

**Date:** January 6, 2020  
**From:** Acting Chief of Health Professions Education, VA Office of Academic Affiliations (10X1)  
**Subj:** Approved Allocation Plan for Associated Health and Nursing Trainee Positions: Academic Year 2020-21 or Fiscal Year 2021  
**To:** Medical Center Director (00)  
Designated Education Officers

1. Academic Year (AY) 2020-21 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 Office of Academic Affiliations (OAA). As always, all health professions trainee (HPT) allocations ultimately will be dependent upon Congressional appropriation of VHA Fiscal Year (FY) 2021 funds.
2. You may view your VA Medical Center's (VAMC) approved allocations on the OAA Support Center Intranet site via the report found at the following link:

**Allocation Plan for Associated Health and Nursing Trainees by Discipline** report <http://vaww.oaa.med.va.gov/DBAHealth/ahRptAllocPlan3.aspx>, contains a list of approved allocations broken down by discipline and education level.

3. These reports do not require special access. To access your site-specific report, select your VAMC 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 2021**), then select **<View Report>** (upper right button). Dollar amounts provided in the reports include HPT stipends, VA's share of FICA (7.65%), and, for year-long HPTs, an estimate of VA's share of health and life insurance benefits.
  - a. You may export your VAMC'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 HPTs 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 HPT uses health insurance benefits, your VAMC will need to add these costs into OAA's quarterly needs and excess report since these costs are not included in each VAMC's projected target allowance.
  - c. This report now identifies the appropriate needs and excess code and HR Smart job codes for each profession and level of training. We encourage you to share your VAMC'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), Psychosocial Rehabilitation (PSR) will not appear in your VAMC's AHE and Nursing allocation plan. Rather, these fellows reside in OAA's Advanced Fellowship portfolio.
  - e. VAMCs funded for two-year neuropsychology or rehabilitation psychology positions will have these specialty psychology postdoctoral resident base positions identified as either "Psychologist Resident Yr 1" or "Psychologist Resident Yr 2." These levels assist AHE in allocating the appropriate funding for these two-year positions.
  - f. Beginning in academic year 2020-21, positions that were previously labeled as CoE-PACT and HIV/Liver now will appear as AHE/Nursing regular positions. Please note that this change in nomenclature had no impact on the number of base positions previously approved under the COE-PACT and HIV/Liver labels. The number of CoE-PACT and HIV/Liver positions approved for academic year 2019-20 remains in your base allocations for the 2020-21 academic year.
4. Annually OAA reviews local conditions and establishes per annum stipend rates for funded AHE and Nursing training programs. HPTs directly paid by the VA are paid on a per annum stipend basis. The per annum stipend rate is set by OAA and is paid at the start of the HPT's training year. The stipend rate will not be adjusted during their tenure in the program, regardless of Executive Order. Note that multiple-year programs (e.g., neuropsychology, Podiatry, Pharmacy, etc.) may have a change in per annum stipend at the start of the subsequent level of training, and these rates are identified by program year. Current and historical rates by location and program can be found under the AHE and Nursing sections at <http://vaww.oaa.med.va.gov/DBReports/LocBasedStipends.aspx>. Per Handbook 5007, Pay Administration, HPTs receiving a stipend are ineligible for within-grade increases, Premium Pay, or a Night Differential.
  5. It is critical to use the appropriate job codes for all funded AHE and nursing trainees. The HR Smart codes reside on your approved allocation plan as well as at the following link: <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 to ensure that HPTs are **not** appointed as intermittent and are coded properly for benefits and leave accrual.
  6. Paid AHE and nursing HPTs (pre- and post-degree) accrue leave based on their Federal service computation date (SCD). Since most HPTs are new to federal employment, this means that **HPTs earn 4 hours of annual leave and 4 hours of sick leave for every 80-hours in pay status**. Also, HPTs are eligible for federal holidays throughout the calendar year. HPTs must be in duty status (on-site) the day before a holiday to be paid for the holiday (i.e., when Independence Day falls on a Monday, and the first day of duty is Tuesday, July 5th, they will not be paid for the

Federal holiday, July 4th). It is important to ensure that HPTs are meeting their profession-specific accreditation requirements, and an HPT may occasionally need to be transferred to without compensation (WOC) status if additional clinical hours must be obtained when leave is fully used and all OAA approved hours have been paid. **Please note that HPTs are not eligible for premium pay on holidays or weekends and must not receive compensation for more than 80 hours per pay period.**

7. Please note that beginning in academic year 2019-20, OAA no longer funds Physician Assistant (PA) pre-degree HPT positions. VHA now supports residencies for PAs, and the pre-degree funding is now being redirected to the residency programs. In future years, we intend to reduce physical and occupational therapy pre-degree training funding as we expand the residency and fellowship portfolios, respectively, for these professions.
8. Please note that OAA requires a **minimum of two VA training supervisors hired in the same occupational series** as the HPTs to provide on-site supervision. The training supervisor must serve as the primary provider on the encounter and co-sign the progress note, as the minimum documentation of supervision.
9. 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 VAMC's DEO and training director for all funded professions review the allocation plan to verify its accuracy. It is critical that each VAMC pays very close attention, especially to one-year allocations.** These should match, as closely as possible, the expectations you have for HPTs selected with academic partners or through matching processes. If discrepancies are not identified and managed quickly, OAA may be unable to later adjust.
  - b. If the training directors identify any discrepancies, please communicate these to the VAMC 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](mailto:assoc.health@va.gov); all nursing-related discrepancies must be reported to Dr. Jemma Ayvazian via [Jemma.Ayvazian@va.gov](mailto:Jemma.Ayvazian@va.gov) no later than Friday, March 13, 2020.**
  - c. After match processes for Nutrition/Dietetics, Optometry, Pharmacy, Podiatry, and Psychology are complete and unmatched positions (that you will be unable to fill) are identified, training directors must alert the DEO immediately. In February 2017 OAA launched a database (**AH and Nursing Field Filled Positions**) for DEOs for reporting unfilled positions for all associated health and nursing professions (see attachment with detailed instructions). This 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 VAMC.

10. 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.
11. Please email questions pertaining to AHE to [Assoc.Health@va.gov](mailto:Assoc.Health@va.gov) . For Nursing Education questions please e-mail [Jemma.Ayvazian@va.gov](mailto:Jemma.Ayvazian@va.gov).



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