Department of Veterans Affairs

Memorandum

Date:

From: Secretary (00)

Subj: National Academic Affiliations Council Veterans Health Administration Action Plan Response (VIEWS 01538688)

To: Under Secretaries, Assistant Secretaries, and Other Key Officials

1. The National Academic Affiliations Council (NAAC) Federal Advisory Committee held their face-to-face meeting on September 4-5, 2019. The Council provided a variety of insights on matters affecting partnerships between Department of Veteran Affairs (VA) and its academic affiliates and have forwarded one recommendation for VA’s consideration.

2. Attached is the Council’s recommendation, as well as VA’s response to the recommendation, pending your approval.

3. Should you have any questions, please contact the NAAC Designated Federal Official, Ms. Larissa Emory, Office of Academic Affiliations, at (915) 269-0465 or by email at larissa.emory@va.gov.

Richard A. Stone, M.D.

Attachment

Approve/Disapprove

__________________________  _______
Robert L. Wilkie           Date
October 29, 2019

The Honorable Robert L. Wilkie  
Secretary, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs  
810 Vermont Avenue NW  
Washington, DC 20420  

Dear Secretary Wilkie:

In our shared efforts to advance VA’s national leadership in health professions education, it is with great pleasure that I submit the minutes from the National Academic Affiliations Council’s (NAAC) face-to-face meeting held on September 4th and 5th, 2019 at the Phoenix VA Health Care System (PVAHCS).

The Council commends VA’s dedication to strengthening external relationships with the academic community. As evidenced by its September 2019 meeting, the Council continues to explore the many benefits of seamless integration between VA and its academic partners to enhance Veterans’ access to advancements in health care. The Council respectfully forwards one recommendation, summarized below for your consideration:

1. As previously noted by the NAAC, the Council recognizes the need for a national authoritative database to track trainees. Currently there is no national trainee registration or tracking system, leaving it up to individual medical centers to track trainees locally. The individual medical centers know their own trainees, but there is no aggregation of data into a national data set. To better understand who the VA is training, to enable the potential recruitment of trainees at the end of their programs, there needs to be a centralized repository of information. The Council recommends that work continue towards development of a national data base for trainees and requests continued updates on progress.

We look forward to your feedback.

Sincerely,

John F. Duval, MBA, FACHE (Chair)  
VA National Academic Affiliations Council
Recommendation 1: As previously noted by the NAAC, the Council recognizes the need for a national authoritative database to track trainees. Currently there is no national trainee registration or tracking system, leaving it up to individual medical centers to track trainees locally. The individual medical centers know their own trainees, but there is no aggregation of data into a national data set. To better understand who the VA is training, to enable the potential recruitment of trainees at the end of their programs, there needs to be a centralized repository of information. The Council recommends that work continue towards development of a national data base for trainees and requests continued updates on progress.

**VA Response:** Concur. Since 2003 OAA has recognized the need for VA to develop a standardized system capable of registering and tracking the 120,000 health professions trainees (HPTs) who are being trained throughout all VA Medical Centers. As VA onboarding processes have become more complicated over the years the need to efficiently register and track our HPTs at a national level has become critical. Thankfully other VA offices have joined OAA’s efforts and are working to create an authoritative data source to track our VHA trainees. These partners include the Office of Information & Technology, Office of Operations, Security and Preparedness and the Office of Human Resources & Administration. Because most of our HPTs do not receive direct pay from the VA, they receive a without compensation (WOC) appointment and therefore cannot be tracked in the traditional Human Resources management system, HR-Smart.

The goals are to have all HPTs:
- Register in an external online “Information Intake” system
- Complete onboarding and provisioning through an interface between the intake system the VA Identity and Access Management (IAM) onboarding solution system
- Tracked in HR-Smart as they train at VA facilities
- Categorized consistently in the Electronic Medical Record (EMR)
- Identified as they complete training to ensure seamless transition to other programs and hiring into VA staff positions

OAA is committed to acquiring a robust and sustainable system for registering and tracking all HPTs but is not willing to increase burden on Trainees, Academic Affiliates or VA Education field staff. The technical steps for realizing a trainee management system include:
- Activating HR-Smart Academic Profile for Existing Paid HPTs
- Identifying an Information Intake system to allow for HPT self-entered data and Facility bulk processing
- Creating a WOC partition or space in HR-Smart
- Creating an interface between the identified Information Intake system and HR-Smart
- Creating an interface between Information Intake system and IAM Onboarding Solution
<table>
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<th>Recommendation</th>
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<tr>
<td>Activate HR·Smart Academic Profile for Existing Paid HPTs</td>
<td>WMC</td>
<td>OAA</td>
<td>Communicate to HR field staff and provide instructions to mandate addition of Academic Profile information for each Paid HPT</td>
<td>Jessica Bonjorni, Chief Officer Workforce Management VHA</td>
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<tr>
<td>Identify an Information Intake system to allow for HPT self-entered data and Facility bulk processing</td>
<td>HR&amp;A</td>
<td>OAA</td>
<td>Identify an Information Intake system to allow for HPT self-entered data and Facility bulk processing</td>
<td>Joseph Thele, Executive Director, HR Information Technology</td>
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<td>Create HR·Smart WOC Partition</td>
<td>HR&amp;A</td>
<td>HRIT</td>
<td>Configure HR·Smart to accommodate WOC personnel</td>
<td>Joseph Thele, Executive Director, HR Information Technology Tracey Therit, Chief Human Capital Officer, VA Office of Human Resources Management, HR&amp;A</td>
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<td>Create Interface between Information Intake System and HR·Smart</td>
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<td>Create Interface between Information Intake System and AIM Onboarding Solution</td>
<td>OSP</td>
<td>HRIT</td>
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<td>Daniel Galik, Executive Director, Office of Identity, Credential &amp; Access Management, OSP</td>
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