# Kathleen Parker, Director of the OKCVAHCS Nurse Residency and Training



Kathleen R. Parker, PhD, APRN-, FNP-BC, currently serves the Oklahoma City Veterans Affairs Health Care System (OKCVCS) as the Director of the Nurse Residency and Training programs.

In 2019, during Leadership briefing, the Facility’s Director shared a concern regarding recruitment and retention of Primary Care Physicians. One option for mitigating the shortage of physicians is to recruit Nurse Practitioners (NPs). Dr. Parker created a business case for an NP Residency Program to attract NPs to the VA. The future success of the OKCVAHCS hinges on the organization’s ability to provide quality and timely access to care to the population served. This is predicated on hiring and retaining well-qualified professionals, inclusive of graduate and post-graduate nurses.

*Kathleen Parker*

Dr. Parker, with evidence-based business case in hand, wrote the request for funding (RFP) with the support of the internal and external stakeholder. In Fall of 2019 OKCVAHCS was granted funding from the VA Office of Academic Affiliation (OAA) to establish the state’s first and only Nurse Practitioner Residency Program. As part of the application award, OKCVAHCS was granted eight (8) Academic Partnerships in Graduate Education Nurse Practitioner Student Trainee stipends positions along with the Nurse Practitioner Residency Program in Primary Care- Adult Gerontology (AGPCNPs).

The Residency program affords an opportunity to bridge the gap between academia and practice. The Academic Affiliate School of Nursing (SON) benefited from increased faculty resources that support the expansion of AGPCNP student enrollment. The partnership further strengthens the SON core and AGPCNP specialty curriculum by incorporating more veteran-specific content, a benefit to both faculty and students.

The Residency prepares highly motivated AGPCNPs who can provide a range of services including population specific primary care, consultation, medication management and other skills. AGPCNPs, by nature of their nursing background, are particularly well-suited to advance the VA Health System's goal of providing integrated primary care services across the continuum of care. The Residency Program supports recruitment and retention of the highly qualified licensed independent primary care providers.