

# VETERANS ADMINISTRATION Office of Academic Affiliations

## Updates in Health Professions Education: Psychology Training in VA

Stacy Pommer, LMSW  
Amber Fisher, PharmD, BCACP  
[Assoc.health@va.gov](mailto:Assoc.health@va.gov)

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Choose **VA**

VA



U.S. Department  
of Veterans Affairs

# Learning Objectives

After the presentation, VAPLC attendees will be able to:

1. Summarize two historical events in VA Health Professions Education (HPE) over the past year.
2. Describe the changes in VA's reliance on telehealth modalities and telework created by the COVID-19 pandemic.
3. Explain two innovative systems and resources to support HPE that are under development at VA's Office of Academic Affiliations (OAA).
4. Understand ongoing health professions trainee (HPT) recruitment and hiring efforts used to fill critical vacancies.



# Health Professions Education in VA

**Mission: Educate for VA and the Nation and provide quality clinical care.**

- **VA Public Affairs**

- On January 2021, OAA celebrated the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of affiliate partnerships

[Passion to Learn, Power to Heal: Our Story](#)

- In 2022, VA Secretary announced the inaugural HPE week March 14-18



# Health Professions Training in VA

- Associated Health Education (AHE)
  - Over 60 health professions
  - 113,000 total HPTs rotated in VA Academic Year (AY) 2020-21
  - 20,500 AHE HPTs AY 2020-21
  - 17 funded AHE professions (\$145M)
  - Over 80% AHE portfolio is without compensation (WOC)



# Health Professions Training in VA

- [AHE Fact Sheet](#)
- Psychology is the largest funded profession in AHE portfolio (\$51.3M)
- VA medical facilities receive \$84K per paid HPT position per year for operations (VESS funds)



# Psychology Training Data

- VA has internships in all 50 states, Puerto Rico and DC
- 20% of accredited internship positions nationally are in VA
- 50% of accredited residency positions in VA

	Internship	Postdoctoral Residency/Fellowship
# Programs	129	120+ (AHE) 21 (AF)
# Funded Positions	711	455 (AHE) 98 (AF) AY 21-22 only
# Filled Positions AY21-22	693	454 (AHE)
# Filled Positions AY 22-23	678	397 (AHE)



# Trainee Satisfaction Survey: AY 2020-21

DOMAIN	PSYCHOLOGY HPT % SATISFIED (N=961)	NATIONAL HPT % SATISFIED (N=14,739)
BEFORE how likely to consider VA employment	75.7	53.5
AFTER how likely to consider VA employment	85.5	72.3
OVERALL, how satisfied	93.7	91.4
Treated with respect at work	96.6	95.3
Clinical Faculty/Preceptors	94.5	94.3
VA Learning Environment	96.3	91.7
VA Physical Environment	82.9	85.5
VA Working Environment	91.7	92.6
Trainee Onboarding Experience	78.9	78.0



# Telesupervision: Pre-COVID



- *Trainee-focused* telesupervision (TS) (e.g., mentorship, discussion of cases outside of patient encounters) is **allowed** regardless of COVID in consultation with accreditation guidelines
- *Clinical supervision* **must be in the same location** regardless of modality of treatment





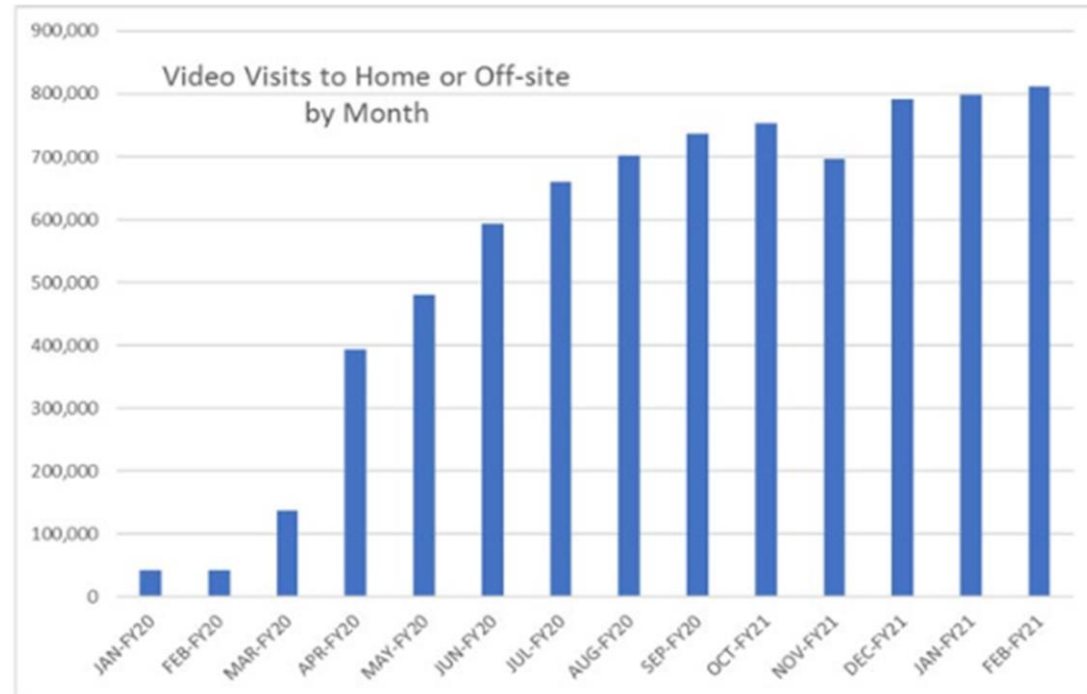
# Telesupervision: Impact of COVID-19

- In March 2020, OAA provided emergency authorization for use of telework/telesupervision (TW/TS) during pandemic
  - [COVID-19 Updates](#)
- Telehealth (TH) visits where HPTs are **not co-located** with the supervisor and the patient are **permitted** during national emergency
- In January 2021, National Defense Authorization Act confirmed that VA healthcare professionals, including HPTs, may deliver TH care across state lines



# Telehealth Flexibilities: Data Feb 2020-21

- From February 2020-21, VA TH visits increased by 1600%
- Prior to March 2020, HPTs participated only in TH visits originating from a VA medical facility
- During pandemic, HPTs may engage in TH while teleworking



# Post-Pandemic Directions

- TW/TS flexibilities will be gradually reverted after emergency declaration is rescinded
- Important for training programs to prepare to return to Handbook 1400.04 policies
  - TH engagement
  - Community/home visits included
- OAA currently revising policies with TW/TS in mind
  - Unlikely to allow fully virtual training experiences



# OAA Innovations

- **Diversity and Inclusion Initiative**  
[GeoMapping Minority Serving Institutions \(sharepoint.com\)](#)
- **Rural Health Faculty Development Initiative**  
[Rural Interprofessional Faculty Development Initiative - Home \(sharepoint.com\)](#)
- **Protected Time for Directors of Training**  
[OAA Staffing Guidelines \(sharepoint.com\)](#)
- Developing HPT tracking system to follow personnel records from HPT through VA employment



# Trainee Recruitment and Hiring Updates

- VHA has supply (HPTs) and demand (vacancies) to fill critical staffing needs
- Agency invests \$2B annually to train
- Authority to use and promote non-competitive hiring flexibilities
- OAA and WMC co-chair Trainee Recruitment and Hiring Workgroup (TMRW)



# TMRW Impact

General strategies to leverage hiring flexibilities:

- Redesigned [internal webpage](#) to improve user experience
- Established [external webpage](#) for users outside VA firewall
- Created [microlearning video](#) marketing Trainee Recruitment Events
- Working towards automated placement software



# TMRW Impact

- Profession-Specific strategies to promote hiring into psychology vacancies:
  - Psychology Trainee Recruitment Event growth: Q1 & Q3
  - National HPT Recruiter intervention after HPT disqualifications
  - OAA/WMC continue to collaborate with OMHSP on the impact hiring has on imbalance of unfilled postdoctoral positions



# Psychology TRE Data FY19-21

- TREs begin in FY19 with psychology
- Nearly half of matched positions are in psychology
- One in three candidates in TRE accept an offer
- 717 total offers accepted between FY19 and FY21
- More recent data indicates larger increase in psychology positions/smaller gain in # HPTs





# Psychology TRE Data FY19-21

ALL-TIME TRE DATA FY19-21	# Registered Candidates	# Registered VA Facilities	# Positions	# Matches	# Meet & Greets	# Job Interviews	# Contingent Job Offers	# Accepted Offers
All MH Professions	1519	405	1720.9	3955	1388	1190	636	459
Psychology	922	231	988	2618	1678	882	477	313



# Additional Guidance & Recommendations

1. Temporary appointments for HPTs
2. “Am I Eligible” Checklist
3. Match/fill rate verification process
4. APA and APPIC Fees



# NTE One-Year Appointment

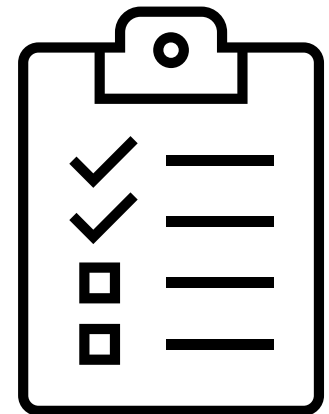
HPTs must be appointed in a not-to-exceed (NTE) one-year appointment.

- By law, a temporary appointment is less than one year
- Prevents HPTs from erroneously receiving benefits they are not entitled to under existing law (e.g., retirement, supplemental vision/dental insurance, etc.)
- HPTs in programs that are two years or longer should be re-appointed annually (including extensions)
- Training extensions may be granted in consultation with DEO, OAA and OMHSP



# Eligibility

- Recommend including OAA's link to [Eligibility Information](#) on recruitment materials
- Prevents HPTs from receiving inconsistent information across VA facilities
- Updated as needed by OAA HPT Staffing Unit
  - [Am I Eligible? Checklist for VA HPTs](#)
  - Drug Free Workplace
  - Selective Service
  - US Citizenship-Social Security Requirements



# Match/Fill Rate Verification Process

- OAA developed new process to verify positions filled for the upcoming academic year.
- **Step 1:** Psychology Internship Match Portal completed after Phase I/II (existing database)
- **Step 2:** Psychology internship *and* AHE postdoctoral residency positions verified after match and UND (new database) – **DEO completes**



# APA & APPIC Fees

- VA Enterprise-wide Psychology Training Accreditation ([VEPTA](#)) renewed May 2022
  - You must notify OAA for the following actions:
    - Initial application submission
    - Site visit has been scheduled/completed
    - Update accreditation status
  - No national contract with APPIC (membership fees are paid locally)
    - Ensure that you collaborate with DEO/fiscal to initiate 2237 (obligate funds) prior to invoice
    - Use purchase card to make payment



# Resources

- [Passion to Learn, Power to Heal: Our Story](#)
- [OAA Internet Page](#)
- [Office of Academic Affiliations Intranet - COVID-19 Updates \(sharepoint.com\)](#)
- [Associated Health Fact Sheet](#)
- [Internal Non-competitive Hiring Flexibilities Webpage](#)
- [External VA Careers Webpage](#)



# THANK YOU, QUESTIONS AND CONTACT INFO



**AHE Team E-mail:**

[Assoc.Health@va.gov](mailto:Assoc.Health@va.gov)

[OAA Help Desk \(va.gov\)](http://va.gov)



U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs  
Veterans Health Administration

