

NURSE ANESTHETIST EDUCATION PROGRAM

1. SUMMARY OF MAJOR CHANGES: Major changes include:

a. Updates the policy owner to the Specialty Care Program Office and adds responsibilities in paragraph 2 for the Assistant Under Secretary for Health for Patient Care Services/Chief Nursing Officer; Chief Officer, Specialty Care Program Office; Veterans Integrated Service Network (VISN) Director; and Executive Director, National Anesthesia Program (NAP).

b. Modifies responsibilities in paragraph 2 for the Deputy Director, NAP; Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Admissions Committee and VA medical facility Director.

c. Clarifies a requirement in paragraph 2 for VA medical facility Directors to contact NAP when unable to place Nurse Anesthetist Education Program graduate(s) sponsored by their VA medical facility as a Certified Registered Nurse Anesthetist (CRNA) at their facility.

d. Updates the name of the Army facility where Nurse Anesthetist Education Program participants complete Phase 1 training to U.S. Army Graduate Program in Anesthesia Nursing (USAGPAN) at the U.S. Army Medical Center of Excellence.

2. RELATED ISSUES: VHA Directive 1426.01(2), Employee Incentive Scholarship Program, dated September 16, 2019.

3. POLICY OWNER: The national Specialty Care Program Office (11SPEC) is responsible for the content of this directive. Questions may be addressed to NAP at VHA11SPEC2ane@va.gov.

4. RESCISSIONS: VHA Directive 1183, Nurse Anesthetist Education Program, dated May 9, 2017, is rescinded.

5. RECERTIFICATION: This Veterans Health Administration (VHA) directive is scheduled for recertification on or before the last working day of April 2028. This VHA directive will continue to serve as national VHA policy until it is recertified or rescinded.

6. IMPLEMENTATION SCHEDULE: This directive is effective upon publication.

April 7, 2023

VHA DIRECTIVE 1183

**BY THE DIRECTION OF THE UNDER
SECRETARY FOR HEALTH:**

/s/ Erica M. Scavella, M.D., FACP, FACHE
Assistant Under Secretary for Health
for Clinical Services/CMO

NOTE: All references herein to VA and VHA documents incorporate by reference subsequent VA and VHA documents on the same or similar subject matter.

DISTRIBUTION: Emailed to the VHA Publications Distribution List on April 10, 2023.

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NURSE ANESTHETIST EDUCATION PROGRAM

1. POLICY

It is Veterans Health Administration (VHA) policy that the Nurse Anesthetist Education Program provide oversight and educational guidance for collaboration with the U.S. Army Graduate Program in Anesthesia Nursing (USAGPAN) to educate selected Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) critical care nurses to ensure VA medical facilities have Certified Registered Nurse Anesthetists (CRNAs) with specialized training in anesthesia. **AUTHORITY:** 38 U.S.C. §§ 7301(b), 7401, 7671-7675.

2. RESPONSIBILITIES

a. **Under Secretary for Health.** The Under Secretary for Health is responsible for ensuring overall VHA compliance with this directive.

b. **Assistant Under Secretary for Health for Clinical Services.** The Assistant Under Secretary for Health for Clinical Services is responsible for:

(1) Ensuring the Chief Officer, Specialty Care Program Office (SCPO) has sufficient resources to fulfill the requirements of this directive.

(2) Supporting the Chief Officer, SCPO with implementation and oversight of this directive.

c. **Assistant Under Secretary for Health for Operations.** The Assistant Under Secretary for Health for Operations is responsible for:

(1) Communicating the contents of this directive to each of the Veterans Integrated Service Networks (VISNs).

(2) Assisting VISN Directors to resolve implementation and compliance challenges in all VA medical facilities within that VISN.

(3) Providing oversight of VISNs to ensure compliance with this directive and its effectiveness.

d. **Assistant Under Secretary for Health for Patient Care Services/Chief Nursing Officer.** The Assistant Under Secretary for Health for Patient Care Services/Chief Nursing Officer is responsible for:

(1) Collaborating with the Assistant Under Secretary for Health for Clinical Services to ensure Patient Care Services program offices support implementation of this directives.

(2) Advising on nursing workforce, policy, compensation and applicable nursing practice elements as appropriate.

e. **Chief Officer, Specialty Care Program Office.** The Chief Officer, SCPO is responsible for:

(1) Providing oversight for VISN and VA medical facility compliance with this directive and ensuring corrective action is taken when non-compliance is identified.

(2) Coordinating with the Assistant Under Secretary for Health for Operations, VISN Directors and VA medical facility Directors to ensure all necessary action is taken and funding is obtained to ensure the Executive Director, National Anesthesia Program (NAP) has sufficient resources to fulfill the requirements of this directive, including personnel and accounting/budgetary expertise to meet the program's associated fiscal obligations (e.g., facilitating transfer of allocated funding between internal and external stakeholders to accomplish Army tuition payments).

(3) Supporting the Executive Director, NAP with implementation of this directive.

(4) Coordinating with the Executive Director, NAP; VISN Directors and VA medical facility Directors to ensure all necessary action is taken to facilitate placement of successful graduates across VHA.

f. **Executive Director, National Anesthesia Program.** The Executive Director, NAP, as delegated by the Assistant Under Secretary for Health for Clinical Services, is responsible for:

(1) Serving as chair of the VA Admissions Committee, appointing members of the VA Admissions Committee and developing standardized selection criteria.

(2) Overseeing the screening, interview, and selection process for applicants to the Nurse Anesthetist Education Program. Interview modalities can be in person, video teleconference or teleconference, with priority on interview modes that do not cause travel expenses for the applicant.

(3) Negotiating the annual maximum number of candidates with USAGPAN with consideration of the availability of VA funding and projected Phase 2 capacity (see paragraph 3).

g. **Deputy Director, National Anesthesia Program.** The Deputy Director, NAP is the designated VA representative referenced in the memorandum of agreement (MOA) with Army (see paragraph 3.a.). The Deputy Director, NAP is responsible for:

(1) Ensuring the Nurse Anesthetist Education Program opportunity is widely distributed and announced in the VA nursing community.

(2) Serving as a member of the VA Admissions Committee.

(3) Communicating the results of the VHA Nurse Anesthetist Education Program selection process to the USAGPAN Program Director annually.

h. **Veterans Integrated Service Network Director.** The VISN Director is responsible for:

(1) Ensuring that all VA medical facilities within the VISN comply with this directive and informing leadership and taking appropriate corrective action when barriers to compliance are identified.

(2) Coordinating with the VA medical facility Directors and engaging the Deputy Director, NAP as needed to ensure all necessary action is taken to facilitate placement of successful graduates across VHA.

i. **VA Medical Facility Director.** The VA medical facility Director is responsible for:

(1) Ensuring overall VA medical facility compliance with this directive and appropriate corrective action is taken if non-compliance is identified.

(2) Recommending critical care nurses to participate in the Nurse Anesthetist Education Program.

(3) Appointing or assigning the Employee Incentive Scholarship Program (EISP) facility-sponsored participant(s) who have completed their academic program and who meet all applicable licensing and qualification requirements to a position as a VA medical facility CRNA. If a sponsoring facility does not have a CRNA position within 60 days prior to the sponsored individual's graduation, notifying the Deputy Director, NAP to ensure all necessary action is taken to facilitate placement of successful graduates across VHA.

(4) Ensuring that the service obligation period for the EISP facility-sponsored participant(s) is within the timeframe prescribed in VHA Directive 1426.01(2), Employee Incentive Scholarship Program, dated September 16, 2019.

3. USAGPAN COLLABORATION AND SCHOLARSHIP FUNDING

a. VA medical facility CRNAs are an important part of the surgical anesthesia team providing perioperative health care to Veterans. A continuing supply of well-trained VA medical facility CRNAs is critical to VHA's ability to complete its mission. To help address this need, VHA developed a MOA with the Department of the Army to educate future VA medical facility CRNAs via USAGPAN at the U.S. Army Medical Center of Excellence through a set-aside of positions for VA critical care nurses. Pending available funds, VA funds the tuition and other authorized education expenses using EISP. **NOTE:** For additional information about education expenses and service commitment, see VHA Directive 1426.01(2). Phase 1 of USAGPAN is at Joint Base San Antonio, Fort Sam Houston, and lasts 12 months. Phase 2 of the program is primarily clinical and is conducted through a VA or USAGPAN-affiliated medical facility.

b. VA critical care nurse applicants must meet all USAGPAN and affiliate degree-granting institution criteria and will be evidenced by referral for consideration to the VA Admissions Committee by Army.

c. Any in-person interviews required by either USAGPAN or affiliate degree-granting institution must be done at the expense of the applicant, not VA.

d. In accordance with the MOA with Army, VA and Army will negotiate the number of VA student positions annually, subject to the availability of EISP and Phase 2 clinical resources. A copy of the MOA may be obtained by request to NAP at vhanas@va.gov.

e. Beyond EISP funding, all other expenses associated with the VA employee participating in the Nurse Anesthetist Education Program are the personal expenses of the participant. To participate in EISP, participants must comply with program requirements specified in VHA Directive 1426.01(2). Employees selected for participation must sign the EISP Mobility Agreement, VA Form 10-10154, located at <https://vaww.va.gov/vaforms/>. **NOTE:** *This is an internal VA website that is not available to the public.*

f. Failure to meet Army, USAGPAN or affiliate degree-granting institution academic standards can result in dismissal from the Nurse Anesthetist Education Program. Dismissal for academic or disciplinary failure results in monetary penalties as specified by 38 U.S.C. § 7675.

4. TRAINING

There are no formal training requirements associated with this directive.

5. RECORDS MANAGEMENT

All records regardless of format (e.g., paper, electronic, electronic systems) created by this directive must be managed as required by the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) approved records schedules found in VHA Records Control Schedule 10-1. Questions regarding any aspect of records management should be addressed to the appropriate Records Officer.

6. REFERENCES

a. 38 U.S.C. §§ 7301(b), 7401 and 7671-7675.

b. VHA Directive 1426.01(2), Employee Incentive Scholarship Program (EISP), dated September 16, 2019.

c. VA Form 10-10154, Employee Incentive Scholarship Program – Mobility Agreement.

d. Memorandum of Agreement between the U.S. Army Medical Department Center and School and the Department of Veterans Affairs-2009. Subject: U.S. Army

April 7, 2023

VHA DIRECTIVE 1183

Graduate Program in Anesthesia Nursing, Joint Base San Antonio, Fort Sam Houston
Texas.