Background
The Veterans Health Administration (VHA) presently conducts the largest health professions education enterprise in the country, with 120,000 trainees in 40 health professions disciplines deriving clinical education in VHA facilities each year. Among these are 40,000 medical residents enrolled in graduate medical training programs, almost exclusively sponsored by academic affiliates, who rotate into 10,000 full-time resident positions funded by the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA). Recent legislation to address access to care for Veterans includes a provision to expand physician resident positions in VHA.

The Veterans Access, Choice, and Accountability Act (VACAA; PL 113-146, signed on August 7, 2014) directs VA to “establish medical residency programs, or ensure that already established medical residency programs have a sufficient number of residency positions, at any medical facility of the Department that the Secretary determines is experiencing a shortage of physicians and is located in a community that is designated as a health professional shortage area” and shall “give priority to residency positions and programs in primary care, mental health, and any other specialty the Secretary determines appropriate.” The legislation states that over the next five years, VA shall “increase the number of graduate medical education residency positions at medical facilities of the Department by up to 1,500 positions.”

Implementation
The VHA Office of Academic Affiliations (OAA) will oversee the design, implementation, and monitoring of the residency position expansion plan. OAA envisions that VHA will collaborate with existing academic partners and enter into new, innovative, and/or non-traditional partnerships to achieve the desired expansion. Priorities will be assigned to applications based upon facility and program characteristics, as summarized below:

**Academic Year 2015-2016:** GME positions may be requested through the Base Allocation Process managed by the Designated Education Officer of each local VA Medical Facility. Applications are due by October 17, 2014 for positions starting July 1, 2015.

**Future years:** GME positions will be requested in response to program announcements, requests for proposals, and various ventures and partnerships between OAA, VA Medical Facilities, and academic programs.

**Further Information**

[http://www.va.gov/oaa/gme_default.asp](http://www.va.gov/oaa/gme_default.asp)

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