

## **VA NURSING ACADEMIC PARTNERSHIPS IN GRADUATE EDUCATION PSYCHIATRIC-MENTAL HEALTH NURSE PRACTITIONER EDUCATION REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS**

### **1. PURPOSE**

- a. Request for Proposals:** The Office of Academic Affiliations (OAA), in collaboration with the Office of Nursing Services (ONS), solicits proposals for a newly created program: Veterans Affairs Nursing Academic Partnerships in Graduate Education (VANAP-GE) program, to foster the development of closer relationships between VA facilities and schools of nursing (SON) with graduate advanced practice Psychiatric-Mental Health Nurse Practitioner (PMHNP) degree programs. This program provides the financial and consultative resources to enable substantive change in VA/nursing school relationships and promotes innovation in nursing education and practice. VA facilities and affiliated nursing schools committed to enhancing academic partnerships that includes the development, implementation and evaluation of a PMHNP post-graduate residency are invited to submit proposals to participate in this program.

This initiative will leverage academic and clinical resources to increase student enrollment by 6 to 12 students over baseline, enhance VA faculty competencies and professional scholarship, promote innovation in clinical education, revise academic curriculum to include Veteran specific mental health problems, develop interprofessional education, develop Veteran-centric mental health practice and education initiatives, and increase the recruitment and retention of VA PMHNPs. Sites selected for this initiative will be expected to implement a postgraduate PMHNP residency, which will require the development and implementation of a veteran-centric residency curriculum with program evaluation and contribute to the development of potential residency accreditation standards. A consortium of programs will be required to develop a standard curriculum for the residency and a proposal for accreditation standards. All clinical training in this program will be expected to occur within the VA healthcare system. NP students in the VANAP-GE mental health NP programs will be strongly encouraged to apply for VA mental health NP residency positions upon graduation.

This program announcement provides information, policies and application procedures for VA facilities and schools of nursing regarding the VANAP-GE program for Psychiatric-Mental Health Nurse Practitioner Education.

- b. Eligibility to Apply:** Only VA facilities with current OAA funded PMHNP residencies are eligible to apply for this initiative.

Successful sites will demonstrate strong executive and programmatic leadership support and a documented record of innovation in education and clinical practice. Demonstrated leadership in strategic planning and program planning, implementation and evaluation is essential. VA facilities and nursing school affiliates must be strongly committed to the goals and objectives defined in this program announcement and provide evidence of existing academic collaboration. Applicants should focus their proposals on graduate psychiatric-mental health nurse practitioner programs and a commitment to developing the PMHNP residency.

VA faculty are expected to fully perform didactic, simulation and clinical teaching as well as participate in the achievement of VANAP-GE PMHNP objectives.

The required increase in student enrollment must be in the educational program identified for the VANAP-GE PMHNP program.

A letter of intent to submit a proposal must be submitted by February 24, 2014 and a full proposal must be submitted by April 2, 2014 (see Attachments 1 and 2 for submission instructions).

- c. **Expected Annual Funding:** Up to four VANAP-GE partnerships will be selected for implementation in academic year 2014-2015. Selected sites will receive a comprehensive funding package designed to enable robust implementation of an academic partnership that will bring value to Veterans, students, faculty, and staff.

Faculty funding for the first year (AY14-15) of the partnership will include three full-time FTEEs, as well as two part-time (0.50 FTEE) program directors, one each for the VA facility and the SON. In the second through fourth years of the partnership, up to five full-time faculty FTEEs as well as the two part-time program directors will be funded. In the fifth year (AY18-19) of the partnership, faculty funding levels will revert to the first-year rate of three full-time FTEEs and two part-time program directors. **Each faculty member and program director must commit at least 50% time to VANAP-GE activities. Program Directors will be expected to assume teaching (direct or indirect PMHNP student supervision) as well as program administrative responsibilities.**

Partnerships will receive central funding for five years, subject to VA appropriations and the ability of sites to initiate, execute and meet program goals and objectives. **Successful sites will be expected to maintain the partnership beyond the five-year period of central funding (see Section 4b (5) for local funding expectations).**

## 2. BACKGROUND

The new PMHNP VANAP-GE program builds upon the extraordinary relationships and dynamic innovations fostered by the Veterans Affairs Nursing Academy (VANA). VANA was established in 2007 as a five-year pilot program to address the VA and national nursing shortages at the critical bottlenecks of faculty availability and clinical training site capacity.

The pool of qualified preceptors was increased by using clinically experienced and academically prepared VA nurses to extend SON faculty. Funding was provided for collaborating nursing schools to hire faculty and for VA to provide release time and backfill positions for VA faculty. VA facilities provided expanded access to clinical training sites; in return, the partnering nursing schools agreed to increase baccalaureate student enrollment. In sum, VANA provided a platform, structure, and resources for the expansion of undergraduate nursing education with a focus on improving the health of our Veterans.

The VANA pilot promoted programs that enhanced the professional development of VA nurses, fostered innovation in nursing education and practice, facilitated recruitment of new graduate nurses to VA, introduced the Post-Baccalaureate Nurse Residency to VA and reduced the turnover of nurses at VANA training sites. Closer integration of education with practice resulted in numerous Veteran-centric innovations and initiatives. Internal and

external VANA program assessments demonstrated strong positive learning and professional development outcomes and a favorable return on investment. These assessments also identified the characteristics of successful partnerships, which have been incorporated into the new VANAP-GE psychiatric-mental health NP program.

Additional VA nursing academic partnerships have been implemented based on the success of the VANA pilot program including funding for 18 new VA Nursing Academic Partnerships (VANAP), Post-Baccalaureate Nurse Residency programs, and Psychiatric-Mental Health Nurse Practitioner Residency programs. The VANAP-GE PMHNP education program will support graduate level education based on objectives congruent with the VANA pilot program.

### 3. PARTNERSHIP GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

The VANAP-GE PMHNP program is designed to enable stronger, mutually beneficial relationships between nursing schools and VA facilities by: (a) expanding faculty and professional development; (b) increasing PMHNP student enrollment and clinical training capacity; (c) enhancing recruitment and retention of VA PMHNP residents and PMHNPs; (d) providing opportunities for education and practice innovations aligned with veteran care; (e) developing and implementing a post-graduate PMHNP residency and (f) developing interprofessional psychiatric-mental health education.

### 4. PARTNERSHIP EXPECTATIONS

**a. Overall Commitment:** The partnership's collective and individual commitment to meet the following strategic and operational expectations of the national VANAP-GE PMHNP program *must be clearly addressed in the core narrative and letters of support.*

**(1) The VA Facility and SON will:**

- (a) Demonstrate executive leadership support to promote a culture of excellence in nursing education and clinical practice.
- (b) Work collaboratively to develop, implement and evaluate innovative approaches to education and nursing practice at the VA and the SON.
- (c) Work collaboratively to develop and implement a VANAP-GE SON faculty practice program within the partnering VA facility by the second year of the program.
- (d) Work collaboratively to develop the structure and curriculum for the PMHNP residency; and contribute to the development of nurse practitioner residency accreditation standards.
- (e) Work collaboratively to implement and evaluate the post-graduate PMHNP residency program.
- (f) Collaboratively select qualified VA nurses to participate in this program and assist them in assuming faculty roles and responsibilities.
- (g) Collaboratively select qualified SON faculty to participate in this program.

- (h) Jointly develop and implement Veteran-centric educational and practice initiatives.
- (i) Jointly develop a sustainability plan, inclusive of faculty resources and operating funding, for the sixth and future years of the program.
- (j) Share curriculum innovations and/or practice and education initiatives on the VANAP SharePoint site.

**(2) The VA Facility will:**

- (a) Provide VA paid or Intergovernmental Personnel Mobility Act (IPA) appointments to SON faculty who participate in VA nursing education, practice or administrative activities.
- (b) Provide release time for VA faculty to participate in partnership activities at both the VA and the SON.
- (c) Support VA-based faculty participation in SON committees.
- (d) Develop and implement a robust recruitment program for VANAP-GE PMHNP graduates and promote hiring of PMHNP graduates who meet criteria for the PMHNP residency and/or VA employment.
- (e) Fund the VA program director and selected VA faculty to attend an initial planning meeting and follow-up implementation and evaluation meetings organized by national VANAP leadership throughout the program.

**(3) The School of Nursing will:**

- (a) Provide faculty appointments to VA nurses who participate in academic activities at the VA and SON.
- (b) Provide release time for SON faculty to participate in partnership activities at both the SON and the VA.
- (c) Support SON faculty participation in VA nursing committees and practice initiatives.
- (d) Incorporate Veteran-centric concepts into the PMHNP and Residency curriculums to ensure that NPs are prepared to address the health needs of military service members, Veterans and their families.
- (e) Fund the SON program director and selected faculty to attend an initial planning meeting and follow-up implementation and evaluation meetings organized by national VANAP leadership throughout the program.

**b. General Attributes:** In developing the proposal, applicants should pay particular attention to the following attributes of successful partnerships.

**(1) Transformative Potential:** Innovative models of nursing education are the building blocks of the future nursing workforce. Address the role of the partnership within the broader context of transforming PMHNP education and the nursing workforce and make a convincing case for how the partnership will generate changes that will foster and sustain the major goals and objectives of this initiative.

- (2) Institutional Collaboration and Shared Decision Making:** The sponsoring VA facility and academic affiliate(s) are expected to collaborate throughout the development of the proposal and in its subsequent implementation and evaluation. Provide clear evidence that the proposal has been developed by the partners as a joint enterprise and describe the process for shared decision making moving forward. Address how SON faculty will be integrated into VA organizational structure and culture and how VA faculty will be integrated into SON organizational structure and culture.
  - (3) Partnership Governance:** Successful partnerships require strong internal and external support. Provide a plan that describes program management, oversight, strategic planning, communication within and external to VANAP-GE stakeholders, conflict management, joint decision making and recruitment and retention plans. All plans will be aligned with the program objectives. Explain how VA and SON leadership will provide executive and operational oversight of the initiative. Also address the charter and composition of a program advisory committee, explaining how it will advance the major goals and objectives of this initiative.
  - (4) Local Support:** VA and SON leadership must have a demonstrated commitment to VANAP-GE PMHNP education, endorse the application and specifically guarantee: (1) sufficient clinical, education and administrative space to support the program; (2) that program directors and faculty will have at least 50% release time to participate in VANAP-GE activities; and (3) the availability of human resource and fiscal support services to facilitate IPA logistics, to hire faculty and to manage funds and quarterly reports for the program.
  - (5) Program Sustainability:** This initiative is part of an ambitious plan to expand VA-nursing academic partnerships for PMHNP education enterprise-wide. The VISN director, VA facility director and SON dean must acknowledge that a jointly negotiated plan (in the form of a memorandum of understanding [MOU]) will be developed to maintain the program beyond the five-year period of central funding. A detailed MOU is not required at this time; however, specific commitments to maintain the program, including the PMHNP residency, with local funding must be part of the proposal.
- c. Specific Requirements:** In developing the proposal, applicants must address the following specific requirements of the program.
- (1) Program Directors:**

    - (a) Each partnership must have two designated program directors. There will be one program director for the VA facility and one program director for the SON. Each program director will receive central funding at the 0.5 FTEE level for five years. Program directors must be certified as psychiatric-mental health NPs.
    - (b) Both program directors must be willing and able to develop and maintain collaborative partnerships with academic and clinical leaders, facilitate development and implementation of the identified education and practice innovations including development and implementation of the PMHNP residency program. In addition they will support faculty and staff development, participate

in hiring and evaluating faculty, lead program evaluation activities and complete an annual report of the accomplishments of the program. Program directors will also be expected to assume teaching (including direct or indirect PMHNP student supervision) responsibilities.

- (c) The VA nurse executive and SON dean will approve the program directors and ensure that they are freed up from other responsibilities so that they have at least 50% time devoted to VANAP-GE activities.
- (d) The SON dean will ensure that the VA program director receives a faculty appointment commensurate with qualifications and responsibilities.
- (e) Program Directors will have at minimum a Master's Degree in Psychiatric-Mental Health Nursing with a Doctorate preferred. Additionally, they will also have nursing education expertise and proficiency collaborating with academic or clinical practice partners.

**(2) Faculty:**

- (a) The number of VANAP-GE faculty is dependent on the year of the program. Funding for the first year (AY 14-15) of the partnership will include three FTEEs, exclusive of the program directors. Funding for one FTEE will be available to the VA and funding for two FTEE will be available to the SON. In the second through fourth years of the partnership, up to five FTEEs (exclusive of the program directors) will be funded. Funding for up to two FTEEs will be available to the VA and funding for up to three FTEE will be available to the SON. In the fifth year (AY 18-19) of the partnership, faculty funding levels will revert to that of the first year. The SON dean and the VA nurse executive cannot be funded through this initiative.
- (b) Faculty will participate in a variety of educational activities at the VA and the SON, including didactic instruction, simulation exercises, clinical precepting, performance improvement and evidence-based practice learning experiences and participation in PMHNP and residency curriculum development, review and operational committees.
- (c) Faculty will be certified as psychiatric-mental health nurse practitioners, jointly selected by the VA and SON program directors and must be approved by VA and SON leadership, as appropriate. Appointment of faculty will be consistent with the standards for employment at the respective partner facilities.
- (d) The VA nurse executive and SON dean must ensure that all faculty members are freed up from other responsibilities so that they have at least 50% time devoted to VANAP-GE activities.
- (e) The SON dean will ensure that VA nurses receive faculty appointments commensurate with their qualifications and responsibilities and that VA faculty participate fully in the academic life of the school. This will include opportunities to enhance core competencies expected in the comprehensive faculty role. The SON's professional development opportunities will be made fully available. Each VA faculty member will be assigned a SON mentor, with a focus on individual

needs assessment, plan to meet identified needs, consultation as issues arise and opportunities for scholarly collaboration.

**(3) Student Enrollment and VA Training Cohort:**

- (a) Faculty funding is linked to required increases in student enrollment in the PMHNP program and residency
- (b) Central funding is contingent on the SON increasing its psychiatric-mental health NP program enrollment by 6 students over the AY 2013-2014 baseline in the first and fifth years of the program and by 12 students in the intervening years (see table). A minimum of 4 and a maximum of 6 PMHNP residents will be appointed each year. Failure to reach these targets will result in proportionate reductions in funding.

	AY 14-15	AY 15-16	AY 16-17	AY 17-18	AY 18-19
VA Faculty FTEE	1	2	2	2	1
SON Faculty FTEE	2	3	3	3	2
Total Faculty FTEE	3	5	5	5	3
Program Directors (0.5 each at VA and SON)	1	1	1	1	1
PMHNP Student Enrollment Increase (over AY 13/14 baseline)	6	12	12	12	6
NP Trainee Stipends	6	6	6	6	6
PMHNP Residents	4-6	4-6	4-6	4-6	4-6

- (c) Each annual cohort of VANAP-GE PMHNP students is expected to receive all of their clinical education in new or enhanced programs at the VA facility.
- (d) VA facilities are encouraged to apply to OAA for NP clinical trainee positions that will provide stipends for NP students in the PMHNP VANAP-GE program.
- (e) For evaluation and reporting purposes, VANAP-GE PMHNP students must be tracked as a discrete cohort for the duration of their nurse practitioner program and for five years following graduation.
- (f) Nursing schools are encouraged to allow separating military service members to receive credit or course waivers for education received in military settings.

**(4) Innovations in Nursing Education and Practice:** Nursing education and clinical practice innovations are expected components of the partnership and will be implemented collaboratively.

Development of a PMHNP residency is required for this initiative. The SON and VA VANAP-GE faculty will lead residency curriculum development and participate in the development of proposed residency program accreditation standards.

Additional innovations might include:

- (a) New settings for mental health clinical experiences, especially settings that promote military cultural competence and evidence-based care.
  - (b) Student experiences that demonstrate continuity of care across clinical settings.
  - (c) Enhancing Veteran-centric mental health education throughout the didactic curriculum and by developing and using standardized patients, case studies and/or simulation for Veteran-centric experiential learning activities.
  - (d) Interprofessional collaborative learning opportunities.
  - (e) Practice initiatives aligned with VHA and facility mental health objectives or identified facility needs.
  - (f) Quality of care, patient safety and performance improvement initiatives.
  - (g) New models of clinical education, such as development of VA VANAP-GE faculty as educators and SON VANAP-GE faculty in PMHNP practice roles within the VA.
  - (h) Development of continuum of recruitment and retention initiatives. Examples include the alignment of the OAA NP clinical trainee program and PMHNP residency programs for hiring new VANAP-GE PMHNP graduates and/or residents.
  - (i) Leveraging academic relationships through successful application for other OAA funded nursing initiatives such as the Post-Baccalaureate Nurse Residency, and/or Psychiatric-Mental Health Nurse Practitioner Residency.
- (5) Recruitment and Retention of VA Nurses:** The national VANAP-GE mental health NP program is designed to enhance NP recruitment and retention. VA facilities are required to:
- (a) Develop and implement a recruitment and retention plan for VANAP-GE PMHNP graduates and give priority to hiring qualified graduates.
  - (b) Collaborate with the VA nurse recruiter network to facilitate job placement within the VA system for any PMHNP graduate not hired by the participating facility.
  - (c) Consider VANAP-GE PMHNP students for participation in the VA Office of Academic Affiliation clinical trainee stipend support programs.
  - (d) Consider graduates who participated in the PMHNP VANAP-GE for OAA funded PMHNP residency programs.

## 5. PARTNERSHIP POLICIES

- a. Appointment and Compensation of SON Faculty:** SON faculty will either be appointed to VA part-time and paid directly by VA or remain wholly on the school's payroll with the school reimbursed for salary and benefits through an IPA agreement. Other potential forms of faculty reimbursement must be approved in advance by the VANAP National Program Director. Development of PMHNP clinical practice

opportunities for SON faculty within the VA is an expectation of the VANAP-GE program.

**(1) SON Faculty Appointed to and Paid by the VA:** SON faculty appointed to VA part-time will receive salary and benefits based on VA national qualification standards and local VA facility salary scales prorated by FTEE designation. VANAP-GE faculty must meet all requirements for appointment to VA, including U.S. citizenship. Using this payment option, SON faculty:

- (a) Will be paid directly by VA. Funds will not be paid to the school for this purpose. Hiring SON psychiatric-mental health NP faculty for part-time VA PMHNP practice is strongly encouraged.
- (b) May become part-time VA employees and continue as part-time school employees. VA funding may not be used to supplement a full-time salary from the school or to increase individually determined SON salaries. However, it is recognized that differences in VA and SON salary rates may lead to changes in total remuneration.
- (c) Will be eligible for prorated VA benefits such as annual and sick leave and participation in the Federal Employees Health Benefits Program, Federal Employees Retirement System and the Thrift Savings Plan, as determined by Federal regulations for part-time employees.

**(2) SON Faculty Paid through an IPA Agreement between the VA Facility and the SON:** The school will be reimbursed by the VA for services provided by designated faculty while at VA facilities or providing services for VA. Reimbursement will be for the usual salary and fringe benefits as reported by the SON and VA program directors. Using this payment option, SON faculty:

- (a) Will be processed for appointment at the VA facility according to the policies and procedures for “without-compensation” employees.
- (b) Will not receive additional salary based on their assignment to the VANAP-GE program.
- (c) Will receive benefits according to SON policies.
- (d) Are not entitled to VA employee benefits other than those provided to “without-compensation” employees.
- (e) Are required to maintain appropriate registration, licensure, and certification and must provide this documentation to the VA facility upon request.

**b. Appointment of VA Nurses as SON Faculty:** VA nurses will be appointed as nursing school faculty in accordance with the usual practices of the school. It may be necessary for an individual to obtain a license to practice in the state where the school is located.

**c. Annual Reporting:** A standardized, web-based annual report will be used to monitor site compliance with program requirements and detail major accomplishments of the partnership.

**d. Site Visits:** Site visits will be conducted at the discretion of the VANAP National Program Director. They will be consultative in nature and designed to facilitate success

as well as to evaluate adherence to overall VANAP-GE PMHNP program objectives and the predetermined objectives of the specific partnership proposal.

- e. **Early Termination:** Program directors are expected to communicate frequently and freely with local leadership about any issues that may impede partnership success. Program directors and local leadership are strongly encouraged to seek early assistance from the VANAP National Program Director as well. It is the joint responsibility of the VA facility VANAP-GE program director and SON dean/director to notify the VANAP National Program Director of significant unresolved issues. If informal consultation fails to resolve the problem(s), the partnership will be notified in writing by the VANAP National Program Director that a corrective action plan is required. If corrective efforts are not fully successful within a stipulated period, participation in the program will be terminated.
- f. **Research:** VANAP-GE is an educational initiative, and evaluation activities are intended to support ongoing program improvement. Such activities are normally exempted from human subject research oversight requirements, but only the Institutional Review Board (IRB) has the authority to make that determination. We anticipate that the initiative will also generate ideas and opportunities for publication of observational data and hypothesis-driven research. Interested investigators are encouraged to contact the VANAP National Program Director for further information and to explore opportunities for collaboration. Research projects will be subject to IRB review and must be funded through alternate channels.
- g. **Liability Protection:** When providing services at a VA facility in accordance with this program, SON faculty and students will be protected from personal liability under the *Federal Employees Liability Reform and Tort Compensation Act*, 28 U.S.C. 2679(b)-(d). VA faculty will similarly be protected while at the VA facility or the school.

## 6. PROGRAM EVALUATION

Evaluation of the VANAP-GE PMHNP program will be implemented at both the local partnership level and the national level. Each partnership must develop an evaluation plan to assess education, clinical practice, and program achievements. The annual report will inform the success of these activities as well as any barriers to completion. Performance metrics will also be identified in the plan as applicable. The following list contains examples of potential evaluation activities and is not intended to be either comprehensive or prescriptive.

### a. Education

- (1) How were educational innovations identified and developed? What has been the impact on curriculum content, process and outcomes? What is the likelihood that curriculum changes will be retained?
- (2) Were Veteran-centric topics or courses introduced that enhance military cultural competence, and how were they received by students, faculty and Veterans?
- (3) Identify use of simulation in the VANAP-GE PMHNP program. Report the Veteran-centric simulations developed as well as the inclusion of complex co-morbidities such as PTSD, TBI, military sexual trauma (MST), substance abuse and suicidal ideation.

How is military cultural competence taught and evaluated? What lessons were learned by faculty relative to concept and method of teaching and evaluation?

- (4) What structural changes to the curriculum were tested? Examples might include embedding SON faculty in VA mental health clinics or the creation of VA-based clinical education opportunities in non-traditional settings (e.g. homeless/mental health outreach programs).
- (5) Has student performance on standardized tests, including tests of clinical skills, improved? Identify the baseline scores prior to VANAP-GE PMHNP program and all expected improvements.

**b. Clinical Practice**

- (1) Has the VANAP-GE PMHNP program fostered improvements in clinical practice and patient care? How were clinical practice innovations identified and implemented? What has been the impact on existing clinical care practices? Examples might include quality improvement or evidence-based practice projects (care of veterans with PTSD, traumatic brain injury, military sexual trauma, homeless and mentally ill, etc.) improvements in discharge planning and reductions in hospital admissions or length of stay, or projects that meet MSN and/or DNP program requirements.
- (2) Were improvements in clinical practice and patient care associated with reductions in the cost of care?
- (3) Has the VANAP-GE PMHNP program promoted interprofessional learning opportunities to enhance communication and collaboration among mental healthcare disciplines? How has this impacted patient safety and quality of care?

**c. Program**

- (1) Were students satisfied with the VA clinical learning environment? What were the strengths and weaknesses identified and their suggestions for improvement? How does the VA compare to other clinical training sites used by the SON?
- (2) Were faculty satisfied with their roles and responsibilities in the program? Were they oriented or prepared for these new roles and responsibilities, and was this effective? What were their suggestions for improvement?
- (3) Do faculty view involvement in VANAP-GE as an important career development opportunity? Are faculty planning to seek additional professional development opportunities and advanced degrees?
- (4) What are the VANAP-GE PMHNP faculty retention and turnover rates, and what factors influence these rates?
- (5) What are the students' career plans? How many have been recruited to the VA (locally and nationally) for PMHNP residencies and/or PMHNP positions? What factors determine recruitment and retention?

## 7. REVIEW PROCESS

- a. **Review Committee:** An ad hoc review committee designated by the Chief Academic Affiliations Officer will assess the merits of proposals. Reviewers will have demonstrated expertise and leadership in health professions education and clinical practice.
- b. **Incomplete Proposals:** Incomplete proposals (i.e., those with missing or incomplete elements) will not be considered by the review panel.
- c. **Key Selection Factors:** The determining selection factors will be the level of commitment of VA facility and SON leadership (including willingness to maintain the program following cessation of central funding) and the strength of proposed innovations in nursing education and practice.
- d. **Scoring Criteria:** Proposals will be scored according to the following criteria.

Criteria	Points
Demonstrates commitment and ability of the VA facility and SON leadership to support a culture of excellence in nursing education and practice; implement and maintain the VANAP-GE PMHNP program; and meet all the requirements of the RFP including development and implementation of a PMHNP Residency. Letters of support demonstrate understanding of the purpose of VANAP-GE, Letters of support include authorization to develop SON PMHNP faculty clinical practice at the VA. Letters of support include authorization as appropriate for faculty release time, space and commitment of resources to support sustainability.	10
Demonstrates commitment and ability of the SON to increase enrollment by the required number of students in the psychiatric-mental health NP degree program and residency. In addition, recruits (a) qualified program director(s) and faculty.	10
Governance plan demonstrates understanding of the intent of VANAP-GE PMHNP/residency program and delineates the structural and process elements that support a vibrant management and strategic vision. Communication, conflict management, strategic planning and joint decision making are core elements of the governance plan with clear pathways identified to enable collaborative leadership and practice Role of Dean, Nurse Executive and Program Directors in implementing and evaluation plan is described. Strength of faculty practice program plan.	20
Strength of the professional development plan for VANAP-GE PMHNP VA faculty Strength of plan in meeting core educational competencies needs for faculty as well as enhance professional scholarship and publications. Presence of an individual faculty needs assessment methodology and subsequent custom plan to achieve identified competency.	10
Strength of the recruitment and retention plan for VANAP-GE PMHNP graduates. This plan identifies alignment with current VA recruitment resources, includes methods to actively recruit Veterans and includes a strategy to assure PMHNP residency and PMHNP positions are held for VANAP-GE PMHNP graduates. Development of a plan that demonstrates recruiter outreach to other VA facilities and assures communication of available VA positions within the state and the nation is required.	10

Strength of plan for proposed innovations in nursing education and clinical practice. Development and implementation of the PMHNP residency is described in the plan that includes a development of the residency curriculum, NP competency and proposed accreditation standards development. Innovations should consider curricular revision specific to common Veteran mental health problems and military culture. Practice innovations should enable interprofessional interactions as well as and evidence based initiatives.	20
Strength of interprofessional education plan with emphasis on both curriculum and experiential interprofessional learning opportunities.	10
Strength of the local evaluation plan, its alignment with VANAP-GE PMHNP graduate and post graduate education (residency) core objectives and a commitment to producing annual evaluation reports and participating in national evaluation activities.	10
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>100</b>

## 8. SCHEDULE

- January 27, 2014** Request for proposals distributed to VISNs, VA facilities, schools of nursing and other professional organizations
- February 24, 2014** Letter of intent due to OAA (see instructions in Attachment 1)
- April 2, 2014** Proposals due to OAA by 11:59PM Eastern Time (see instructions in Attachment 2)
- May 7, 2014** Applicants notified of selection/non-selection
- July 1, 2014** Program implementation and funding begins
- October 15, 2015** First annual report due to the Office of Academic Affiliations

## 9. CONTACTS (for further information or questions)

- Mary Dougherty, PhD, MBA, RN, VANAP National Program Director in the Office of Academic Affiliations, at (202) 461-9498 or [mary.dougherty@va.gov](mailto:mary.dougherty@va.gov)
- Johnnie Guttery, MSN, RN, VANAP National Program Manager in the Office of Academic Affiliations, at (202) 461-1482 or [johnnie.guttery@va.gov](mailto:johnnie.guttery@va.gov)
- Karen Ott, DNP, RN, Director for Policy, Education, and Legislation in the Office of Nursing Services, at (202) 461-6966 or [karen.ott@va.gov](mailto:karen.ott@va.gov)
- David Bernett, Office of Academic Affiliations Support Center Specialist, for any technical questions or problems, at (803) 647-5806 or [david.bernett@va.gov](mailto:david.bernett@va.gov)

## ATTACHMENT 1

### LETTER OF INTENT INSTRUCTIONS

1. **Letters of intent are due no later than 11:59 pm Eastern Time on February 24, 2014 and must be sent via email to [VHACOOAA@va.gov](mailto:VHACOOAA@va.gov).** Letters should be addressed to the Chief Academic Affiliations Officer (10A2D).
2. **Letters should be signed by the VA facility director and contain the following information.** (It is understood that some of this information might evolve or change with the development of a full proposal.)
  - a. Statement of intent to submit an application
  - b. Name of VA facility and SON comprising the proposed partnership
  - c. Name, credentials and contact information for the VA and SON points of contact responsible for development of the proposal

## ATTACHMENT 2

### PROPOSAL INSTRUCTIONS

#### 1. FORMAT AND SUBMISSION

- a. Font Size and Margins:** Font size must be 10-point or larger and margins must be one inch on all sides, excluding headers and footers.
- b. Page Limits:**
- (1) The core narrative (section 2e, below) must not exceed 20 pages. The information identifying the VA and SON, the transmittal letter and the abstract are not included in the core narrative page limit.
  - (2) The letters of support and any supplemental materials must not exceed 10 pages.
- c. Submission:** Documents will be submitted at [http://vaww.oaa.med.va.gov/rfp\\_general/default.aspx?PID=16](http://vaww.oaa.med.va.gov/rfp_general/default.aspx?PID=16)
- (1) You must initially register for access by clicking on the REGISTER link at the bottom of the page.
  - (2) After registration, you will be able to login with your created password. After login you will be ready to begin your upload(s).
  - (3) Documents required for upload are the **transmittal letter**, the **table of contents**, the **abstract**, the **core narrative**, the **letters of support and supplemental materials**.
  - (4) Documents can be uploaded as one or more **PDF** files. **Please name your file(s) appropriately. The application will not change your file names.**

#### 2. ORGANIZATION

- a. Identifying Information:** Identifying information will be entered directly into the online database.
- (1) VA Facility
    - (a) Name of facility
    - (b) City and state
    - (c) Director's name and e-mail address
    - (d) Nurse executive's name, title, e-mail address and phone number
    - (e) Proposed program director's name, current position, telephone number, fax number, e-mail address and percent of time assigned to this role
  - (2) School of Nursing
    - (a) Name of college or school of nursing
    - (b) City and state
    - (c) Dean/director's name, title, e-mail address and phone number
    - (d) Proposed program director's name, current position, telephone number, fax number, e-mail address and percent of time assigned to this role
    - (e) Name of university (if applicable)

**b. Transmittal Letter:** The transmittal letter must be signed by the VA facility director and shall include:

- (1) A statement of the VA facility commitment to the program and that a similar commitment has been received from the SON dean/director,
- (2) A description of contributions of the proposed partnership to the care of Veterans and to nursing education and practice,
- (3) An agreement to provide release time for the VA program director and VA faculty,
- (4) An agreement to authorized implementation of a NP faculty practice program in VA Psychiatric-Mental Health with SON,
- (5) An agreement to pay SON faculty as described in the staffing plan in the proposal,
- (6) An agreement to fund travel and registration for the VA program director and selected VA faculty to attend an initial planning meeting and follow-up implementation and evaluation meetings organized by the VANAP National Program Office on an annual basis,
- (7) An agreement, within budgetary limitations, to pay for travel and registration for regional or national conferences at which the local VA program director or VA faculty have been selected to give oral or poster presentations about VANAP-GE activities,
- (8) An agreement to develop a robust recruitment and retention program for VANAP-GE PMHNP graduates,
- (9) An agreement to support the IT needs of the program,
- (10) An agreement to maintain the VANAP-GE partnership after the cessation of central funding.

**c. Abstract:** The Abstract should describe the proposed partnership, must not exceed two pages, and should include:

- (1) A brief history of relationship between VA facility and SON,
- (2) A description of the proposed program, including governance and operations,
- (3) The roles and responsibilities of VA and SON faculty,
- (4) The SON faculty development opportunities for VA faculty,
- (5) The proposed educational and clinical practice innovations,
- (6) A description of evaluation plan.

**d. Table of Contents:** Prepare a table of contents that identifies the major components and starting page numbers of the core narrative (section 2e), letters of support and supplemental materials (section 2f).

**e. Core Narrative:** The core narrative must not exceed 20 single-spaced pages and should be numbered sequentially starting with page number 1. Proposals exceeding the page limitation will not be reviewed. The core narrative should include:

(1) Background Information

(a) VA Facility:

- i. Clinical and education activities
- ii. Nature of the relationship with the SON partner
- iii. Nursing vacancy and turnover rates and ability to backfill positions if current nurses are reassigned as VANAP-GE faculty

- (b) School of Nursing:
  - i. Education programs, faculty, student enrollment, graduations
  - ii. Accreditation status
  - iii. Current clinical training programs at VA facility
  - iv. Current inclusion of VA staff in academic activities such as precepting, teaching and serving on SON committees
  - v. Description of any advanced standing programs for students with military experience
- (2) Proposed Partnership
  - (a) Reasons for applying for the VANAP-GE PMHNP program, including expected outcomes and the transformative potential of the partnership for nursing education and practice.
  - (b) Governance:
    - i. Description of key governance elements, including mechanisms for shared decision making and conflict resolution, plans for regular communication and meetings and how the overall governance structure will enhance the development of a common core faculty
    - ii. Visual depiction of governance structure, such as a standard organizational chart, identifying key reporting relationships
  - (c) VA and SON Program Directors:
    - i. Names, current positions, educational preparation (degree, university, date, specialty) and description of clinical, educational and administrative experience that justify program director role.
    - ii. Percent FTEE devoted to this program (required minimum is 50%)
  - (d) VA and SON Faculty:
    - i. Selection method(s), including required qualifications
    - ii. Roles and responsibilities in the program and anticipated percent of time each faculty member will devote to the program
    - iii. If known, the names, positions, educational preparation (degree, university, date, and specialty) and clinical and educational experience
    - iv. Percent FTEE that each will devote to this program (minimum required is 50%)
    - v. Faculty development plan for newly appointed VA faculty
  - (e) VANAP-GE Student Cohort:
    - i. PMHNP student expansion plan (numbers must justify VA support of SON faculty)
    - ii. Selection method(s) for the VANAP-GE PMHNP students
    - iii. Level and number of students involved in new or enhanced educational opportunities at VA and SON on an annual basis
  - (f) Local Evaluation Plan:
    - i. Plan methodology to determine effective achievement of VANAP-GE PMHNP program and residency objectives

- f. Letters of Support:** Letters of Support must not exceed 10 pages and should continue the page numbering started with the core narrative.
- (1) VISN Director: Describe the importance of the program to the VISN and the Veterans Health Administration. Comment on how the VISN will be involved in governance of the program and the support it will provide. Include a specific commitment to maintain the program beyond the five-year period of central funding and the implementation of faculty practice program with SON.
  - (2) VA Facility Director: Describe the unique contributions the partnership can make to the care of Veterans and how facility leadership will be involved in governance of the program. Include a specific commitment to maintain the program beyond the five-year period of central funding and implementation of faculty practice program with SON.
  - (3) VA Nurse Executive: Describe the anticipated impact of the partnership on the care of Veterans, nursing education and the nursing workforce locally and nationally. Discuss program governance and how VANAP-GE PMHNP students and faculty will be integrated into the specific clinical settings involved in the partnership. Provide assurance that the VA program director and faculty will be released from their usual duties while participating in the program. Include specific commitment to faculty practice with SON.
  - (4) Dean/Director of the School of Nursing: Describe the SON's commitment to the partnership and the anticipated impact of the partnership on the care of Veterans, PMHNP education and the nursing workforce locally and nationally. Discuss how SON leadership will be involved in the governance of the program. Provide assurance that the SON will expand the graduate level PMHNP program to meet the requirements of the RFP and that with the exception of services not provided in the VA, VANAP-GE NP students will receive all of their clinical education in a new or enhanced curriculum at the VA facility. Also provide assurance that the SON program director and faculty will be released from their usual duties while participating in the program, that faculty appointments will be provided to qualified VA nurses participating in the program and that SON professional development programs will be made available to VA faculty. Include a specific commitment to maintain the program beyond the five-year period of central funding and faculty practice with VA.
  - (5) Program Directors at VA Facility and SON: Describe how you will be involved in the governance of the program and your specific roles and responsibilities. Provide assurance that you have been provided release time and resources to assume operational oversight of the program.
  - (6) VA Designated Education Officer: Provide your support for the VANAP-GE PMHNP program and describe how the program will enhance health professional education at the VA facility and nationally.
  - (7) Other letters as desired and within 10 page limit.
  - (8) Supplemental materials as desired and within 10 page limit.

- g. Funding Request:** Funding to support faculty positions in AY 14-15 will be entered onto a funding request spreadsheet.
- (1) VA and SON Program Directors (0.5 FTEE each): Average annual salary and benefits for each program director
  - (2) VA Faculty (total 1 FTEE): Average annual salary and benefits per FTEE
  - (3) SON Faculty (total 2 FTEE): Average annual salary and benefits per FTEE
  - (4) PMHNP Trainee allocations (Total 6 OAA funded NP trainees)
  - (5) NP Residents (Four to six PMHNP residents)