

The VISN 20 Academic Affiliations Advisory Education and Research Group submits the following recommendations for the VA National Academic Affiliations Council to consider at their July meeting.

We believe discussions are taking place within VHA to identify the core clinical services that the VA will continue to provide at its medical centers and outpatient clinics. By inference, services not on that list will be outsourced or the practice locally will be significantly reduced. As specific clinical services are included or excluded from the list it is critical to consider the impact of each decision on the local teaching mission. If decisions are made such that the number of trainees within the VA can't be sustained, academic affiliates need to be made aware of these decisions in real time as it impacts the selection of future trainees. It will also impact the number of clinician-educators needed at the local VA. The following recommendations could prevent unintended negative consequences to the VA's education mission.

1. If a process to identify the core clinical services is taking place with the goal of identifying what will be provided in house and what will be outsourced, this should be communicated clearly to the field. Who is participating in this process? What is their timeline?
2. If not already occurring, the group involved in this process should include experts from the Office of Academic Affairs and the field who can speak to the impact of different scenarios on trainees throughout the VA.
3. If discussions on core services are also being conducted at the VISN level, representation by the Designated Education Officer from the VAs in that VISN with teaching programs is strongly recommended.