

**Department of
Veterans Affairs**

Memorandum

Date: January 10, 2018

From: Acting Chief of Health Professions Education (10A2D)

Subj: Approved Allocation Plan for Associated Health and Nursing Trainee Positions: Academic Year 2018-19 or Fiscal Year 2019

To: Medical Center Director (00)
Designated Education Officers

1. Academic Year (AY) 2018-19 allocation plans for nursing and associated health trainee positions are now available on-line. Approved allocations are based on the recommendations by profession-specific VHA national program office leaders and OAA. As always, all trainee allocations ultimately will be dependent upon Congressional appropriation of VHA Fiscal Year (FY) 2019 funds.
2. You may view your facility's allocations on the OAA Support Center Intranet site via two reports:
 - a. **Allocation Plan for Associated Health and Nursing Trainees** report is available at <http://vaww.oaa.med.va.gov/DBAHealth/ahRptAllocPlan1.aspx>, contains a list of approved allocations broken down by special program initiative (e.g., GRECC, Mental Health, CoE-PACT, etc.).
 - b. **Allocation Plan for Associated Health and Nursing Trainees by Discipline** report available at <http://vaww.oaa.med.va.gov/DBAHealth/ahRptAllocPlan3.aspx>, contains a list of approved allocations broken down by discipline and education level, followed by the special programmatic initiative.
3. These reports do not require special access. To access your site-specific report, select your facility from the drop-down list at the top tab (it will default to Albany), then select the academic year (this field should default to **FY 2019**), then select **<View Report>** (upper right button). Dollar amounts provided in the reports include trainee stipends, VA's share of FICA (7.65%), and, for year-long trainees, an estimate of VA's share of health and life insurance benefits.
 - a. You may export your facility's allocation report in various formats by selecting the Export icon that appears as  at the top of the report. To print the report, first export it to PDF format and then print.
 - b. Note that, as of January 2015, part-time trainees who are appointed for more than 90 calendar days and work more than 130 hours per month are eligible for health benefits. If a part-time trainee uses health insurance benefits, your facility will need to add the costs into OAA's quarterly needs and excess

report since these costs are not included in each facility's projected target allowance.

- c. This report now identifies the appropriate needs and excess code for each profession and level of training. We encourage you to share your facility's allocation plan with your human resources and fiscal points of contact.
 - d. Please note that Mental Illness Research, Education, and Clinical Centers of Excellence (MIRECC) and Psychosocial Rehabilitation (PSR) fellowship positions will not appear in your facility's AHE and Nursing allocation plan. These fellows are included in OAA's Advanced Fellowship portfolio rather than in AHE.
 - e. Facilities funded for two-year neuropsychology or rehabilitation psychology positions will have these specialty psychology postdoctoral resident base positions identified as either "Psychology Postdoctoral Resident – Year 1 (Specialty)" or "Psychology Postdoctoral Resident – Year 2 (Specialty)." Only the labels of the education level are revised from postdoctoral fellow to postdoctoral resident. These changes in identifying the positions and levels align with accrediting body terminology and assists AHE in allocating the appropriate funding for these two-year positions.
4. Facility-Locality-Based Stipend Rates for Associated Health and Nursing may be found at <http://vaww.oaa.med.va.gov/DBReports/LocBasedStipends.aspx>. Select your facility name and the desired academic year from the dropdown menus. You may print your facility's report or export the rates to Excel using the buttons on the page. OAA completed rate studies, and stipends across four professions deemed hard-to-recruit – **Clinical Pastoral Education, Optometry, Podiatry, and Psychology** – were increased an additional 8% beginning in AY 2018 - 19 (July 1, 2018). The remainder of AHE's funded professions as well as nursing stipends will remain the same with OPM's designated locality adjustments updated. Please also note that for the current academic year (2017-18) facilities must use current locality rates that went into effect on January 7, 2018, which are updated in the stipend rate report (see link above).
 5. New job codes are now in effect for all funded AHE and nursing trainees. The new HR Smart codes may be found at: <http://vaww.oaa.med.va.gov/DBReports/PayCodes.aspx>. A memorandum was released in August 2017, in collaboration with HR, to all DEOs, HR managers, and national program offices announcing these updated codes in order to ensure that trainees are **not** appointed as intermittent and are coded properly for benefits and leave accrual.
 6. Please be aware that there are different amounts of annual leave accrual for some AHE and nursing training levels when a trainee is appointed for more than 90 calendar days. Title 38 professions funded at the post-degree level only

(Chiropractic residents, Nurse Practitioner residents, Post-Baccalaureate Nurse residents, Optometry residents, Physician Assistant residents, and Podiatry residents) receive eight hours of annual leave per pay period. All other funded AHE and nursing trainees (pre and post degree) accrue four hours of annual leave per pay period. It is important to ensure that trainees are meeting their profession-specific accreditation requirements, and there may be circumstances where a trainee must be transferred to without compensation (WOC) status if additional clinical hours must be obtained when leave is fully used.

7. As we request your assistance in more closely tracking your allocated positions and whether they are filled, please do the following:
 - a. **As quickly as possible, please ensure each facility's DEO and training director for all funded professions review the allocation plan to verify its accuracy. It is critical that each facility pays very close attention, especially to one-year allocations.** These should match, as closely as possible, the expectations you have for trainees selected with academic partners or through matching processes. If discrepancies are not identified and managed quickly, OAA may be unable to make adjustments later.
 - b. Please note that nursing allocations for some sites have been recently revised since facilities reviewed pre-approved nursing positions in the Fall. Please ensure all nursing allocations are reviewed to identify any changes.
 - c. If the training directors identify any discrepancies, please communicate these to the facility DEO, the national program office, and OAA. Any discrepancy must be shared directly with the OAA-AHE or OAA-Nursing team. **AHE-related discrepancies must be reported to OAA via assoc.health@va.gov; all nursing-related discrepancies must be reported to Dr. Jemma Ayvazian via Jemma.Ayvazian@va.gov no later than Wednesday, March 14, 2018.**
 - d. After match processes for Optometry, Pharmacy, Podiatry, and Psychology are complete and unmatched positions are identified (that you will be unable to fill), training directors must alert the DEO immediately. In February 2017 OAA launched a new database for DEOs to report unfilled positions for all associated health and nursing professions (see attachment with detailed instructions). The **AH and Nursing Field Filled Positions** database must be used to report unfilled positions, and is available year-round. At the time a DEO identifies an unfilled position, the appropriate national profession lead will automatically receive notification and can reassign the position to another facility.
8. Training clinicians for VA and the Nation is one of the four primary missions of VHA. We at OAA greatly value your role in administering these important training programs. Your preparation of these future VA clinicians and researchers helps

VA fulfill the agency's mission. Thank you for your dedication to training in your important leadership role.

9. Please email questions pertaining to AHE to Assoc.Health@va.gov or call Stacy Pommer at 202-461-9877. For Nursing Education questions please e-mail Jemma.Ayvazian@va.gov or call 202-461-7541.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Kenneth R. Jones, Ph.D." with a stylized, cursive script.

Kenneth R. Jones, Ph.D.
Acting Chief of Health Professions Education