

ENHANCING VA PSYCHOLOGY TRAINING BY PROMOTING WELLNESS AND INTEGRATING SUICIDE PREVENTION



Stacy D. Pommer, LMSW
Veterans Health Administration
Office of Academic Affiliations



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

- Describe Associated Health Education (AHE) training in VA and OAA's mission
- Describe current initiatives that affect psychology training in VA
- Identify and use resources to promote wellness among Veterans and Trainees
- Recognize educational best practices and future directions in VA training





OAA Overview

OFFICE OF ACADEMIC AFFILIATIONS (OAA) MISSION

To Educate for VA and for the Nation

- Statutory Mission of VA
 - 72nd anniversary
 - VA Policy Memo #2
 - Psychology Training in VA began in 1946
- Incredibly important recruitment tool
 - Non-competitive hiring authority
 - Creating the clinical workforce for VA and the Nation
 - 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
 - 123,000 rotate through VA annually
 - 25,000 AHE trainees
 - ~85% without compensation (WOC)
- 17 funded professions (\$139 million)
 - AY 17 = 4,749 stipends
 - AY 18 = 4,870 stipends
 - AY 19 = 4,880 stipends



AHE FUNDED TRAINING PROFESSIONS



Audiology	Blind Rehabilitation	Chiropractic Care	Clinical Pastoral Education	Dietetics
Licensed Professional Mental Health Counselors	Marriage and Family Therapists	Occupational Therapy	Optometry	Pharmacy
Physical Therapy	Physician Assistants	Podiatry	Prosthetics/Orthotics	Psychology
Social Work	Speech Pathology			

ACADEMIC YEAR 2018-19

- 131 Internship programs
 - 711 positions
 - 50 states + DC & Puerto Rico
- 141 Postdoctoral residency programs*
 - 454 positions**
- Total: 1,165 positions**
- ~\$51 million; largest funded AHE profession

*Includes Advanced Fellowships, MIRECCs, Psychosocial Rehab programs accredited/seeking accreditation

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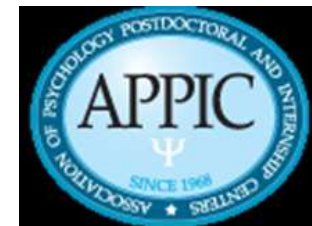
APPIC: INTERNSHIP MATCH DATA 2018

NATIONAL DATA

- # of registered applicants in 2018 decreased and #of internship positions increased
- 3,779 applicants registered for match (118 withdrew)
- 3,940 internship positions available
- 3,518 internship positions matched Phase I/II
- 95% of positions from APA or CPA-accredited programs matched
- 59% of positions from unaccredited programs matched
- 4% of internship positions remain unfilled after Phase II

VA DATA

- 711 VA Internship Positions (18%)
- 80+ unmatched positions after Phase I
- 17 unmatched positions after Phase II
- Still awaiting data from Post-Match Vacancy Service





Current Mental Health Initiatives

INITIATIVES WITH AN IMPACT

Mental Health Hiring Initiative

- Goal to hire a net of 1,000 additional MH providers in 2018
- Over 8,000 mental health trainees in VA annually
- OAA partnered with OMHSP and WMC
 - Increase return on investment by hiring trainees
 - Increase use of non-competitive hiring authority
 - Promote Virtual Hiring and Connection Event
- Over 1,700 trainees and early career professionals registered and will be matched with over 600 vacancies



INITIATIVES WITH AN IMPACT

Centralized APA Accreditation Payments

- OAA centralized APA accreditation business process
 - VA Enterprise-wide Psychology Training Accreditation – VEPTA - <http://vaww.oaa.med.va.gov/VEPTA/>
 - You must notify OAA for the following actions:
 - Initial Application Submission
 - Site Visit has been scheduled
 - Update accreditation status
 - We do not have a national contract with APPIC (membership fees still paid locally)



Psychologist Site Visitor Travel

- OGC has issued new guidance affecting all VA staff visiting federal facilities (VA, Federal Prisons, Indian Health, DoD)
- Federal travel rules apply (room, per diem, no rental cars unless approved by OAA)
- OAA cross-funds and must pre-approve travel
- For federal site visits (VA and non-VA) you must be on duty status
- For non-federal site visits, you must be on leave (Annual or Administrative leave) status



MH EDUCATION EXPANSION (MHEE) INITIATIVE

VA MHEE Approved Positions (Phases I – VI)

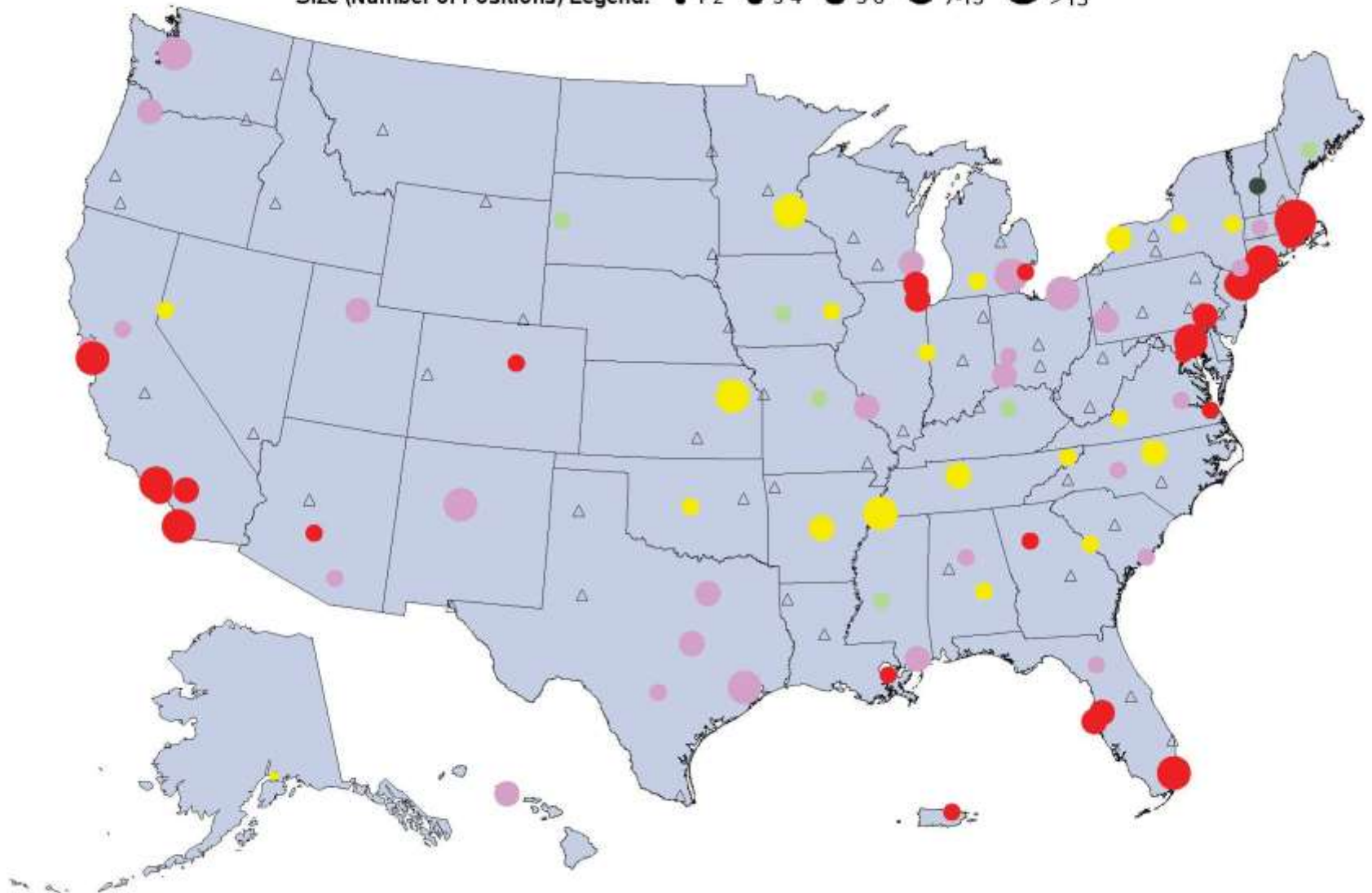
Mental Health Expansion							
Year Funding Awarded	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	Total:
Clinical Pastoral Education		10	10		21		41
LPMH Counselor				18	3	4	25
Marriage and Family Counseling				3	5	5	13
Nursing (MH)	12	20					32
Occupational Therapy		1					1
Pharmacy	43	15	5		11		74
Physician Assistant					7		7
Psychiatry	34.6	17.9	39.3				91.8
Psychology	62	66	139	42	25	20	354
Social Work	51	17	36		8		112
Total:	202.6	146.9	229.3	63	80	29	750.8

Map of FY 2011 Psychology Internship Positions at VA Facilities

Circles identify VA facilities having Psychology Internship positions while triangles identify all other VA facilities not having trainee positions. The color and size of each circle represent a facility's degree of rurality and number of positions, respectively. Facilities (i.e., circles) with higher rurality proportions (i.e., green/dark green) have higher rurality than facilities with lower rurality proportions.

Color (Rurality Proportion) Legend: ● 0% - 20% ● 21% - 40% ● 41% - 60% ● 61% - 80% ● 81% - 100%

Size (Number of Positions) Legend: ● 1-2 ● 3-4 ● 5-6 ● 7-15 ● > 15

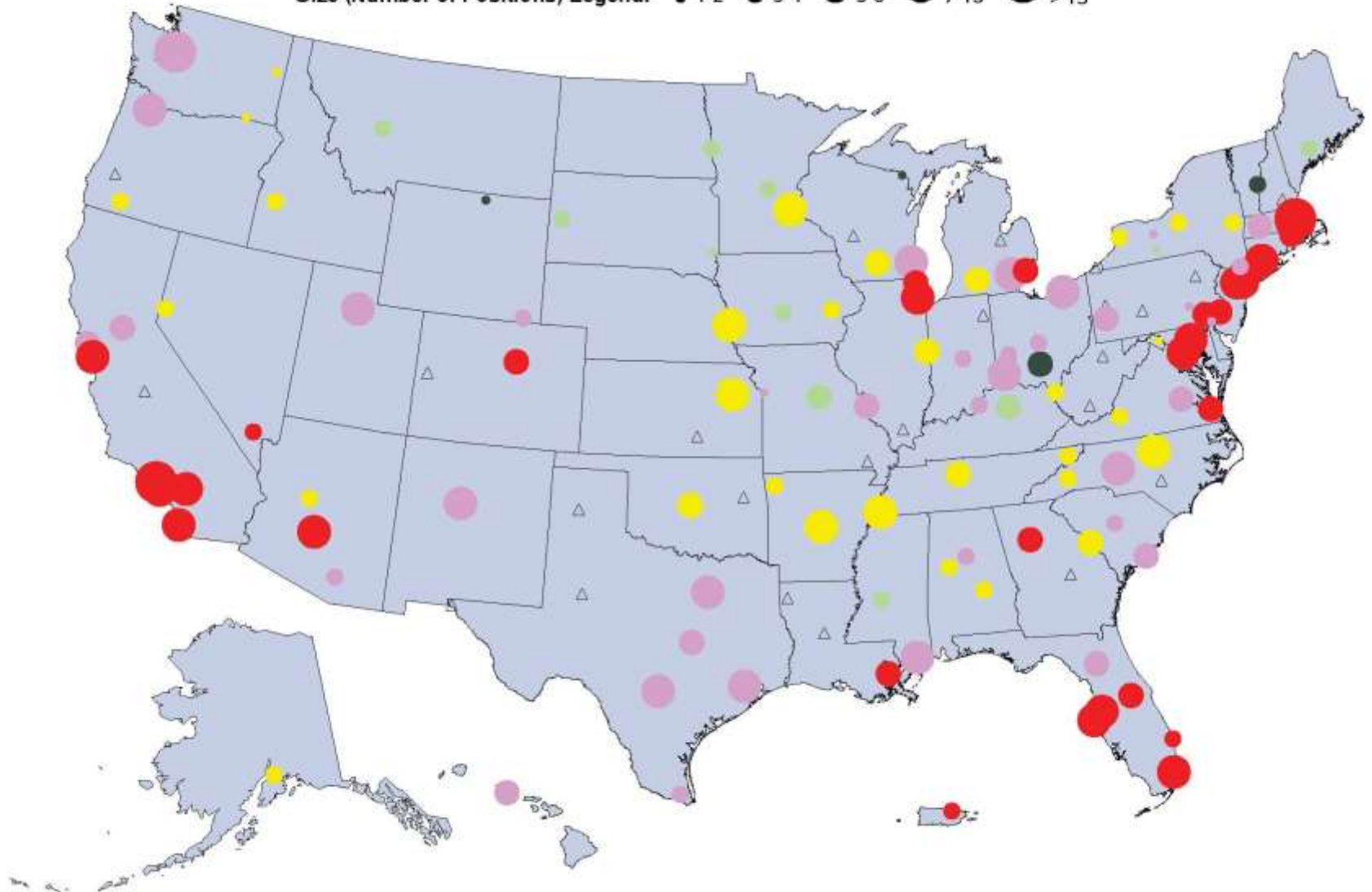


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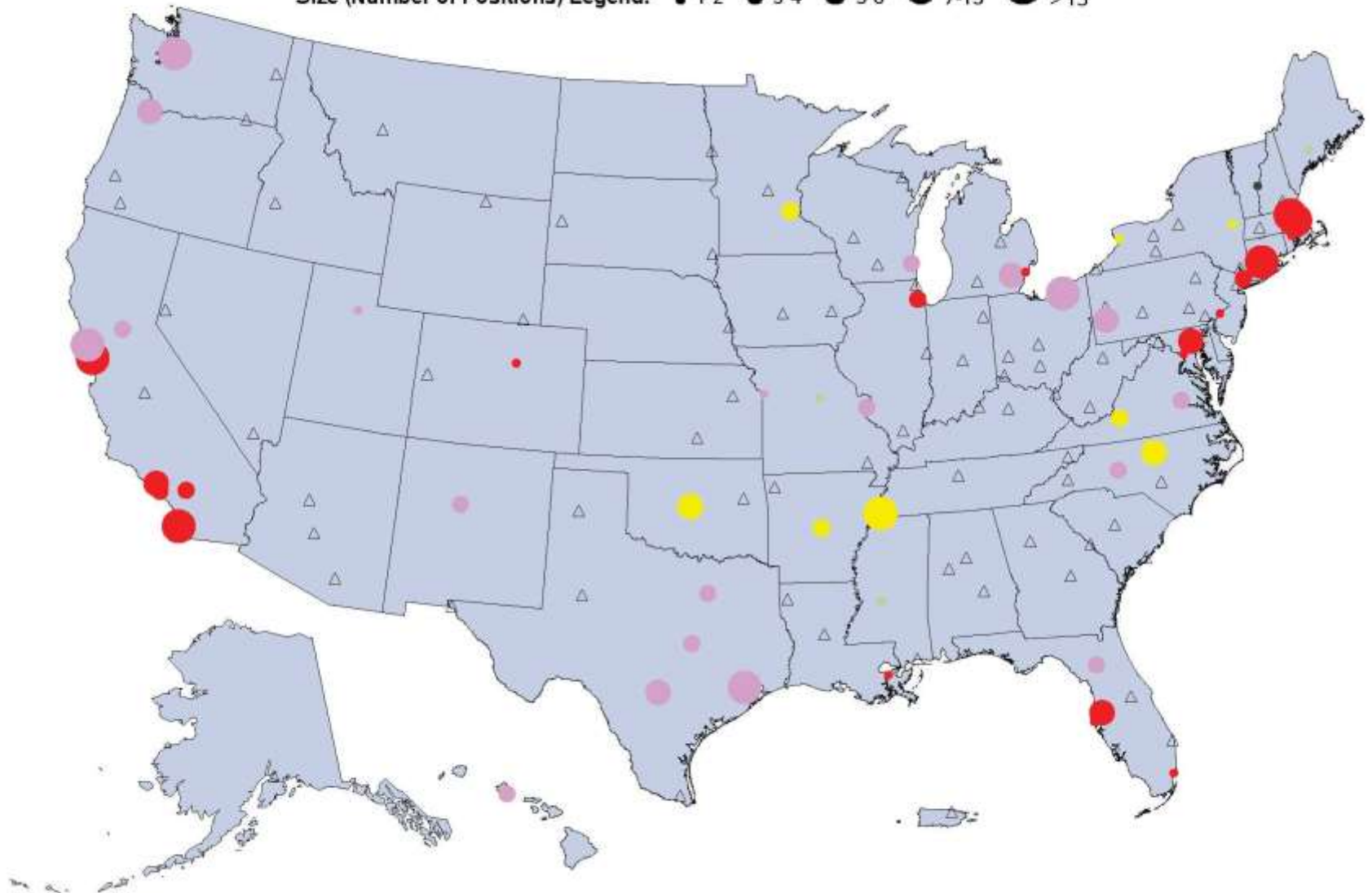


Map of FY 2011 Psychology Post Doc Resident PGY1-PGY2 Positions at VA Facilities

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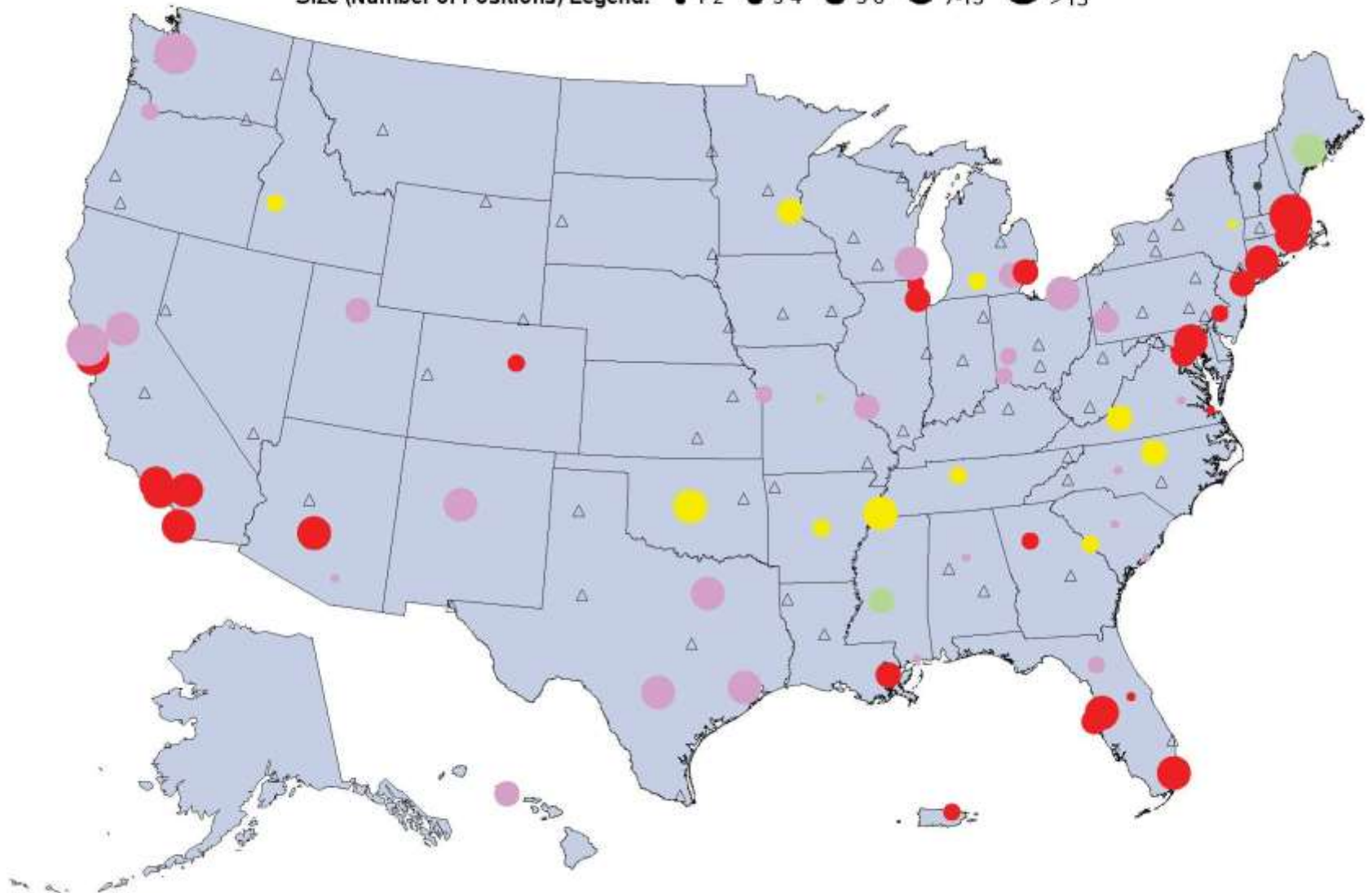


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INITIATIVES WITH AN IMPACT

Additional ongoing initiatives that impact psychology training in VA

- “Just Say No to NEO” campaign
- Psychology consortia agreement OGC review
- Internship and Residency Fill Rate Database
- APPIC’s proposed policy change to include students from PCSAS-accredited programs in national match





Promoting Wellness

PROMOTING WELLNESS



- Enhancing training by promoting wellness and integrating suicide prevention is critical for both Veterans and trainees
- OAA has taken steps to address Veteran suicide prevention and promote wellness for Veterans and trainees by:
 - Awarding points in proposals integrating clinical rotations focusing on suicide prevention and risk assessment
 - Updating affiliation agreements and Handbooks to include sections on trainee wellness
 - Developing a Trainee Qualification and Credential Verification Letter (TQCVL) guide for VA and affiliate sponsored programs
 - Consulting with training directors on remediation related to trainee wellness

CLINICIAN WELL-BEING

- The National Academy of Medicine (NAM) launched the Action Collaborative on Clinician Well-Being and Resilience
- Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education (ACGME) is focusing on creating a learning environment promoting wellness
- Over 50% of physicians report experiencing symptoms of burnout
- 400 physicians (including residents) die by suicide annually
- Clinician burnout can lead to consequences:
 - Reduced job performance
 - Increased patient safety risk
 - Depression/suicidality



CLINICIAN WELL-BEING

- Critical to address clinician wellness in psychology internship and residency curricula
 - Improving learning environment
 - Enhancing psychological safety
 - Assessing emotional distress
 - Facilitating dialogue with trainees about burnout, depression, and suicide among medical professionals
 - Coping with tragedy (i.e., loss of colleagues/classmates)
 - Emphasizing self-care and training faculty modeling self-care as a professional skill
 - Sharing resources promoting wellness



REMEDATION RECOMMENDATIONS



- Trainee burnout may result to conduct/competency
- Ensure you follow your program's remediation and grievance due process if you notice job performance deficits
 - Update your program's due process with lessons learned
 - Include due process procedures in trainee handbook - consistent with relevant VHA Policies (Handbooks 1400.04 and .08) and APA SoA
 - Include list of situations where trainees must consult training faculty
 - Include list of serious infractions that can result in rapid termination

REMEDICATION RECOMMENDATIONS



- Evaluate if burnout/distress is interfering with patient care and trainee learning
 - Option for leave of absence from training or assignment of administrative tasks
 - Request approval from OAA to extend training
 - Request VA Occupational Health complete a wellness (fitness for duty) evaluation before returning to clinical care
 - Collaborate with Reasonable Accommodation Coordinator
- Engage Designated Education Officer (DEO) early and include Chief, Human Resources if you are considering leave of absence or dismissal

REMEDATION RECOMMENDATIONS

- Talk with the DCT and consider consulting with APA-CoA and APPIC
 - In the event of a complaint, these partners are aware
- Make sure you are calling the shots (not HR)
 - The faculty and the DoT should drive this process
 - The Union must **not** be involved as trainees are not covered by union
- Decide who an appeal should be directed to:
 - Chief/Lead, Psychology
 - Chief MHS
 - DEO



CLINICIAN WELL-BEING RESOURCES

- **Suicide Prevention Video (7 minutes; personal narratives)**

“Time to Talk About It: Physician Depression and Suicide”

<https://www.mededportal.org/publication/10508/>

(scroll to Appendices on left navigation tab; download Appendix A to view video)

- **NAM Resources**

<https://nam.edu/clinicianwellbeing/resource-center/>



CLINICIAN WELL-BEING RESOURCES - 2

- **ACGME Resources**

<http://www.acgme.org/What-We-Do/initiatives/Physician-Well-Being/Resources>

- **University of Buffalo Self-Care Kit**

<https://socialwork.buffalo.edu/resources/self-care-starter-kit/introduction-to-self-care.html>



RECOMMENDATIONS



- Have a strong working relationship with your DEO
- Collaborate with the VA Psychology Training Council (VAPTC)
- Serve as a mentor to others in the training role
- Receive training and serve as a site APA site visitor

RECOMMENDATIONS



- Read and follow the AHE Handbooks
 - 1400.04: Supervision of Associated Health Trainees
 - 1400.08: Education of Associated Health Professions (section 11 on remediation/dismissal)
- Ensure TQCVL is completed for each trainee (paid and WOC)
- Have trainees complete the Trainee Satisfaction Survey
- Have trainees only complete Mandatory Training for Trainees in TMS
- Non-competitively hire your star trainees

THANK YOU, QUESTIONS, AND CONTACT INFO



General AHE Questions:

Assoc.Health@va.gov

Internship Affiliation Questions:

Psychology.Affiliation@va.gov

APA Accreditation Fee Questions:

Psychology.accreditation@va.gov