UTILIZING PARTNERSHIPS TO ENHANCE PSYCHOLOGY TRAINING IN VA

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OBJECTIVES:
I WOULD LIKE YOU TO BE ABLE TO ...

• Describe Associated Health Education (AHE) training in VA and OAA’s mission

• Identify and use internal and external mental health partnerships

• Describe current initiatives that affect psychology training in VA

• Recognize educational best practices and future directions in VA training
OAA Overview
To Educate for VA and for the Nation

- Statutory Mission of VA
  - 70th anniversary
    - VA Policy Memo #2
    - Psychology Training in VA
- Incredibly important recruitment tool
  - Special hiring authority (direct appointment)
  - Creating the clinical workforce for VA and the country
  - Many will leave and then return to VA employment in the future
  - Our major succession planning activity
AHE PORTFOLIO

• “Associated Health Education (AHE)” includes all clinical health professions with the exception of Medicine, Dentistry, and Nursing
  • Other OAA sections: Graduate Medical/Dental Education, Nursing Education, and Advanced Fellowships
• Over 40 Associated Health professions train in VA
  • 120,000 rotate through VA annually
  • 27,000 AHE trainees
  • ~85% without compensation (WOC)
• 17 funded disciplines ($126 million)
  • AY 15 = 4,513 stipends
  • AY 16 = 4,681 stipends
  • AY 17 = 4,796 stipends
# AHE FUNDED TRAINING PROFESSIONS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Audiology</th>
<th>Blind Rehabilitation</th>
<th>Chiropractic Care</th>
<th>Clinical Pastoral Education</th>
<th>Dietetics</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Licensed Professional Mental Health Counselors</td>
<td>Marriage and Family Therapists</td>
<td>Occupational Therapy</td>
<td>Optometry</td>
<td>Pharmacy</td>
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<tr>
<td>Physical Therapy</td>
<td>Physician Assistants</td>
<td>Podiatry</td>
<td>Prosthetics/Orthotics</td>
<td>Psychology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Work</td>
<td>Speech Pathology</td>
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</table>
OAA’s AHE TEAM

WASHINGTON DC

Kenneth R. Jones, PhD
Director

Debbie L. Hettler, OD, MPH, FAAO
Clinical Director

Stacy Pommer, LMSW
Health Systems Specialist

Rosie M. Jones
Management Analyst

MENLO PARK, CA

Samuel S. King, MS, MDiv
Statistician

HOUSTON

David M. Latini, PhD, LMSW
Health Systems Specialist
AHE WEBSITE RESOURCES

OAA Intranet Link:
http://vaww.va.gov/oaa/

Quick Website Links:
https://vaww.portal2.va.gov/sites/oaa/public/Lists/Associated%20Health%20Links/AllItems.aspx

- FAQs
- Handbooks/Policies
- General reports
- Affiliation agreements
VISION: INTERPROFESSIONAL TRAINING

• Training that goes beyond a simple multidisciplinary team
• Members of multiple professions and trainees share responsibilities
• Shared curriculum, didactics, projects, and collaborative assessment and care
• Trainees learn about the unique contributions of their discipline, the disciplines of fellow trainees, and how to communicate effectively to provide team-based care
• Goals: Understand and appreciate own and others professional perspective and how to work together in a complementary way
Mental Health Partnerships
OAA collaborates with national VHA program offices to enhance psychology training

- Healthcare Recruitment and Marketing Office (HRMO)
- Readjustment Counseling Service (RCS)
- VA’s Psychology Training Council (VAPTC)
- Mental Health Services
• ~70% of current VA Psychologists have had VA training 
  (All Employee Survey - 2015)
• Psychology is in VA’s top five mission critical shortage 
  professions
• OAA developed a partnership with HRMO to meet 
  MH staffing needs
  • Promote “Take-A-Closer-Look” Campaign
  http://www.vacareers.va.gov/taclva/
  • Leverage hiring flexibilities for Hybrid/Title 38 
    professions
  • Encourage using Facility Recruitment Liaisons (FRL) 
    and VISN Recruitment Consultants
VISN 1: Charles Long (charles.long4@va.gov)
VISN 2: Julie Torres (Julieann.Torres@va.gov)
VISN 4: Mike Naccarato (Michael.Naccarato@va.gov)
VISN 5: Terry Anderson (terrance.anderson@va.gov)
VISN 6: Keith Liles (harold.liles@va.gov)
VISN 7: Sam Wright (samuel.wright4@va.gov)
VISN 8: Shane Stults (shane.stults@va.gov)
VISN 9: David Raines (david.raines@va.gov)
VISN 10: Larry Elliott (lawrence.elliott@va.gov)
& Kenneth Mitchell (kenneth.mitchell3@va.gov)
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VISN 22: David Aragon (david.aragon@va.gov)
VISN 23: Charles Long (charles.long4@va.gov)
NON-COMPETITIVE HIRING FLEXIBILITIES: THE EASY WAY TO APPOINT NEW STAFF

• Post positions at your facility
• Release internal ads to BU
• Use this language in internal announcement:
  • “No selections or personnel actions will take place until this position is approved to fill by the Resource Management Committee or equivalent”
• Include current and former trainees
• Use of appropriate language in Tentative Job Offers (TJO)
• If announced on USAJOBS, language should state that current trainees may apply – contact Stacy Pommer for language
READJUSTMENT COUNSELING SERVICE (RCS)

- Collaborative partnership between OAA and RCS
- Compliant with national policy
- Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) developed between VAMC and Vet Center
- MOU allows trainees from existing VA training programs to rotate at Vet Centers
- Recognize value of psychosocial services available at Vet Centers to returning Veterans, Servicemembers, and their families
- Unique setting for trainees to receive supervision working with Veterans and caregivers who are readjusting to civilian life
• Gain support from Vet Center leadership and consult with VAMC Designated Education Officer (DEO) and profession-specific training director
• Ensure that VAMC has existing training program for the profession that will have trainees rotate at the Vet Center
  • Affiliation agreement with VA must be established with accredited program (e.g., psych externship)
  • Two supervisors must be boarded in profession’s VA occupation series at VAMC; one supervisor required at Vet Center
  • Onboarding process and trainee appointment completed by VAMC
• Vet Center supervisors may become members of VAMC training program’s faculty and be involved with curriculum development and trainee recruitment/selection
• Use hyperlinks to refer to the Talking Points and MOU Template
VA’s PSYCHOLOGY TRAINING COUNCIL (VAPTC)

- Chartered by Mental Health Services to consultation to MHS, OAA, and Directors of Training
- Trainee resource: www.psychologytraining.va.gov
- DoT resource: https://vaww.portal2.va.gov/sites/mentalhealth/vaptc/Pages/home.aspx
  - Listing of Training Directors
  - Share documents (e.g., Standards of Accreditation competencies, functional statements, curriculum and didactics materials)
  - Policies and FAQs
- VAPTC provides training mentors
MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES (MHS)

- Weekly conference calls with MHS training liaison, Stacey Pollack, PhD
- MHS maintains e-mail distribution and master lists for training directors (contact Suzan.Hoopengarner@va.gov with changes/additions)
  - VHA Psychology Internship Directors
  - VHA Psychology Postdoctoral Training Directors
- Work in partnership on Requests for Proposals
- Review Standards of Excellence reports and accreditation status for psychology programs
- Collaboration on responses to congressional inquiries and proposed legislation
OAA collaborates with non-VA professional organizations to enhance psychology training

- Association of VA Psychology Leaders (AVAPL)
- American Psychological Association (APA)
- Association of Psychology Postdoctoral and Internship Centers (APPIC)
- Congress
- Additional MH professional organizations
Current Initiatives
INITIATIVES WITH AN IMPACT

OAA has a range of ongoing initiatives that affect psychology training in VA

• “Just Say No to NEO” campaign
• Centralizing APA accreditation payments
• Psychology consortia agreement OGC review
• Mental Health Education Expansion (MHEE)
• Internship and Residency Fill Rate Database
Five year interprofessional MHEE began in Fall 2012

**Phase I (AY14):** General Outpatient Mental Health Clinics OR Patient Aligned Care Teams - 203 positions awarded at 43 facilities

**Phase II (AY15):** Core Mental Health Programs OR Advanced Training Opportunities targeting underserved populations - 132 positions awarded at 45 facilities

**Phase III (AY16):** Mental Health Clinical Program OR Medical Care Clinic/Team - 240 positions awarded at 67 facilities

**Phase IV (AY17):** LPMHC, MFT, and Psychology Internships; Neuropsychology Residencies - 63 positions awarded at 32 facilities
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Profession</th>
<th>Educational Levels</th>
<th>Funded Hours per position</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Chaplaincy (Clinical Pastoral Education)</td>
<td>Post-master’s Specialty Resident Level II</td>
<td>2080 hours</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Licensed Professional Mental Health Counseling</td>
<td>Pre-master’s Intern</td>
<td>500 hours</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marriage and Family Therapy</td>
<td>Pre-master’s Intern</td>
<td>500 hours</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pharmacy</td>
<td>Postdoctoral Resident (PGY 2)</td>
<td>2080 hours</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Psychology</td>
<td>Doctoral Intern</td>
<td>2080 hours/year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Postdoctoral Neuropsychology Resident (2 year program)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Work</td>
<td>Pre-master’s Intern</td>
<td>500 hours</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Psychology Factoids
ACADEMIC YEAR 2016-17

- 124 Internship programs
  - 679 positions
  - 49 states + DC & Puerto Rico
- 70 Postdoctoral sites
  - 440 positions*
  - 32 states + DC & Puerto Rico
- Total: 1,119 positions
- ~$45 million; largest funded AHE profession

*Excludes Advanced Fellowships, MIRECCs, Psychosocial Rehab, & HSR&D
INTERNSHIP AND FELLOWSHIP POSITION TRENDS: THE PAST DECADE

Internship and Residency Position Trends

- **Internship**: 110 in AY07, 394 in AY08, 440 in AY16, 679 in AY17
- **Residency**: 110 in AY07, 394 in AY08, 440 in AY16, 679 in AY17

Academic Year
NATIONAL DATA

- # of registered applicants in 2016 decreased by 6%; # of internship positions increased 3%
- 3,999 applicants registered for match (185 withdrew)
- 3,812 internship positions available
- 3,595 internship positions matched Phase I/II
- 98% of positions from APA or CPA-accredited programs matched
- 80% of positions from unaccredited programs matched
- 4% of internship positions remain unfilled after Phase II

VA DATA

- 679 VA Internship Positions (18%)
- 77 unmatched positions after Phase I
- 25 unmatched positions after Phase II across 9% of VA’s internship programs
- 11 positions filled in Post Match Vacancy Service
- ~$425,000 unused internship funds
Best Practices, Future Directions, & Recommendations
BEST PRACTICES AND FUTURE DIRECTIONS

- VA Pulse Trainee Community Page – Currently in development by psychology intern
- Patient Care Services trainee resource webpage
- New MH Residencies for Physician Assistants
- First Psychosocial Rehabilitation site applying for Occupational Therapy accreditation
- Council on Social Work Education is establishing accreditation standards for post-degree fellowships
RECOMMENDATIONS

- Have a strong working relationship with your Designated Educational Officer (DEO)
- Collaborate with the VA Psychology Training Council (VAPTC)
- Know your training program
  - How many fellows, what areas, funding source(s)
  - How many interns, funding source(s)
- Mentor others in the training role
- Receive training and serve as a site APA site visitor
- “Follow the money” – annual accreditation and site visit fees under $3500 may be paid with purchase card
RECOMMENDATIONS

- Read and follow the re-publication of VHA Handbook 1400.04: Supervision of Associated Health Trainees and two new Handbooks (1400.03 and 1400.08)
- Make additions/revisions to local handbooks for trainees
  - Remediation process with clear steps and grievance process
  - Trainees are subject to administrative boards of investigation
- Contact OAA if remediation is required for a trainee
- Ensure TQCVL is completed for each trainee
- Have trainees complete the Learners Perception Survey
- Have trainees only complete Mandatory Training for Trainees in TMS
RECOMMENDATIONS

- Do **not** count trainees in facility FTEE
- Utilize OAA website resources
  - Add “Associated Health Links” to your favorites
  - Frequently Asked Questions
  - Allocation reports and stipend rates
  - Military History Pocket Cards
- Employ trainees, when possible
  - Don’t cut training short
SUMMARY: YOU SHOULD BE ABLE TO:

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• Identify and use internal and external mental health partnerships

• Describe current initiatives that affect psychology training in VA

• Recognize educational best practices and future directions in VA training
THANK YOU, QUESTIONS, AND CONTACT INFO

General AHE Questions:
Assoc.Health@va.gov

Internship Affiliation Questions:
Psychology.Affiliation@va.gov