



Nurse Practitioner Residency Program – Mental Health Track

The North Florida/South Georgia Veterans Health System (NFSG VHS) is proud to announce a one-year post-graduate traineeship for new Nurse Practitioners. The program offers two tracks – Mental Health and Primary Care. This document provides information for the Mental Health Track. Resident placements may occur throughout the system, with primary locations in **Gainesville, Florida**, on site at the VA Medical Center and local off-site specialty clinics.

Program cohorts have fall start dates (i.e., August or September) and applications are due April 1st and can be sent directly by email. Please contact the program director for this specialty track with any questions:

Dr. Kerry Creasy, PhD, APRN, PMHNP-BC. MH-NP Residency Program Director. Kerry.creasy@va.gov

Program Description:

The program is designed to support the new graduate in acquiring the competencies needed for successful independent practice as an advanced practice nurse within a complex, Veteran-centric health care environment. Specifically, the program provides training in culturally sensitive, patient-centered care using empirically based best practices and interprofessional collaboration. The program is 80% clinical and 20% didactic. Residents are required to complete a scholarly project and presentation during the training year.

Program Mission: The mission of the NFSG VHS NP Residency – Mental Health Track is to enhance the scientific knowledge, clinical expertise, and professionalism of novice PMHNPs by providing a safe, mentored transition of the newly licensed and board-certified PMHNP into a competent and confident professional, thereby providing excellent care to military Veterans.

Program Goals:

1. Increased confidence in the role of the PMHNP.
2. Increased competence in the practice of advanced psychiatric nursing care.
3. Enhanced utilization of scientific evidence to support nursing practice.
4. Increased retention of newly hired graduate PMHNPs in the VA workforce.

Program Outcomes: The program welcomed its first cohort in January 2020. As of fall 11/2023,

1. 100% of graduates demonstrated increased confidence across all domains of practice.
2. 100% of graduates achieved anticipated competencies for practice across all domains.
3. 100% of graduates participated in evidence-based, quality improvement projects within the system, contributing to staff education and improved patient care access opportunities.
4. 100% of alumni maintain gainful employment, at least 50% of whom retained positions in VA.

Training domains include:

- Professional role development and career management
- Clinical assessment and case formulation
- Clinical documentation
- Treatment planning and patient engagement
- Mental health treatment, including evidence-based pharmacotherapy and psychotherapy, alternative and complementary approaches
- Consultation and interprofessional communication skills
- Patient-centered cultural competency (with a particular emphasis on Military and Veteran culture)
- Clinical scholarship, leadership, and program development and evaluation

Residents will rotate through clinics in NFSG and receive preceptorship from Nurse Practitioners and Psychiatrists in multiple settings. Each resident will manage a panel of patients in a year-long continuity clinic while also rotating through specialty mental health care settings, providing a comprehensive experience designed to prepare the graduate to work and lead in a complex healthcare environment. In addition to pharmacotherapeutic treatment, residents are provided supervised experiences in evidence-based psychotherapy and develop case management skills.

Clinical rotations offered:

- Outpatient General Mental Health
- Substance Use Disorders Clinic
- Primary Care-Mental Health Integration
- Mental Health Intensive Case Management

Opportunities for specialty experiences in:

- Inpatient Psychiatry/ECT/rTMS
- Eating Disorder Treatment Team
- Mental Health Residential Programs
- Psychosocial Rehabilitation & Recovery Clinic

Benefits:

- Stipend (as of AY 2023-2024): \$77,796
- A comprehensive benefits package that includes paid vacation, sick leave, holidays, and health benefits
- Hiring preference for open positions at *any* VA upon completion of the residency
- Active and ongoing professional development which includes opportunities for recruitment into open positions in NFSG VHS and other VA facilities

Applicant Qualifications:

- U.S. Citizenship
- Recent graduate (within 12 months) of a master's, post-master's certificate, or doctoral level nurse practitioner program accredited by CCNE or the ACEN
- Possess current board certification or be eligible to sit for board examination as a Psychiatric-Mental Health Nurse Practitioner
- Must have *never* worked as a PMHNP; applicants with other NP experience (e.g., FNP) are eligible
- Must possess a current, full, active, and unrestricted registration as a graduate professional nurse AND nurse practitioner in a State, Territory or Commonwealth (i.e., Puerto Rico) of the United States, or the District of Columbia, prior to the start of the program
- Current BLS; this must be maintained for the duration of VA employment
- Proficient in written and spoken English
- Pass a background/security investigation as required by the Veterans Health Administration
- Provide evidence or self-certification of satisfactory physical condition based on a physical examination in the past 12 months
- Provide evidence or self-certification of up-to-date vaccinations for healthcare workers as recommended by Centers for Disease Control (CDC) and VA: <https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/adults/rec-vac/hcw.html>
- Random drug testing may be required

Application Requirements:

- Curriculum vitae or professional resume (including graduation and board certification completion/test dates)
 - A one to two page essay or cover letter describing interest in completing a VA Mental Health NP residency and how it fits with career aspirations. Please include specific interests in Veterans health care, clinical rotations, and short- and long-term goals.
 - At least two (2) letters of recommendation*:
 - one from an academic instructor OR place of employment
 - one from a clinical preceptor during the PMHNP program- may be NP, MD, or DO; may be from a Psychologist if the clinical experience was primarily psychotherapy.
 - **All** nursing school transcripts (may be unofficial copies; ensure all information is legible after it is scanned)
 - Copy of current BLS
 - Copy of current RN license
 - Copy of current APRN license, if available at time of application
 - Copy of current ANCC board certification OR test date, if available, if available at time of application
- *Letters of recommendation should be sent directly to the program director from the reference person when possible.*

In addition to the above, applicants must meet eligibility criteria for VA Health Professions Trainees. Information can be found on the Office of Academic Affiliations website [here](#).

Cohorts start in the fall (i.e., August or September) and **applications are due April 1st of the training year**. Extenuating circumstances may delay program start date (e.g., global pandemic), so please contact the program director for specific dates or questions pertaining to the year for which you are applying. **June and July graduates may apply and will be considered**, if graduation is before the program start date.

Please contact the program director, Dr. Creasy, with any questions.
Applications can be send directly by email: Kerry.creasy@va.gov