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# News Release

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## VA Celebrates 70 Years of Partnering with Medical Schools

WASHINGTON – Caring for the nation's Veterans is a shared honor and a shared responsibility, which is why the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) this year is celebrating the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of its partnership with the nation's medical and health professional schools.

Since 1946, VA has worked with academic institutions to provide high quality, state-of-the-art health care to America's Veterans and to train new health professionals to meet the rapidly evolving health care needs within VA and the nation.

"We are extremely proud of the long-standing, close relationships built over the past 70 years among VA and academic institutions across the country," said VA Secretary Robert A. McDonald. "These partnerships strengthen VA's healthcare system, and provide high quality training for the nation's healthcare workforce. We cannot do what we do without them."

The partnership between VA and academic affiliates dates back to the end of World War II. Following the allied victory, VA faced the imminent arrival of over 100,000 new patients and was confronted with a severe lack of resources as it had only 98 mostly rural hospitals offering fewer than 84,000 beds and 1,000 physicians. To meet this challenge, VA created a landmark partnership with U.S. medical schools to establish a dynamic, talented workforce of students, physician residents, and faculty who provide world class care to Veterans while providing training to generations of future physicians that has evolved to include more than forty health care professions over the decades.

"Through this historic collaboration, VA has become the largest single provider of medical training in the country, where more than 40,000 residents and 20,000 medical students receive clinical training each year," said Darrell G. Kirch, President and CEO of the Association of American Medical Colleges.

"VA benefits enormously from its relationship with its partners in the medical academic community. We are able to do the work we do because of this synergistic relationship," said VA Under Secretary for Health Dr. David Shulkin. "We have the benefit of the top medical professionals being produced by leading academic institutions. In turn, the medical community and patients around the country benefit from VA innovations – innovations such as the implantable cardiac pacemaker; the nicotine patch to help smokers quit; liver transplants and electronic medical records. We are both proud and grateful for these relationships."

Today, VA conducts the largest education and training programs for health professionals in the United States. VA has affiliations with more than 1,800 educational institutions; more than 70 percent of all doctors in the U.S. have received training in the VA healthcare system. VA invests \$900 million annually to provide clinical education and training programs to more than 120,000 interns, residents, fellows and students in more than 40 clinical health professions. Among them are over 10,000 graduate medical education (GME) positions training more than 40,000 physicians in training annually.

For more information about VA's Office of Academic Affiliations, visit [www.va.gov/OAA](http://www.va.gov/OAA). To learn more about the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of VA's partnership with medical schools, visit [www.va.gov/OAA/OAA\\_70th\\_Anniversary.asp](http://www.va.gov/OAA/OAA_70th_Anniversary.asp) and [www.blogs.va.gov/VAntage/http://www.blogs.va.gov/VAntage/category/postname/academic-affiliations/](http://www.blogs.va.gov/VAntage/http://www.blogs.va.gov/VAntage/category/postname/academic-affiliations/).

For more information about the AAMC's relationship with VA, visit <https://www.aamc.org/initiatives/vahealthcare>.

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