

Academic-Practice Partnership Description
University of Alabama at Birmingham School of Nursing and
Birmingham Veterans Affairs Medical Center

The University of Alabama at Birmingham School of Nursing (UABSON) and the Birmingham VA Medical Center (BVAMC) have enjoyed a 40-year student training *relationship*—one that flourished in 2009 when our *partnership* to plan and develop a VA Nursing Academy began. This unique partnership, strategically designed to accomplish mutually beneficial goals, is built on a framework of relationship-building, engagement, governance, evaluation of outcomes, and sustainability. Our shared vision is to transform the care of Veterans and their families by working collaboratively to educate compassionate, highly competent nurses and nurse practitioners. The UABSON Dean, BVAMC Chief Nursing Officer (CNO), and key leaders from both organizations are visible directors of the partnership and regularly affirm their commitment to this shared vision and the expansion of learning opportunities for students and faculty at VA facilities. Since 2009, our partnership has strengthened and evolved to now include a VA Nursing Academy, a Mental Health Nurse Practitioner (MHNP) Residency, and a VA Nursing Academic Partnership for Graduate Education (VANAP-GE).

Our partnership was selected as a VA Nursing Academy (VANA), now known as the VA Nursing Academic Partnership (VANAP), in 2009. The initial VANAP goal was to improve the recruiting and retaining of baccalaureate nurses who possess the knowledge and skills required to improve Veteran’s health care. Within the first 6 years of our VANAP partnership, 113 BSN students were accepted as VA Nurse Scholars, completing all of their clinical training, except pediatrics and obstetrics, within the BVAMC. To date, 82 have graduated and 14 were hired at the BVAMC, reducing the costs associated with recruitment and onboarding newly hired RNs. Several associated activities have occurred as a result of the VANAP partnership. Some UABSON faculty work directly with nursing staff on improvement and professional development activities, and some BVAMC nurses are instructors in the UABSON. This faculty/staff exchange is critical to the success of the program and has led to joint scholarly work, including 80 presentations at professional conferences and 40 publications in peer reviewed journals.

In October 2013, our partnership was selected as one of 4 MHNP residencies for a 3-year pilot program, the goal of which is to develop MHNP leaders who are well-prepared to work in interprofessional team environments with Veteran populations and who will be positioned for careers within the VA Health System. The residency is co-directed by a BVAMC MHNP and a UABSON MHNP faculty member and has provided increased access and improved care delivery for Veterans with mental health needs at the VA. The initial cohort of three MHNP graduates completed the year-long, full-time residency at the BVAMC in January 2015; one resident was hired by the BVAMC and took over the co-director role of the residency program. The second cohort of three residents began in January 2015 and is currently in process. Together, these two cohorts have provided almost 7,500 mental health visits for Veterans at the BVAMC.

Most recently, in July 2014, our partnership grew to include the only VA Nursing Academic Partnership for Graduate Education (VANAP-GE) Psychiatric Mental Health Nurse Practitioner Program in the country. This partnership (resulting in an MSN in psychiatric-mental health nursing) is charged with producing a minimum of 6-12 MHNPs per class who complete the majority of their clinical experiences at the BVAMC and who are encouraged to enroll in and complete the MHNP residency at the BVAMC following graduation. During the first year, VANAP-GE students have provided 1,130 mental health visits with Veterans and have increased access to care through the addition of a weekly After Hours Clinic staffed by VANAP-GE faculty and students.

A key feature of our robust partnerships is the exchange of faculty and BVAMC nurses and nurse practitioners. The result has been the development of new models of innovative care delivery based on strong and trusting relationships, shared faculty and trainees, innovation in education, staff development and patient care, and an emphasis on scholarship and inquiry – all focused on improving the nursing care for our nation’s Veterans and their families – and now permanently woven into the fabric of our partnership.



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Selecting Partners

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Preparing for Your First Meeting

Date/Time of Meeting

2009

Place of Meeting:

UAB School of Nursing

What do you and your partner need to know about you and your organization?

The UAB School of Nursing (UABSON) and Birmingham VA Medical Center (BVAMC) have had an ongoing partnership since 2009. The initial partnership began with joint planning and development of an application for a VA Nursing Academy and a shared vision of transforming the care of Veterans and their families. Through this initial partnership, UABSON and the BVAMC had an opportunity to: increase the recruitment and retention of nursing students and graduates into the VA nursing workforce; increase the number of students educated about the population specific needs of Veterans; develop and expand faculty expertise among VA master's-prepared nurses and UABSON faculty with a focus on the delivery of health care for Veterans; and expand partnership opportunities in education, clinical service, and evidenced-based practice to improve quality outcomes. This partnership links institutional missions and governance and creates a pipeline for the development of VA Nurse Scholars and faculty.

PARTNERSHIPS

Initial Meeting

What is the right partnership activity for you and your partner?

Our initial partnership developed around plans to submit an application for a VA Nursing Academy (now called VA Nursing Academic Partnership or VANAP). This joint endeavor was the right partnership for us in 2009 and resulted in a funded proposal whereby undergraduate nursing students complete their clinical rotations at the BVAMC and have a curriculum that focuses on the special care of Veterans. These clinical experiences will enhance knowledge so that nursing students are better prepared to care for our Veteran population upon graduation. Students and graduates help the BVAMC and Veterans integrated Service Network (VISN) 7 to provide and improve access to care for Veterans living in Alabama and surrounding states.

What documents about your organization should you bring to the meeting?

The UAB School of Nursing Strategic Plan, Vision, and Mission, as they are closely linked with our VA partnership goals of increasing access for Veterans, improving their quality of care, and developing a nursing workforce educated to transform the care of Veterans .

What do you have to offer?

Twenty (20) students per year are selected as VA Nurse Scholars and participate in a Veteran-centric curriculum and dedicated educational unit (DEU) at the BVAMC. They are taught by UABSON and BVAMC joint faculty. In addition, we guide faculty whose research and practice interests align with BVAMC strategic plans toward collaborative BVAMC projects, and we facilitate the students' progress through the nursing academic program. We provide appropriate academic faculty appointments to qualified VA nurses and provide access to university-based professional development programs. Thanks to our UABSON Board of Visitors Endowed VA Nursing Scholarship, we are also positioned to award scholarships to VA nurses and students committed to the care of Veterans, and we also match contributions for up to three Jonas doctoral student Veterans Scholarships annually for UAB VANAP faculty and/or VA employed nursing students.

What is your vision for this partnership and does your partner share this vision?

Our shared vision is transforming the care of Veterans and their families and our partnership provides a groundbreaking approach toward achieving that vision. Undergraduate nursing students complete their clinical rotations at the BVAMC and have a curriculum that focuses on the special care of Veterans and their families. These clinical experiences enhance knowledge so that nursing students are better prepared to care for our Veteran population upon graduation. This partnership results in many benefits for both partners, including: an expanded enrollment of active duty and Veteran students; embedding Veteran centric content throughout all didactic and clinical courses for more than 1,320 baccalaureate nursing students to date; reducing recruitment and onboarding costs for BVAMC by hiring VA Nurse Scholars upon graduation; enhancing bedside practice initiatives; and disseminating joint scholarly work, including 40 peer-reviewed publications and 80 professional presentations.

Who else needs to be involved in both organizations? Is top leadership involved?

In addition to the co-directors dedicated to overseeing the management of this program and UABSON and BVAMC faculty involved in the program, top leadership from both organizations play an important role. The BVAMC's Associate Director/Patient Care Services, Associate Chief of Staff for Education, Chief of Patient Care Services, Medical Center Director, and VISN Director are all actively involved in the program through their respective service on its Steering Committee, along with the UABSON Dean and Associate Dean for Clinical and Global Partnerships.

What is the business case for the partnership?

The initial business case for the partnership was to transform nursing education and practice within the VA in a manner similar to that resulting from the close and long-standing partnership between the VA and the nation's medical schools. Ultimately, the result would be to: 1) improve care and satisfaction with care for Veterans and their families; 2) increase the knowledge of nurses prepared to provide high quality care for Veterans, and 3) increase recruitment and retention of nurses within the VA health system, thus reducing costs.

Subsequent Meetings

Do you have clarity on goals and vision?

Yes. The goals of our original partnership are (a) expand faculty and professional development, (b) increase student enrollment, (c) provide opportunities for educational and practice innovations, and (d) increase recruitment and retention of VA nurses. Our mutually agreed upon VA Mental Health Residency goals are (a) increase veteran satisfaction with health, education, and counseling by increasing the numbers of Mental Health Nurse Practitioners (MHNPs) who will make vital contributions to the primary mental health care of Veterans, especially those living in Alabama, (b) employ innovative approaches to the development, implementation, and evaluation of the interprofessional MHNP residency, and (c) create veteran-centric three-trimester clinical experiences that promote high quality clinical skill development for MHNP students. Our VANAP-GE goals are (a) expand faculty and professional development, (b) recruit students for the program and increase clinical training capacity, (c) enhance CRNP and PMHNP recruitment into BVAMC and retain VANAP students and CRNPs at BVAMC, (d) provide opportunities for education and practice innovations aligned with Veteran care, (e) enhance the post-graduate PMHNP residency, and (f) develop interprofessional PMHNP education.

What are the details and time line of the initiative?

The VA Nursing Academy was created to address the predicted long-term nursing shortage, projected to be more acute within the VA because of the older average age of nurses and to recruit and retain baccalaureate nurses with the knowledge and skills to improve Veteran's health care. Over time, however, the goals shifted toward patient safety and quality and increased access to health care for Veterans and their families. As one of five funded programs in the 2009 cohort, the BVAMC and UABSON were funded for a 5-year pilot period through September 2014. The partnership is now maintained by both partners contributing the resources to sustain it.

Whom can we call for expert consultation if needed?

Doreen C. Harper, PhD, RN, FAAN - Dean and Fay B. Ireland Endowed Chair, UAB School of Nursing
Cynthia Cleveland, DNP, RN - Chief Executive Nurse, Birmingham VA Medical Center
Kimberly Froelich, PhD, RN - Associate Chief Nurse for Education, Birmingham VA Medical Center
Randy Moore, DNP, RN - Assistant Professor and VANAP co-director, UAB School of Nursing
Cynthia S. Selleck, PhD, RN, FAAN - Associate Dean for Clinical and Global Partnerships, UAB School of Nursing
Teena McGuinness, PhD, PMHNP, FAAN - Professor & Interim Department Chair, UAB School of Nursing
Susanne Fogger, DNP, PMHNP - Associate Professor, UAB School of Nursing

What are the expected outcomes of the activity?

The opportunities provided to the students and faculty (UABSON and BVAMC) in this partnership not only lay the foundation for VA nursing careers as opposed to positions, but also for nursing faculty and leadership development among VA nurses. This program exists in a time when state resources are limited and qualified students are being denied admission due to a shortage of faculty. This program addresses the faculty shortage and also provides a pathway for program graduates to fill job vacancies left by the resignations or retirements of BVAMC nurses. School of Nursing faculty with expertise in patient safety and quality research are able to provide added expertise to BVAMC quality improvement and safety initiatives to assist in research design and analysis techniques, furthering both UABSON's and BVAMC's goals to increase collaborative research, presentations, and publications. Ultimately, of course, the goal is improved care and increased access to care for Veterans and their families.

ENVIRONMENT

Time

Is this the right time for this partnership?

Yes. Considering the dire need to provide and improve access to care for Veterans living in Alabama and surrounding states, this partnership is important and needed at this critical time for Veterans. The BVAMC-UABSON is an especially important locale for such an innovative effort because of the high proportion of Veterans who live in Alabama. The State of Alabama has approximately 415,000 living Veterans and has deployed the third-highest number of service men and women to Iraq and Afghanistan, including active duty and reservists from every county in the state. Educating nurses and nursing students to identify and care for the unique needs of Veterans and their families is imperative and this partnership has allowed that to happen.

What are the issues that will facilitate or impede the development of the partnership?

This unique partnership is facilitating the close work of both parties through monthly Leadership meetings, quarterly "All Staff" meetings and Advisory Committee meetings. Each partner's commitment to dedicating the necessary time involved with overseeing these program has been paramount to our successes. As our new partnership programs have come onboard (MHNP Residency and VANAP-Graduate Education Program), an additional monthly meeting has been added to review plans and progress of these initiatives.

What is the time commitment for the partners?

Both partners provide protected time to enable faculty to carry out the functions of the program effectively and efficiently. This includes relieving faculty of other administrative, clinical, or academic responsibilities, where necessary, and monthly planning meetings. There will also be an annual strategic planning meeting of key leadership and stakeholders to review successes, identify barriers, and plan for future years. Program leadership will ensure that strategic planning and assessment is aligned with local and national nursing education and practice goals and objectives. Annual reports will be provided to the VA Office of Academic Affiliations to be approved in advance of submission by both the Nurse Executive and the Dean of the UAB SON.

Whose time will be required?

There is some time required of executive leadership from each partner (at least monthly), with the majority of administrative time being spent by UABSON and BVAMC faculty. The VANAP Leadership Team meets monthly, alternating between meetings at the UABSON and BVAMC. All members are actively engaged and have agreed to the time requirements necessary to grow and sustain the partnership.

When will the meetings be scheduled?

Monthly VANAP Leadership Team meetings are held that include the UABSON Dean, BVAMC CNO, program co-directors, BVAMC Chief of Patient Care Services and UABSON Associate Dean for Clinical and Global Partnerships. As the partnerships have grown, the BVAMC Associate Chief of Staff for Education and Chief of Mental Health have joined as have the co-directors of the MHNP Residency and VANAP-Graduate Education Program. These meetings are held on the first Tuesday of each month and alternate between the UABSON and BVAMC. The meetings are used for planning and to review successes, identify barriers, and plan for sustainability.

ENVIRONMENT

Space

What space is required for the activity?

The BVAMC has excellent facilities available to educate students. A 313-bed acute tertiary care facility located within Birmingham's health sciences and medical center district, the BVAMC provides acute tertiary medical and surgical care to Veterans of Alabama and surrounding states. Recent construction provides patients with access to state-of-the-art facilities and equipment in all clinical programs. The BVAMC also includes a Mental Health Clinic and Community Based Outpatient Clinics. The UABSON provides office space within the School of Nursing building for VA co-directors of all three partnership initiatives, including VANAP, the MHNP Residency and the VANAP-Graduate Education program.

What equipment and supplies are needed?

The BVAMC uses a Computerized Patient Record System (a specific genre of Electronic Medical Records) that students must be familiarized with. The UABSON acquired this system for its simulation lab to allow students to learn the program's specifics in a safe, controlled environment.

What money is needed?

The original VA Nursing Academy (VANAP) partnership was supported by the Veterans Health Administration Office of Academic Affiliations and included support for 10 FTEs between the UABSON and BVAMC. This was reduced to 5 FTEs midway through the program and as of October 2014, the partnership became completely sustained via a Memorandum of Understanding between the UABSON and BVAMC and shared support of 3 FTEs (1.5 FTE from each partner). Currently, each partner also contributes a .5 FTE co-director for the MHNP Residency. The VANAP-GE program, through funding from the VHA Office of Academic Affiliations, currently supports faculty positions for both partners.

Where are we meeting?

Meetings are alternated monthly between the UABSON and the BVAMC.

Where will we present outcomes?

VANAP faculty have been actively engaged in joint scholarly work since the initial partnership began in 2009. To date, partners have disseminated 40 publications in peer-reviewed nursing and health related journals and provided 80 professional presentations. Internally, outcomes are presented via news stories on websites and in annual reports developed by both parties.

ENVIRONMENT

Regulation

What are the policies or regulatory issues that will impede or facilitate development of the partnership on both sides?

This partnership must abide by VA and state university system regulations. Our shared vision allows us to work through the infrastructure issues existing at the state academic level and the federal arena.

Context

How will the partnership be funded?

The original VA Nursing Academy partnership was initiated with a commitment to a sustainability plan and a desire to create resources targeted at continuing the relationship. Funding drove the depth and breadth of the partnership and its related outcomes early on. While each partner's executive leaders invested resources to support the initiative, extramural federal funding for the VA Nursing Academy provided the resources needed to produce the significant vertical and horizontal integration of the initiative across both organizations that lead to the value-added outcomes associated with this initiative. Because of the success and importance of the program and partnership, the UABSON and BVAMC agreed to sustain the partnership with internal resources once VA funding ceased as of September 30, 2014. Notably, the UABSON Board of Visitors also established an Endowed VA scholarship in 2011, funded at more than \$140,000 that supports undergraduate students with expressed commitments to VA health care nursing. Additionally, the UABSON matches up to three Jonas doctoral Veterans Scholarships annually (\$30,000 per year) for VANAP faculty and VA employed Nursing students.

What are the constraints of both partners?

As previously mentioned, this unique partnership necessitates the close work of both parties through monthly meetings and regular interim communication. Reports of partnership activities are regularly required by the VHA and there are also monthly conference calls with the VHA Office of Academic Affiliations. Each partner's commitment to dedicating the necessary time involved with overseeing these programs has been paramount to our successes; however, the time involved by busy administrators, faculty and staff can also be considered a constraint at times.

What history do the partners have with each other and each others' institutions?

The UABSON and the BVAMC had a 40-year history of educational collaboration with student training prior to formalizing our academic-practice partnership in 2009. BVAMC nurses have been preceptors for many years for both BSN and MSN students and are hired consistently each semester as part-time faculty to supervise groups of clinical students for direct care experience in both undergraduate nursing foundations and advanced adult health courses. Since 2009, when we partnered more significantly and collaboratively through establishing the VA Nursing Academy, our relationship has become intimately interwoven and grown with the onboarding of each new partnership program.

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Academic-Practice Partnerships Partnership Expectation and Outcome Metrics Worksheet

Partnership Goals	Activities	Outcomes
VA Nursing Academic Partnership (VANAP) Undergraduate Program (formerly known as VA Nursing Academy)		
<p>Increase the recruitment and retention of baccalaureate nursing students and graduates into the VA nursing workforce.</p>	<p>Establish VANAP Leadership Team that includes UABSON Dean, BVAMC CNO, VANAP co-directors and other key faculty and staff that meets monthly.</p> <p>Establish VA Nursing Academy Advisory Council that meets quarterly.</p> <p>Expand the enrollment of BSN students and select up to 20 per year as “VA Nurse Scholars” who complete all of their clinical education (with the exception of pediatrics and obstetrics) at the BVAMC.</p> <p>Recruit VA Nurse Scholars into Student Nurse Technician (SNT) roles at the BVAMC after completion of first semester.</p> <p>Provide ongoing mentoring and recognition of VA Nurse Scholars throughout BSN program.</p> <p>Promote VANAP Undergraduate Program widely via written materials, signage, website, incoming BSN student orientations, joint presentations and publications.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ongoing and open discussion about student performance, strategic initiatives, joint efforts, future plans and sustainability. • Graduation, to date, of 82 VA Nurse Scholars, 14 of who were hired by the VA upon graduation. • 10-fold increase in number of active duty and Veteran students enrolled in UABSON programs. • Establishment of a UABSON Board of Visitors Endowed VA scholarship funded at \$140,000 to support BSN students with expressed commitments to VA nursing. • Awarding of 3 Jonas Doctoral Veterans Scholarships annually for VANAP faculty and VA-employed students (SON matches \$30,000 for these scholarships annually). • Accelerated orientation and transition from student to BVAMC nursing service resulting in improved care and cost savings.

<p>Increase the number of undergraduate nursing students educated about the population specific needs of Veterans through an emphasis on innovative curriculum about high quality, culturally competent care for Veterans and their families.</p>	<p>Select up to 20 VA Nurse Scholars each year who complete all of their clinical education (with the exception of pediatrics and obstetrics) at the BVAMC.</p> <p>Embed Veteran-centric content throughout all BSN didactic and clinical courses. Examples include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development of an elective course on “Caring for America’s Heroes: The VHA System.” • Incorporation of the simulated VA Computerized Patient Record System (CPRS) into the UABSON’s clinical nursing laboratory. • Development of VA-specific simulation scenarios that address the top 10 diagnoses seen at the BVAMC. • Implementation of student projects addressing quality improvement, including improving mobility while hospitalized and decreasing incontinence-associated dermatitis. <p>Development and validation of a set of 10 Veteran competencies and associated knowledge, skills and attitudes that can be used to guide curriculum development for all undergraduate nursing students: Veteran Competencies for Undergraduate Nursing Education (VCUNE) includes the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Military and Veteran culture • Post Traumatic Stress Disorder • Amputation and Assistive Devices • Environmental/Chemical Exposures • Substance Use Disorder • Military Sexual Trauma • Traumatic Brain Injury • Suicide • Homelessness • Serious Illness Especially at End of Life 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All undergraduate nursing students exposed to Veteran-centric curriculum annually (more than 1,320 to date). • Increased numbers of undergraduate Honors students conducting quality improvement projects at BVAMC. • Improved quality of care and patient satisfaction for Veterans/families. • Increased culturally competent nursing workforce. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Modified Delphi study complete and dissemination of validated, revised VCUNE competencies in process; result should be enhanced Veteran education and cultural competency of additional BSN-prepared nurses across the country.
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<p>Develop and expand faculty expertise among VA master's-prepared nurses and UABSON faculty with a focus on the delivery of health care for Veterans.</p>	<p>Trading of faculty and staff between UABSON and BVAMC.</p> <p>Implementation of a 1-week Faculty Development Intensive for VA nurse instructors (to learn about roles and responsibilities of faculty, and for instruction in curriculum development, classroom teaching, and distance education technology).</p> <p>BVAMC faculty embedded in UABSON, providing clinical, classroom, simulation lab and other kinds of instruction to VANAP students and others.</p> <p>UABSON faculty embedded on select BVAMC units working directly with nursing staff and students on improvement and professional development activities.</p> <p>Development of an MOU between UABSON and BVAMC committing to sustain the VANAP program once funding ceased on September 30, 2014.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Three BVAMC nurses prepared as faculty and involved in educating and mentoring students in Veteran's health care. • Seven UABSON faculty working with BVAMC staff on development and implementation of new processes in staff development, continuing education, performance improvement, leadership and management, and research. • Increased number of BVAMC nurses enrolled in UABSON graduate programs. • 3.0 FTEs continue to be committed (1.5 from UABSON and 1.5 from BVAMC) to maintain the VANAP program.
<p>Expand partnership opportunities in education, clinical service, and evidence-based practice to improve quality outcomes, specific to prevention and management of chronic conditions, cultural competence, nursing informatics, and simulation technology.</p>	<p>Partnership with UAB Theater Department to produce an educational DVD of psychiatric simulations entitled <i>The Mental Health Patient on a Medical-Surgical Floor</i> which was distributed to all Veterans Affairs Medical Centers across the country to educate nurses on the unique mental health needs of veterans.</p> <p>Participation of UABSON VANAP faculty on Evidence-Based Practice Councils at BVAMC.</p> <p>Participation of BVAMC VANAP faculty on Faculty Organization and committees at UABSON.</p> <p>Partnership with Alabama Statewide Area Health Education Center (AHEC) Program to present a statewide conference, <i>Painting A Moving Train: Working with Veterans of Iraq and Afghanistan and Their Families</i>.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 152 VA Medical Center CNOs received a free copy of the educational DVD and Guidelines in December 2012 for use with nursing staff; additional copies continue to be requested. • Dissemination of 40 Veteran-focused scholarly publications and 80 professional presentations; much of this scholarly work was joint between the partners and included students. • Evidence-based practice projects improved patient mobility while hospitalized and decreased incontinence-associated dermatitis resulting in shortened hospital stays and cost savings.

	<p>Partnership with Alabama Statewide AHEC Program to implement 3 Alabama Veterans Community Mental Health Summits during 2014, including use of keynote speaker, Linda Schwartz, DrPH, RN, FAAN who spoke on <i>Identifying and Supporting Veterans through the Campaign "Have You Ever Served."</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Partnership on the incontinence-associated dermatitis was featured as one of the top 10 innovation awards by the Office of Nursing Service and was presented on a VHA Hotline Call and the National Nursing Service Conference Call. • Increased number of community health professionals and health professions students across Alabama educated about military cultural competency and the unique mental and behavioral health needs of Veterans, Service Members and their families.
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VA Mental Health Nurse Practitioner (MHNP) Residency

Partnership Goals	Activities	Outcomes
<p>Increase Veteran satisfaction with health, education, and counseling by increasing the numbers of Mental Health Nurse Practitioners (MHNPs) who will make vital contributions to the primary mental health care of Veterans, especially those living in Alabama.</p>	<p>Establish MHNP Leadership Team that includes UABSON Dean, BVAMC CNO, MHNP co-directors, BVAMC Mental Health lead psychiatrist and other key faculty and staff that meets monthly.</p> <p>Recruit students from the UABSON, Alabama, Georgia and Mississippi via strategic advertising through professional meetings/conferences, internet, nursing journals, brochures and flyers, and websites.</p> <p>Create an Advisory Council to assist in recruitment strategies in Alabama and Mississippi, including American Psychiatric Nurses Association chapters from each state.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ongoing and open discussion about resident performance, program planning, strategic initiatives, joint efforts, future plans and sustainability. • Full complement of 3 residents recruited for cohort 1 of residency (January 2014 – December 2014); residents completed 4,935 mental health visits with Veterans (duplicated headcount), thereby increasing access to care; 1 resident hired by BVAMC and assumed residency co-director role in January 2015. • Full complement of 3 residents recruited for cohort 2 of residency; will complete in December 2015; residents have completed 2,563 mental health visits

		<p>with Veterans, thereby increasing access to care.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Third cohort of 3 MHNP residents to begin in August 2015. • All residents participate in interprofessional teams with psychiatry residents and psychology interns and learn how to provide care for the unique mental health needs of Veterans. • Residents able to enroll tuition-free in 1 DNP course each semester at UABSON; 9 semester hours of DNP program completed at end of residency.
<p>Employ innovative approaches to the development, implementation, and evaluation of the interprofessional MHNP residency.</p>	<p>Plan and author curricular approaches using an interprofessional focus for the MHNP residency via meetings with MHNP residency staff and faculty and in collaboration with other interprofessional residency personnel.</p> <p>Evaluate and revise MHNP residency curriculum in years 1, 2 and 3.</p> <p>Create opportunities for enhanced MHNP clinical decision making via use of software applications that are helpful in psychiatric decision making.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All 3 residents in cohort 1 presented posters and participated in joint podium presentation with residency co-directors at APNA Conference in October, 2014. They each presented their capstone projects which focused on delirium prevention, mood disorders in patients undergoing dialysis, and interprofessional education. The podium presentation was an overview of the residency. • Residency co-directors have developed core competencies for MHNP residency programs in 2014. Currently curriculum is being developed that supports development of the competencies, along with lesson plans. • New curriculum content promoted the uses of VA-specific evidence-based practice in clinical decision-making.

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> MHNP residency curriculum modifications made for year 2, based on evaluations from cohort 1.
Create Veteran-centric 3-trimester clinical experiences that will promote high quality clinical skill development for MHNP residents.	<p>Develop key clinical learning objectives for MHNP residents and ensure each resident spends at least one month with each of the 9 teams comprising the MH Service:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> General Mental Health Clinic Post Traumatic Stress Disorder Clinical Team Mental Health Intensive Case Management Suicide Prevention Clinic Primary Mental Health Outpatient Substance Abuse Health Care for Homeless Veterans Consult/Crisis Team Community Based Outpatient Clinics (CBOCs) <p>Residency co-directors hold weekly meetings with each MHNP resident to evaluate progress.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Residency cohort 1 (3 MHNP residents) completed in December 2014 and are well-prepared to care for Veterans and their families within and outside of VA mental health settings. Residency cohort 2 (3 MHNP residents) currently engaged in clinical training activities at BVAMC and within local CBOCs. Residency cohort 3 (3 MHNP residents) currently being recruited to begin August 2015. Formative evaluations provide opportunities for resident growth and progress and assist with overall summative evaluation of MHNP residency, leading to curricular improvements that ultimately impact the care of Veterans and their families.
VA Nursing Academic Partnership – Graduate Education (VANAP-GE)		
Partnership Goals	Activities	Outcomes
Expand faculty and professional development for Psychiatric Mental Health NPs (PMHNPs) at UABSON and BVAMC.	Establish VANAP-GE Leadership Team that includes UABSON Dean, BVAMC CNO, VANAP-GE co-directors, BVAMC Mental Health lead psychiatrist and other key faculty and staff that meets monthly (since the MHNP residency and VANAP-GE are so closely aligned, this has now become one joint team that meets monthly).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ongoing and open discussion about student/resident performance, program planning, strategic initiatives, joint efforts, future plans and sustainability. Ongoing and open discussion about resident performance, program planning, strategic initiatives, joint efforts, future plans and sustainability.

	<p>Develop a common core faculty for VANAP-GE:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide opportunities for VA PMHNPs to teach within the PMHNP MSN track, including didactic, simulation, and clinical teaching. • Conduct a 1-week (30-hour) Faculty Development Intensive to mentor new VANAP-GE faculty (both UABSON and BVAMC faculty). • Ensure VANAP-GE faculty attend UAB Center for Teaching and Learning (CTL) courses on best practices in distance education. • Mentor and provide opportunities for VA PMHNPs to participate in scholarly activities. • Award UABSON faculty appointments to VA PMHNPs who participate in VANAP-GE. • Orient VANAP-GE faculty to Faculty Organization and committee structure. • Facilitate and encourage the enrollment of VA PMHNPs in SON Nurse Educator courses tuition-free. • Encourage all VANAP-GE faculty to become Certified Nurse Educators. • Utilize VANAP-GE faculty to contribute to and further refine the current elective, “Caring for America’s Heroes: The VHA System.” • Encourage all VANAP-GE faculty to enroll in DNP courses. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • UABSON has identified a VANAP-GE co-director and hired 2 PMHNP faculty; a third faculty position is being recruited. • BVAMC has identified a VANAP-GE co-director and is in process of hiring 2 additional PMHNPs to serve as VANAP-GE faculty. Two BVAMC-VANAP-GE have appointments as instructors at the UABSON. • UABSON faculty appointments are in process for 8 VA PMHNPs. • Faculty mentors identified for VA PMHNPs and orientation materials under development. • VANAP-GE faculty to be provided free access to UABSON Nurse Educator Certification Review Prep Course (4 online modules) when CE course goes live in August 2015. • One VANAP-GE faculty is enrolled in the SON PhD program.
<p>Increase PMHNP student enrollment and clinical training capacity.</p>	<p>Promote VANAP-GE program widely via written materials, signage, website, incoming MSN student orientations, joint presentations and publications.</p> <p>Reach a diverse and qualified applicant pool by maximizing the clinical experience of the VANAP-GE students to opportunities within the BVAMC and CBOCs, as well as nationally, and promote the program at the annual Veterans Community Mental Health Summits (3 held within Alabama).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 6 PMHNP students accepted into VANAP-GE program in 2014 and currently completing the bulk of their clinical experiences at the BVAMC and local CBOCs (with the exception of 130 required hours in child/ adolescent). • 12 current PMHNP students accepted into VANAP-GE program in 2015 and slated to begin clinical year of program in August 2015.

	<p>Enhance PMHNP recruitment into the BVAMC by jointly promoting open positions and recruiting PMHNPs interested in Veterans and Veterans health and the education of PMHNP students and residents.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All VANAP-GE students receiving additional Veteran-centric didactic content and interprofessional, team-based clinical experiences with Veterans and their families in BVAMC and local CBOCs. • BVAMC has experienced decreased recruiting costs due to new graduates' positive experiences with their MSN clinical education at the VA; this is expected to increase as VANAP-GE students begin to graduate and take positions within the BVAMC and other VA facilities.
<p>Provide opportunities for education and practice innovations aligned with Veteran care.</p>	<p>Incorporate Veteran-centric learning opportunities into VANAP-GE curriculum:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Foster increased understanding of military culture and the unique needs of Veterans, Service Members, and their families. • Develop an after-hours clinic to be staffed by PMHNPs and NP residents to increase access to care and decrease wait time. • Provide case scenarios with live Veteran patient simulations. • Lead students in conducting a final project in which they present scholarly findings to a community leader/organization. • Establish a Book Club among VANAP-GE faculty and students that meets monthly to focus on the experiences of the combat Veteran. <p>Provide clinical experiences for all VANAP-GE students within teams at BVAMC and within CBOCs.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Veteran and military specific didactic content has been incorporated into the curriculum for all PMHNP MSN students. • Case studies with a Veteran-centric focus have been developed and are being used in onsite intensives. • After-hours Mental Health Clinic staffed by residents and UABSON VANAP-GE faculty member was established on Thursday evenings in April 2015 and is fully subscribed; has increased access for Veterans and decreased wait time for patients recently discharged from the hospital to less than 1 week. • All VANAP-GE students participating as members of interprofessional teams in the provision of care at BVAMC and within local CBOCs.

	Mentor VANAP-GE students in writing and scholarship experiences with a focus on evidence-based practice.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • VANAP-GE students have completed 1,130 mental health visits with Veterans, thereby increasing access to care.
Further enhance and develop the post-graduate MHNP residency.	<p>Utilize the VANAP-GE program as a recruitment tool for the MHNP residency.</p> <p>Provide opportunities for MHNP residents to interact with and mentor PMHNP VANAP-GE students in the clinical setting.</p> <p>Provide opportunities for MHNP residents and VANAP-GE students to work jointly on scholarly activities, including presentations and publications.</p> <p>Evaluate the MHNP residency by way of focus groups and surveys of current and former residents.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This is already working as 2 current VANAP-GE students have applied for the next cohort of the MHNP residency. They have also applied to the DNP program. • MHNP residents and VANAP-GE students currently practicing together on teams within the BVAMC; this will be expanded to the CBOCs over the coming year. • Results of surveys and focus groups of first cohort of MHNP residents informed curricular changes for cohort 2; these formative and summative evaluation techniques will continue.
Develop interprofessional (IP) PMHNP education.	<p>Meet monthly with MHNP residency co-directors, psychiatry residency and psychology internship directors to collaborate on IP training experiences.</p> <p>Involve VANAP-GE students in MH teamlets at BVAMC for IP clinical experiences.</p> <p>Incorporate VANAP-GE students into weekly psychiatric Grand Rounds and Annual Psychiatric Research Symposium.</p> <p>Plan and involve VANAP-GE students and MHNP residents in weekly IP team meetings focusing on case presentations and treatment planning.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • VANAP GE students (all total) have completed approximately 1300 clinical since August, 2014. • VANAP-GE students learn about the experience in a team by working with members of teams to address serious mental illness and substance abuse, for example. • Didactic content includes Veteran-specific issues: PTSD, Substance use disorders, and traumatic brain injury. • Students and residents are included in attendance of psychiatric Grand Rounds and psychiatric symposia. • Students and residents are incorporated into interprofessional treatment planning.

		<ul style="list-style-type: none">• VANAP-GE faculty have presented content at the CITO (Collaborative Interprofessional Training Opportunity) which includes pharmacy students, social workers, counselors, psychiatric MD residents and psychiatric NP residents.
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