

VA supports the academic education of the nursing workforce in clinical, administrative, and leadership areas. Training for nurses is offered through a broad array of venues varying from locally produced programs to face-to-face network and national conferences. Academic and continuing education opportunities for nurses are provided by television broadcasts over VA's internal television network, through teleconferencing, Web-based training, and purchase of software education. VA's national library network provides hardcover and online access to major nursing and medical journals.

"The best part of working as a VA nurse is the opportunity for constant professional growth. VA is very supportive of ongoing education for nurses."

Donna Hendel, RN, MSed
Staff Nurse
Community-Based Outpatient Clinic



Education Programs

VA offers several initiatives to enhance the educational preparation of its staff, including scholarship and loan repayment programs.

Examples of these programs include:

- **Education Debt Reduction Program (EDRP)**

This program provides funding for education debt reduction for newly employed registered nurses. The EDRP allows VA to provide up to \$44,000 in education loan repayments.

- **Employee Incentive Scholarship Program (EISP)**

This scholarship program funding enables VA employees to obtain entry nursing diplomas/degrees, including LPN, associate degrees, baccalaureate degrees, and advanced degrees. However, it does not provide salary replacement funds.

- **National Nursing Education Initiative (NNEI)**

The NNEI is established under the same authority as the EISP, but is primarily aimed at providing funding for VA nurses to obtain bachelor degrees in nursing (BSNs). This program can also be used to obtain advanced degrees. The VA Nursing Qualification Standards require a BSN degree or Master's to advance to higher grades.

- **VA Nursing Education for Employees Program (VANEPP)**

This is a new initiative that provides salary replacement dollars, full-time equivalents (FTE), and funds to cover the cost of tuition, books, and certain fees to allow employees enrolled in licensed practical (or vocational) nurse (LPN/LVN), associate degree in nursing, and bachelor's degree in nursing programs to pursue their studies on a full-time basis.

- **VA Learning Opportunities Residency (VALOR)**

Initiated in the summer of 1990, this program provides opportunities for outstanding students (junior level in BSN programs) to develop competencies in clinical nursing while at an approved VA health care facility. Opportunities for learning include didactic or classroom experiences, competency-based clinical practice with a qualified registered nurse (RN) preceptor, and participation in nursing-focused clinical conferences. VALOR participants may be appointed above the beginning salary rate when employed as an RN following graduation.

- **Tuition Support Program**

Employees in health care disciplines identified as VA shortage categories are eligible for funding to enroll in job-related courses.

- **Tuition Reimbursement Program**

Tuition reimbursement is available to full-time VA employees who are enrolled in any accredited nursing degree program. Prerequisite courses required for acceptance into a degree program are also funded.

For more information on the programs listed above, contact the Health Care Staff Development & Retention Office (HCS德罗). HCS德罗 provides support to the field in recruitment and retention of VA health care professionals through advertising, outreach, and education programs.

- **Uniformed Services University of Health Sciences (USUHS), Doctoral Program in Nursing Sciences**

A Federal, inter-agency sponsored graduate program with an emphasis on clinical decision making in the Federal health care system, response to operational commitments and changing environments, and evaluation of population health and outcomes. VA can sponsor up to four slots/students per year.

For more information on the USUHS Doctoral program, contact the Office of Nursing Services.