

**Department of
Veterans Affairs**

Memorandum

Date: **MAY 21 2015**

From: Interim Under Secretary for Health (10)

Subj: Expanding Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Graduate Medical Education Positions (VAIQ 7595349)

To: Acting Principal Deputy Under Secretary for Health (10A)
Deputy Under Secretary for Health for Policy and Services (10P)
Acting Deputy Under Secretary for Health for Operations and Management (10N)
Network Directors (10N1-10N22)
VHA CO Senior Leaders

1. We are seeking innovative and creative ideas to expand the Graduate Medical Education (GME) programs for physician residents. The Veterans Access, Choice, and Accountability Act (Veterans Choice Act) of 2014 provides VA the opportunity to expand physician residency positions by up to 1,500 positions over 5 years. The law gives priority to the disciplines of primary care and mental health and to sites new to GME, in health professional shortage areas, or with high concentrations of Veterans. Our goal is to establish new or expand GME programs for about 300 new resident positions each year.

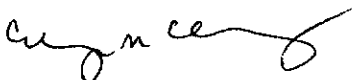
2. The Office of Academic Affiliations (OAA) is coordinating this goal and provides the following two ideas to expand the GME residency program.

- a. The first is to include non-traditional educational entities such as Osteopathic Postgraduate Training Institutions, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' Health Resources and Services Administration-funded Teaching Health Centers, and community-based family medicine residency programs. These new and potential affiliates are community-based, rural in location, and closer to many of our Veteran's homes. GME programs in these areas will increase VA clinical capacity and serve as a pipeline for new health professionals to relocate in these communities.
- b. The second is a GME residency program with a local hospital and medical school. The Orlando VA Medical Center developed GME residency programs with a local Hospital Corporation of America (HCA) facility when HCA launched a new residency program with University of Central Florida's (UCF) new medical school. This new GME residency program allowed VA to accept the full number of UCF residents even though the full capacity was unavailable at the new VA hospital.

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3. You can support this expansion of VA GME residency positions by:
 - a. Proactively seeking out new or expanded residency programs in your local community. For a list of potential education facilities to target, please reach out to Dr. Jennifer Lipkowitz-Eaton at Jennifer.Lipkowitz-Eaton@va.gov.
 - b. Sharing with OAA any challenges that you have identified, related either to identifying a new education facility or taking on new residents. Once identified, we can work together with your facility to find the most appropriate solutions. Please reach out to Dr. Karen Sanders (Karen.Sanders@va.gov).
5. The Veterans Health Administration takes pride in providing the largest education and training enterprise for health professionals in the Nation. As we strive to deliver the best health care for Veterans, these trainees contribute substantially to VA's ability to ensure the highest quality and delivery of care for America's Veterans. OAA has extensive resources to offer.
6. If you have any questions, suggestions, or feedback you'd like to share, please contact Dr. Robert Jesse, Chief of the Office of Academic Affiliations, at (202) 461-9440 or by email at Robert.Jesse@va.gov to brainstorm possibilities.


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