursing educational clinical rotations, the development of clinical adjunct faculty, the VA Boston CCNE accredited nurse residency program, enhanced research initiatives and the Veteran Colloquia Educational Series. Through the office of Academic affiliates, student nurses are assigned to a variety of clinical rotations at the VA Boston. The clinical experiences allow for the academic affiliates to embrace the unique healthcare needs of the Veteran population. Novel clinical experiences have been developed within NERVANA including DEUs on spinal cord injury units, medical units and long term care. NERVANA has implemented a Senior Capstone DEU model to enhance the student nurse experience in preparation for transition to practice. VA staff nurses are now employed as clinical adjunct faculty and are working with the academic partners to augment the number of the next generation of clinical educators. The academic partner assisted in the successful accreditation by the CCNE of the VA Boston RN Residency program. This was the first

nationally accredited program for both the federally funded trainee program and the employee program based on the 2015 standards. The VA Nurse scientists have been an integral component of the Evidence Based Practice curriculum of the RN residency program since 2012. This program have inspired the clinical staff nurses to discuss EBP and research initiatives. The NERVANA partnership has developed biannual programs “The Care of the American Veteran Colloquia Series” which presents a current Veteran specific initiative at one of the 6 schools of nursing on a rotating basis.

NERVANA was awarded the 2014 Exemplary Academic Practice Partnership award from the American Association of Colleges of Nursing. In closing, there has been an increase in journal submissions and publications related to a variety of nursing and patient care issues. The relationships have strengthened, the respect is mutual and the creative ideas continue to be shared. Looking forward to the next ten years!