

June 12, 2017

David Shulkin, MD,
Secretary of Veterans Affairs

Dear Secretary Shulkin:

I am writing to express my gratitude to the VA for the outstanding opportunity that the Seattle Center of Excellence in Primary Care Education (CoEPCE) at VA Puget Sound has provided for students in the Doctor of Nursing Practice program at the University of Washington. The Center of Excellence (CoEPCE) was created in 2011 with funds from a grant from the VA Office of Academic Affairs. Dr. Joyce Wipf, Director of the Center of Excellence in Primary Care Education, had the vision for this project and engaged the UW School of Nursing in the early proposal planning in 2010. This early model of collaboration was critical in creating a program that served both academic and clinical constituencies well!

Through this excellent program, funds supported development of a clinical-academic program in which Nurse Practitioner Students (DNP program) were trained in clinical practice along with medical residents, pharmacy residents, and many other members of the health care team. Using a model developed by the VA, the Patient Aligned Care Team, students were immersed in a real health care team from the beginning of their training. In addition to opportunities to have precepted clinical education in the clinic with Veterans, students in all disciplines came together for joint seminars addressing clinical problems seen frequently in the clinic, conducted huddles to identify patients who could benefit from seeing a particular provider, and participated in workshops. Among some of the outstanding workshops were a workshop series on "Meet Your Colleagues" in which a member of the health care team such as a wound care nursing specialist met with the trainees and engaged them in lecture-discussion about wound care while demonstrating her practice. Team STEPPS training modified for outpatient practice and training in managing entrenched conflict two additional workshops that were rated highly by the participants. Our DNP students also participated in population health panel management for interprofessional health care trainees created by Dr. Catherine Kaminetzky, MD, MPH, Service Line Leader for Education and Director of CoEPCE Scholarship (and recently appointed VA Chief of Staff). In the DNP program, students develop a capstone project that includes quality improvement or program evaluation efforts. Several students have benefited from the model program in panel management with related capstone projects.

One particular contribution of the CoEPCE in Nursing has been the development of a Nurse Practitioner Residency Program at the Seattle VA. Given the complexity of the VA patients seen in the CoEPCE Clinics, our students identified that further postgraduate preparation would facilitate their ability to serve as health care providers in the VA system. Together we held two annual forum events that engaged nurse practitioner faculty from the Western region with national leaders to explore the possibility of residency training such as existed in the Federally Qualified Health Care Centers. Today the CoEPCE offers residency training to two NP graduates each year.

The CoEPCE team of interprofessional faculty led by Dr. Wipf, along with scholarship/QI leadership by Dr. Kaminetzky, readily collaborated with School of Nursing faculty over the years. Together we were able to craft a program that eventually prepared VA faculty to offer the DNP students interprofessional training as part of their curriculum as well as residency training for those graduates seeking practice opportunities in the VA. In addition, they have mentored a Nurse Practitioner in a leadership position in the clinic, solidifying a true interprofessional model.

Biobehavioral Nursing and Health Informatics

In light of her new facility leadership role as Chief of Staff of VA Puget Sound, and Director of the Education Department as well as her innovative work with CoEPCE, I would like to nominate Dr. Catherine Kaminetzky, MD, PhD, for your internal field advisory committee. She has been an extraordinary partner from the start in the development of the CoEPCE, and a visionary with innovative curricula created in panel management and quality improvement activities. She helped to create true interprofessional collaboration and encouragement of DNP student in VA Capstone Projects, working with the School of Nursing to optimize the Capstone process. She has been readily available to engage in solving problems that are inevitable when one begins to blend two very different systems of graduate education: nursing and medicine, in this case.

At the center of our collaboration has been the Veterans who are served by this Center. Throughout our partnership, Dr. Wipf and Dr. Kaminetzky have been instrumental in making the collaboration between Nursing and Medicine as disciplines and professions and between the VA and an academic partner, the University of Washington School of Nursing, successful as a model training program.

We look forward to continued collaboration and innovative education models between the VA and the School of Nursing at the University of Washington. Thank you for the opportunity to provide this nomination of Dr. Kaminetzky to the VA field advisory committee on academic affiliations.

Sincerely,



Nancy Fugate Woods, PhD, RN, FAAN
Professor and Dean Emeritus