



**Veterans Affairs Nursing Academy**  
***Joining Forces***

*VA Office of Academic Affiliations*  
*VA Office of Nursing Services*  
*AACN Webinar May 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2012*

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**VA Nursing Academy (VANA) and Joining Forces**

- Purpose and Objectives of VANA
- Attributes contributing to successful partnerships
- Value to Facility and College
- Examples of Partnership Innovations

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## VANA Purpose and Objectives

**Goal: provide enhanced baccalaureate nursing education by enabling stronger, mutually beneficial relationships between VA facilities and Schools of Nursing**

### Primary objectives

- Expand VA nurse faculty capacity and professional development
- Increase baccalaureate nursing school enrollment
- Provide experiential learning environment for nursing students in VA facilities
- Provide opportunities for nursing education and practice innovations
- Increase recruitment and retention of VA nurses

### Evaluation

- Annual evaluations conducted by external group; final evaluation due Spring 2013
- Value analysis conducted by OAA/ONS to guide programmatic decision making

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2

## VANA Academic Partnerships

### 1<sup>st</sup> Cohort

Gainesville VA and University of Florida  
 Salt Lake City VA and University of Utah  
 San Diego VA and San Diego State University  
 West Haven VA and Fairfield University

### 2<sup>ND</sup> Cohort

Charleston VA and Medical University of South Carolina  
 Chicago ( Hines) VA and Loyola University  
 Detroit VA and Mercy College  
 Saginaw VA and Saginaw Valley State University  
 Oklahoma VA and University of Oklahoma  
 Providence VA and Rhode Island College  
 Tampa VA and University of South Florida

### 3<sup>rd</sup> Cohort

Asheville VA and Western Carolina University  
 Birmingham VA and University of Alabama at Birmingham  
 Honolulu VA and University of Hawaii at Manoa  
 New York VA and Pace University  
 Pittsburg VA and Waynesburg University

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### Slide 3

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**md4** most of programs exceeded cost, will review  
Mary Dougherty, 11/19/2011

## Attributes of Successful partnerships 1

- Context
  - Pre-existing relationship between partners
  - Local market conditions
- Provision of Resources
  - Intra-organizational facilitation
  - Availability of resources
  - Faculty development
- Partnership Infrastructure
  - Communication structure
  - Power sharing arrangements
  - Problem solving mechanisms

## Attributes of Successful partnerships

- Stakeholder roles
  - Involvement in proposal development
  - Leadership involvement
  - Program Director involvement
  - Scope of faculty role
- Partnership Initiatives
  - Visibility of VANA
  - Education innovations
  - Practice innovations

## Attributes of Successful partnerships

- **Implementation**
  - Readiness to launch
  - Presence of champions
  - Stability of partnership personnel
  - Perceived faculty workload
  - Nursing staff involvement
  - Integration of faculty into partnering environments
  - Shared research and quality improvement initiatives
- **Evaluation**
  - Partnership self assessment activities
  - Ratings of faculty performance

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6

## Value to VA

VANA has provided operational value to the VA

- System, practice, and education innovations within VA facilities
- Support and facilitating organizational goals with VANA faculty and students
- DoD-VA integration, shared educational services, and ROTC support
- Efficiencies in workforce succession planning and recruitment
  - Nursing student willingness to work in the VA increased nearly three fold ( prior to VANA clinical training 28% as compared to post VANA clinical training rate of 81% )<sup>2</sup>

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7

## Value to College

VANA has led to reciprocal benefits for VA on the Nursing School side

- Access to clinical teaching sites/ research and practice opportunities
- Creation of Veteran-centric and Veteran-specific curricula
- Development and support of Veteran initiatives for jobs and education with the Nursing Schools
- Partnering for innovations for education and practice

## VANA catalyst enabling Veteran centric Initiatives

- Partnership discussion
  - Fusion of Veteran centric approaches and clinical and didactic teaching
- Curriculum revisions
  - Focus on common complex medical and psychiatric problems of Veterans
  - Military family
- Simulation vignettes
  - Combined Mental Health and Medical vignettes
  - Female Veteran issues
- Clinical education innovations
  - Psychiatric assessment medical surgical rotations
  - Inclusion of Veteran assessment in all nursing assessments
- Practice innovations
  - Utilization of EBP projects in partnership with Faculty and Managers

## Partnership: Edward Hines (Chicago) VAMC, Loyola University Chicago, Marcella Niehoff School of Nursing

- This VANA partnership has created a *Military Assessment Tool* that is used by all students in the Veteran assessment process. Post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), traumatic brain injury, and suicide risk are addressed in the curriculum didactically, as well as taught through patient assignment. Sensitivity to the potential for co-morbidity as adjuncts to primary medical or surgical diagnoses is taught throughout the educational process. The curriculum includes independent review of the causes of PTSD, with the emphasis on the military experience. Each student is required to complete and present a military assessment focusing on indications of PTSD and subsequent patient behavioral outcomes.
- An annual conference for non-VA, community based Chaplains is coordinated with the Chaplain Service and EES to provide necessary information for those providing pastoral care to returning Veterans. Topics discussed include the physical and emotional issues that returning OEF/IEF Veterans encounter, with focus on PTSD and suicide risk.

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10

## Partnership: Adela Lutz VA Saginaw Medical Center, Saginaw Valley State University

Designated Education Units (DEU) incorporating Quality and Safety as core curriculum components.

- The DEU is defined as a single or a cluster of nursing units developed into a teaching/learning community through collaboration among nurses, other disciplines, management, faculty and students.
- Staff on the units was prepared for their role in the learning community by self-assessing their specific knowledge needs.
- Education was developed based on this assessment and included adult teaching learning theory, learning style preference and introduction to Roger's Diffusion of Innovation model in relation to change process.
- Course objectives are shared with staff before students begin clinical education. Staff is included in pre-clinical conferences as well as post conference debriefing with students to reflect on the outcomes of the clinical experience and to solicit feedback for improvement.

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11

## Partnership: Ralph H. Johnson VA Medical Center (Charleston SC) and Medical University of South Carolina

### Publications

- A chapter on Military Families is included in the forthcoming 10th Edition of the widely used psychiatric nursing textbook *Principles and Practice of Psychiatric Nursing* authored by VANA faculty. This chapter was a direct outcome of the VANA partnership.

### Initiatives designed to address the needs of the homeless Veterans

- Designed and implemented by students with Faculty guidance to help homeless Veterans locate potable water sources. Students provided education to the Veteran on s/s of dehydration and heat stroke.
- Decrease in ED visits for hydration and heat stroke ( 4.7 ED visits per month)

### The Skins Game

- VANA faculty used gaming technology to create an interactive, multimedia game designed to help students understand the importance of skin assessment and interventions designed to prevent skin breakdown.

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12

## Partnership: Aleda E Lutz VAMC, Saginaw Valley State University College of Nursing & Health Sciences

- The Aleda E. Lutz VA Medical Center in Saginaw Michigan and Saginaw Valley State University VA Nursing Academy partnership created a series of simulation scenarios that highlight a female Veteran with PTSD.
- The authenticity of the simulation scenarios was enhanced by incorporating current literature and gaining invaluable input from a woman Veteran who understood PTSD and its impact.
- She assisted with script writing and this allowed the simulations to unfold into very authentic patient care encounters. The same woman Veteran volunteered her time to portray the role of a woman Veteran with PTSD and several other medical conditions.
- The nursing students at the university enjoyed interacting with the Veterans during these simulations. Most importantly, they learned how to realistically interact and deliver care to a female Veteran patient with PTSD.

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13



## Partnership: Birmingham VAMC, University of Alabama at Birmingham School of Nursing

- Birmingham VA VANA Faculty has developed an educational program for VA clinicians and trainees focused on the Mental Health needs of the Veteran. Specific problems addressed are traumatic brain injury, post-traumatic stress disorder, depression, and psychiatric illness along with therapeutic interventions appropriate to each problem. The program is available on CD to facilitate easy access and widespread distribution through the facility and college.
- The University of Alabama at Birmingham (UAB) School of Nursing Board of Visitors has approved \$145,000 to the Board of Visitors Endowed Veterans Care Scholarship.
- The Board of Visitors made the decision to create a scholarship to promote military nursing education in 2007 after learning of the Birmingham VA Medical Center and the UAB School of Nursing's VA Nursing Academy Partnership.

## Partnership: North Florida/South Georgia VA Health System (Gainesville), University of Florida College of Nursing

### Interdisciplinary Treatment rounds in Psychiatry

- Implementation of a system redesign to develop interdisciplinary treatment rounds for planning psychiatric care for Veterans.

### Improvements made:

- Documentation of treatment plans/updates/pain assessment, earlier in day discharge, team involvement in planned discharges
- Readmission days reduced by 409.

## Partnership: VA Connecticut Health Care System, Fairfield University School of Nursing

- VANA Program Director, who is a Vietnam Veteran, has authored a chapter on post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) in a simulation learning textbook and is in the process of authoring a chapter on PTSD in a mental health textbook focused on aging Veterans.
- The VANA Program Directors are partnering with other researchers in a study exploring PTSD and the end-of-life experience in the geriatric Veteran population.

## Partnership: John D. Dingell VAMC, University of Detroit Mercy School of Nursing

- The VANA Michigan partnership of the John D. Dingell VA Medical Center and the University of Detroit Mercy has collaborated with the Detroit Mercy College of Engineering to develop both a multidisciplinary education program and an engineering nursing team.
- This team identifies and works with Veterans needing a customized device to enable full participation in desired activities.
- The engineering and nursing team begins the design process with a recognized need, through problem definition and specification, culminating in a complete design package to include assembly drawings and part prints. Engineering students focus on technical details, specifications, marketability, and usefulness of the product. Nursing students evaluate the potential client's physical, emotional, and mental health needs throughout the design and implementation phase.
- A recent project produced a unique assistive device that enabled the Veteran to stabilize devices such as cameras so that he can perform activities he enjoyed prior to his injury.

## Partnership: Providence VA Medical Center, Rhode Island College of Nursing

VANA faculty are members of the VET Success on Campus program. The purpose is to encourage and support Veterans to be successful in their educational and career endeavors. There are 200 Veterans in the program with approximately 50 inquiries per month.

### Simulation

- VANA Faculty developed high fidelity simulation vignettes focused on Veterans.
  - **PTSH/TBI, CAD, HTN, CRF**
  - **Female Veteran with obstetrical problems**
  - **Simulation safety**
- Development of a cloud based educational training platform
- System will be integrated into classroom teaching and /or simulation exercises to provide additional fidelity and complexity and used as a foundation to develop a scenario based learning curriculum

## Partnership: VA San Diego Health Care System, San Diego State University School of Nursing

- *Warrior to Soul Mate: Reclaiming Your Relationship after Combat Deployment.*  
VANA faculty participate in this weekend program designed to help couples grow in their relationship building. Couples practice specific skills during the weekend focused on emotional literacy, confiding, listening, problem solving, and constructive conflict resolution for building and maintaining intimacy, practical knowledge, and strategies and attitudes for sustaining positive marriage and family life. Approximately 30 couples have enrolled in the program. Many participants commented that they now had the skills to continue to work on their relationships. Even those who could not maintain their relationships commented on how smoother the separation went and how they were able to maintain a working relationship to enable ongoing interaction with their children.

## Partnership: James Haley VAMC Tampa, University of South Florida College of Nursing

VANA faculty have participated in caregiver and staff educational programs with the goal of supporting the caregiver of Veterans with poly-trauma injuries and traumatic brain injuries in raising emotionally healthy and secure children. Pediatric Nurse Practitioner VANA faculty have collaborated with VA staff in developing a series of classes to meet the needs of caregivers and children. One program is entitled *“Effects of Trauma on Kids and Families.”* Childrearing and parenting issues were discussed using a cognitive and developmental framework to help the caregivers understand the needs underlying their children’s behavior and learn how to appropriately manage this behavior.

## Questions/Comments

## References

1. Dobalian, A., Needleman J., Bowman C., Wyte T. ( 2011) VA Nursing Academy: Enhancing Academic Partnerships National Program Evaluation. VA HSR&D Center for Excellence for the Study of Health Care Provider Behavior.