



Healthcare Retention and Recruitment Office

VHA Employee Scholarship Program Impact on Recruitment & Retention

Mary Raymer PhD, RN, CNAA
April 2008



The
Best
Care



The
Best
Careers

Overview

Health Professionals Educational Assistance Program

Career Development Interventions

The Best Care logo, featuring the words "The Best Care" in a stylized font within a circular graphic.

Health Professionals Educational Assistance Program

The Best Careers logo, featuring the words "The Best Careers" in a stylized font within a circular graphic.

- Authorized by Public Law 105-368, The Veterans Programs Enhancement Act of 1998 (Amended in 2001, 2003 and 2004).
- Reference: USC Title 38 Part V Chapter 76

The Best Care logo, featuring the words "The Best Care" in a stylized font inside a circular graphic.The Best Careers logo, featuring the words "The Best Careers" in a stylized font inside a circular graphic.

Health Professionals Educational Assistance Program

- Employee Incentive Scholarship Program (EISP)
 - National Nursing Education Initiative
 - VA Nursing Education for Employees Program
- Education Debt Reduction Program (EDRP)

The Best Care logo, featuring the words "The Best Care" in a white, sans-serif font inside an orange circle.The Best Careers logo, featuring the words "The Best Careers" in an orange, sans-serif font inside a white circle.

Employee Incentive Scholarship Program

- Key Points:

Eligible Employees: VA employees with 1 yr continuous service accepted for enrollment in approved academic programs required for Title 38 and Hybrid Title 38 Occupations. May be full or part time

Participants determined by local medical center director as indicated by workforce planning needs including difficult to recruit and retain occupations

Employee Incentive Scholarship Program (Continued)

- Key Points:

Funding Provides: Funds for tuition, fees, books up to maximum allowed per credit hour for 90 hours undergraduate and 54 graduate hours. Maximum allowed increases each yr according to federal pay raise. FY08 = \$398.88/hr Undergrad; \$664.80 grad; Total = \$35,899.60. May provide salary replacement assistance.

Participants must complete program in 6 years

Employee Incentive Scholarship Program (Continued)

- Key Points:

Service Obligation: Minimum of 1 year, maximum of 3 yrs after completion of program

Participant liability: If withdraws from program prior to program completion liable for amount received; if does not complete service obligation after graduating owes triple amount received plus cumulative interest.

National Nursing Education Initiative

VHA Handbook 1020.1

- Established specifically in response to the revised nurse qualification standard in 1999 which required a BSN for advancement beyond entry level (Nurse Grade I)
- Key Points:
 - Limited to RNs in 0610 Series only
 - Principles of EISP apply

The Best Care logo, featuring the text "The Best Care" in a stylized font within a circular graphic.The Best Careers logo, featuring the text "The Best Careers" in a stylized font within a circular graphic.

VA Nursing (National) Education for Employees Program (VANEETP)

- Established in 2004 specifically in response to the escalating nurse shortage. Goal to provide newly licensed RNs and LPNs
- Beginning in 2006 started to include other first licensure occupations

VANEEP con't

- Key Points:
 - Initially limited to LPNs pursuing RN or other employees pursuing first time licensure as LPN or RN; now will accept applications for other (qualifying) occupations
 - Principles of EISP apply
 - Provides facilities with salary replacement funds
 - Employee must complete in 1 yr (LPN or other vocational ed) or 2 yrs (RN or other degree ed)



Department of Defense (DOD)/Veterans Health Administration (VHA)

Nurse Anesthesia Collaborative Training Program



- **DOD authorized VHA to use a portion of their enrollments in the U.S. Army Nurse Anesthesia Training Program. Students attend didactic (Phase I) at Fort Sam Houston, TX. Phase II and III (Clinical) are completed at Augusta, GA for VHA students.**
- **Eligible employees – registered nurses with critical care experience. Must meet all EISP defined criteria**
- **Funding – education funding and 50% salary replacement assistance. Sponsoring facility funds remaining 50% salary.**
- **Currently 14 participants with 6 graduates**
- **Facilities: New York, Tampa, San Diego, Houston, Augusta, Birmingham, San Francisco, Seattle, Temple, Albuquerque, Charleston, Kansas City**

EISP Program Summary

Includes EISP, NNEI, VANEET

Data as of Sept 30, 2007

- **Current Obligation** through 2012: \$88,315,696 Million (Includes salary replacement dollars)
- **Average Award:**
 - EISP = \$12,392
 - NNEI = \$12,885
 - VANEET = Ed \$9,686; Sal \$50,904

- **Participants: 7,127 Awards**
 - RNs - 6595
 - Pharmacists – 188
 - LPN – 134
 - Respiratory Therapists - 34
 - Physical Therapist - 55
 - Physician Assistant - 34



EISP Program Summary Outcomes

- **Completions: 3988 Graduates**
- **Currently Enrolled – Not graduated: 2085**
- **Breached Contract: 1054**

BSN Degree – Statistical Analysis

- Statistically significant correlation ($p < 0.05$) between student attrition and :
 - More than 45 credit hours to complete degree
 - Male students
 - Age greater than 55 years
- Statistically significant correlation ($p < 0.05$) between student completion and :
 - Extending completion date

BSN Degree – Statistical Analysis

- No statistically significant correlation between student attrition or completion and:
 - Ethnicity/Race
 - Years of VA employment
 - Full or Part time employment
 - Nurse Role (Staff nurse, nurse manager etc)
 - Nurse Grade

Breach of Contract/ Student Attrition

- EISP : 27%
- NNEI: 13%
- VANEED: 18%

National Norms:
Student Status
5 yrs after
enrollment

	Bach. Degree	Assoc Degree	Still enrolled
4 Yr Public	47%	4%	21%
2 Yr Public	7%	16%	11%

REF: Horn, L., and Berger, R. (2004). College Persistence on the Rise? Changes in 5-Year Degree Completion and Postsecondary Persistence Rates Between 1994 and 2000 (NCES 2005–156). U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics. Washington, DC:

EDRP Summary

- Total obligation through 2012:
\$93,183,576
- Current capitated amount each award:
\$38,000
- Total # Awards: 5456
- Average amount each award: \$17,079

EDRP Summary Outcomes

- Awards to:
 - RN: 2611
 - Pharmacists: 836
 - Physician: 698
 - LPN: 275
 - Physical Therapist: 230
 - Physician Assistant: 202
 - Occupational Therapist: 102

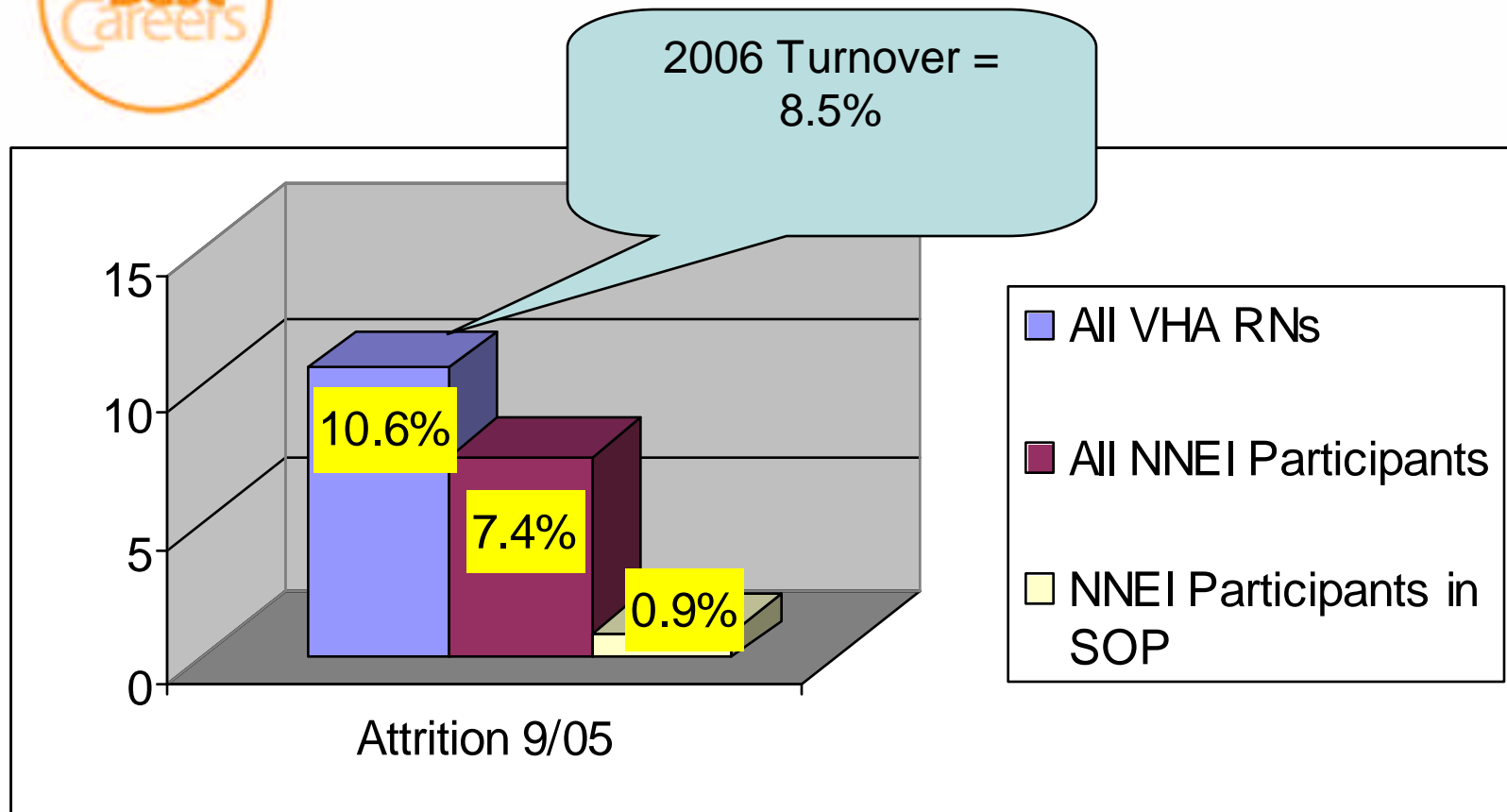
EDRP Communication

- Monthly conference calls
- VISN and Medical Center EDRP Coordinators
- HRRO Toolkit
- National Training for VISN Coordinators
- Each VISN is to establish a plan for use of this Recruitment/Retention Incentive
- Direction from VA Central Office

Does EDRP Promote Employee Retention?

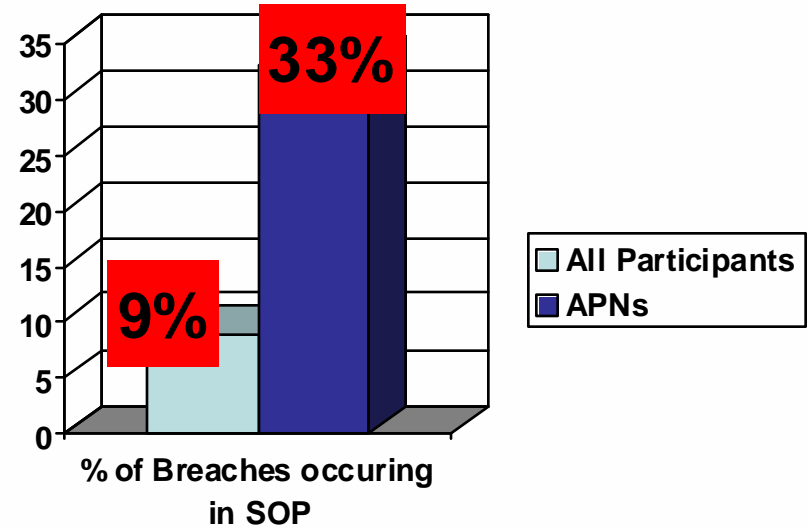
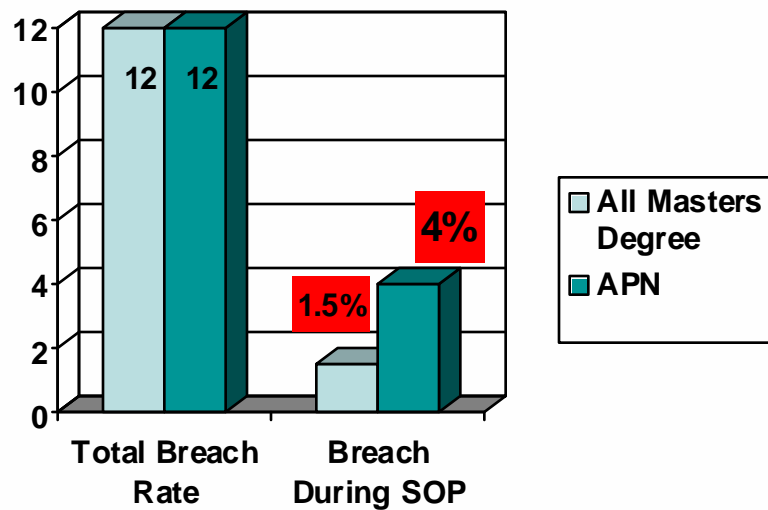
Occupation	Retained in Program
RNs	77 %
Pharmacist	80 %
Physician	75 %
LPN	71 %
Physical Therapist	72 %

Does NNEI Promote RN Retention?

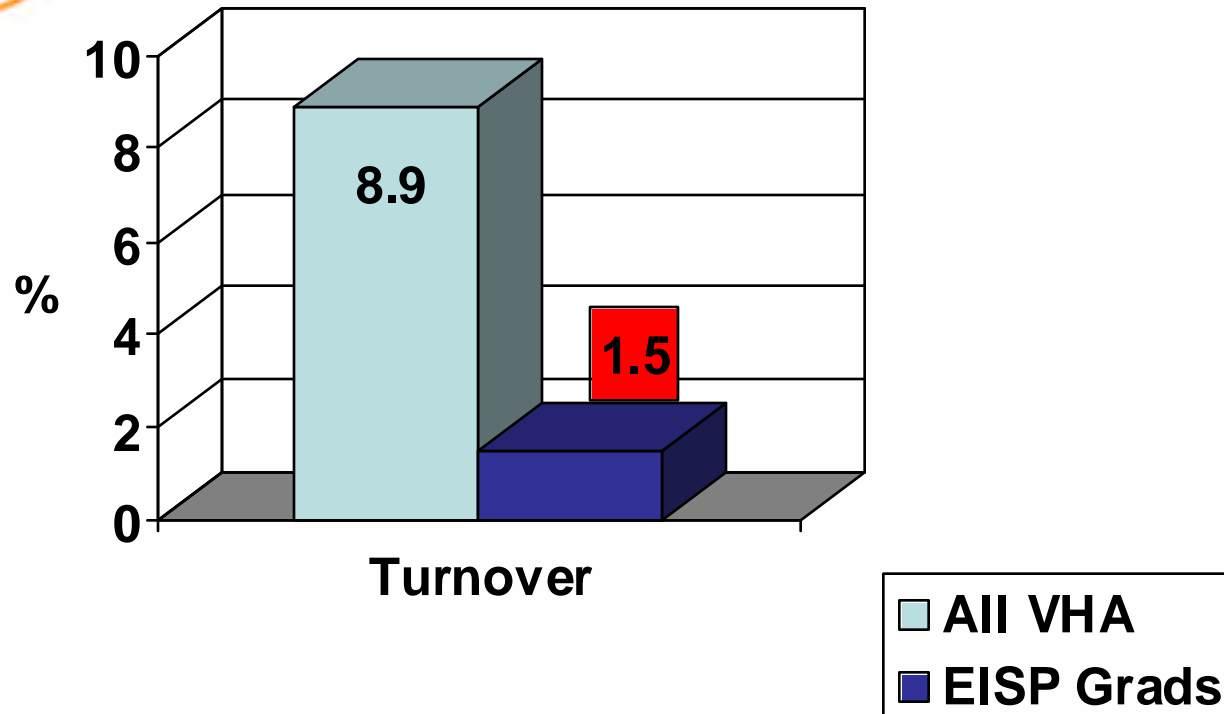


Exception to NNEI and Retention

- Advanced Practice Nurses



Does EISP Promote Retention?



Conclusions

EISP is a cost effective recruitment and retention intervention for VHA nursing workforce and succession planning as evidenced by:

- **Average award of \$12,000 or less**
- **Participant employee attrition considerably lower than other VHA and nursing employees**
- **Student attrition is substantially lower than national norm**
- **Monitoring and collection of student owed liability is effective**
- **Increasing level of VHA nurse education preparation in addition to preparing newly licensed personnel**

Recommendations

- Implement employee academic readiness program to include assessment of math, writing, reading and critical thinking skills with interventional component. **In Process of Implementation**
- Implement web-based academic mentoring program **In Planning Stages**
- Provide data based information to potential students for academic decision making: - i.e. regarding credit hour requirements, potential work life remaining. **Done**

The Best Care logo, featuring the words "The Best Care" in white text inside an orange circle.

The Best Care

The Best Careers logo, featuring the words "The Best Careers" in orange text inside a white circle.

The Best Careers

Do I Have Time for School ?

Or

How Do I Make Time to be
Successful in School?

Adult Learner – Time Assessment

- I. How much time does school take?
- a. Educators have found that on average it takes 2-3 hours per credit hour per week for studying/preparation time plus actual time in class. Each hour of credit equals 1 hour of “seat time” per week attending lecture. Thus a 3 credit hour class would take 9 hours of study time plus 3 hours in class time for a total of 12 hours committed to a 3 credit hour class. This applies to both classroom and web-based programs although web-based may require more time.
- b. The following provides a guide for time commitment required

# of Credit Hours	Time Commitment Required per Week
3	12
6	24
9	36
12	48

Adult Learner – Time Assessment



	SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THUR	FRI	SAT	TOTAL
Instructions: Enter time in minutes								
DATE								
Housework								0
Laundry: Include folding and putting away								0
Shopping; Food - all other								0
Errands: dry cleaners, library books,								
Financial management of home:i.e. Bill paying								0
Meal preparation, eating and cleanup								0
Caregiving: bathing, dressing,feeding								0
Assisting with homework								0



Adult Learner – Time Assessment

Assistive caregiving: Ex parent care support								0
Recreation - include watching TV, movies, hobbies								0
Volunteer activity - Include preparation and actual events for self and children. Ex: Girl scouts, church, social and civic org.								0
Professional org activity								0
Regular scheduled work								0
Preparing for, commuting to and from work								0
Overtime Work								0
Sleeping								0
Exercise								
Personal Care (Self): bathing, hair cuts etc								0
Other								0

Adult Learner – Time Assessment

Other								0
TOTAL	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total Hours Spent in Life Activity for 1 week:	0							
Total Hours Available in 1 Week	168							
Hours Not Committed for Life Activity	168							

Adult Learner – Time Assessment

Description of this VA Employee: 40 Yr Old female nurse who works full time in 8 (8.5 hr) hour tours. She requires 90 min each work day for travel to/from and prep for work. Employee is married with two middle-school aged children. She volunteers at her church playing the piano for Sat eve church service and attending choir practice on Tues eve. She also practices at home for 30 minutes on Wed and Fri. She is her daughters Girl Scout Troup leader with a meeting every Monday for which she spends an additional hour preparing (Thurs). Her son participates in soccer and has a game every Friday during the fall and spring months which she attends; she transports him to practice on Tues and Thurs. She participates in her professional nurses organization attending a monthly meeting on Thurs. Ms Nurse attends a 1 hour exercise class three times a week (plus 30 min travel/prep time). Ms Nurse visits her grandmother (for whom she is the designated durable power of attorney for healthcare) weekly. She resides in a nursing home 30 miles from Ms Nurse' home. Ms Nurse watches some TV and reads (approx 1 hour per day). Ms Nurse is interested in enrolling in a BSN completion program. She has consulted with the school of her choice and found she needs 49 credits to graduate with a BSN.

Adult Learner – Time Assessment

- How much time do I have available?
- The following is an example based on the case study of Ms Nurse and the Life Activity journal she completed

# of hours possible in week	168
Hours spent in life activity per week	158
TOTAL hours not committed	10

Adult Learner – Time Assessment

Thus in this example the maximum number of credits that Ms Nurse could take would be 3 credits or one 3 credit hour course. Even the one course would require some adjustment to provide the needed 12 credit hours as she only has 10 hours per week available.

Utility of Degree

- Questions to ask:
 - How much time will it take to complete the degree?
 - Do I have enough remaining work time to utilize the degree I am seeking?
 - Am I seeking the degree primarily for career advancement – if so, what is the timeline?

Recommendations

- Provide potential dissertation topics regarding academic program outcomes to current doctorate participants **Done**
- Expand current nursing focused approaches to other title 38 and hybrid occupations

Dissertation/Thesis Topics

Scholarship programs:

1. Exploring retention in VHA of scholarship participants – by occupation or in total – (Replication of Rambur study)
2. Comparing and contrasting participation and outcomes by VISN in the programs – possibly in relation to workforce succession plans
3. Exploring causative factors in breaching contracts (student attrition) – administration of a participant survey?
4. Exploring factors which support student persistence in completing degree
5. Identifying characteristics of facilities that have the best and the least successful (based on outcome criteria) programs
6. Identifying impact of scholarship programs on recruitment strategies
7. Analysis of specific interest group in the scholarship participants. For example: age, race, gender diversity; type of program (traditional or nontraditional); geographical location of participants (urban – rural; East - West)
8. Identification of school retention rates and impact on scholarship program
9. Analyze relationship of changing education levels to morbidity/mortality in VHA (Replication of Aiken, Estabrooks studies)

Dissertation/Thesis Topics

Student employment experience programs (SEEP, SCEP, VALOR)

- 1. Exploring hire rates for students and impacting factors**
- 2. Examining VA-Academic Institution relationships that promote student recruitment**
- 3. Exploring student perceptions of the programs**
- 4. Relationship of use of programs to VISN workforce succession plan**

Education Debt Reduction Program

- 1. Longitudinal study of long term (greater than 5 years) retention of EDRP participants**
- 2. Comparing and contrasting participation and outcomes by VISN in the programs – possibly in relation to workforce succession plans**
- 3. Develop a business case model for use of EDRP to fill vacancies**

Opportunities for Workforce Development

- Implement VANEED for additional occupations such as:
 - Nurse Anesthetists
 - Medical Records Technician
 - Radiology Tech
 - Any other qualified occupation for which VHA is having a significant recruitment challenge

10th Yr Celebration

May 22, 1998 Legislation
Introduced in the Senate
Veterans Affairs
Committee

May 19, 2008 10 Yr
Celebration honoring the
scholars and the facility
coordinators



VA Scholar Celebration

VA Facility (VISN)	Employee	Facility Coordinator	Degree Achieved (Date)	VA Position	School
Pittsburgh (4)	Valetta, Lisa	Helen Dowd	Bachelor of Science in Nursing (5/07)	Registered Nurse	Waynesburg College
NoFl/SoGa (8)	Christy Tonetti	Donna Moore	Associate Degree in Nursing Registered Nurse (5/07)	Health tech to Registered Nurse	Lake City Community College
Central Texas(17)	Gammons, Cassandra	Paula Quindlen	Licensed Practical Nurse(7/07)	Claims assistant to Licensed Practical Nurse	Temple College
Durham (6)	Rogers, Matthew	Gwen Waddell-Shultz	Master of Science in Nursing, Certified Registered Nurse Anesthetist(5/07)	Registered Nurse to Nurse Anesthetist	Duke University
Battle Creek (11)	Patrick, Elizabeth	Theresa Vlas	Doctor of Pharmacy (5/07)	Pharmacist	University of Florida
Clarksburg (4)	Given, Robert	Donna Tassos	Master of Physician Assistant Studies(5/07)	Physician Assistant	University of Nebraska

The
Best
Care

The
Best
Careers

VHA Employee Scholarship Program



**Focused on the
Mission**

April 2008

42

Contact Your Facility

EISP/NNEI Program Coordinator to
Discuss your Career Plans and
how the scholarship program can
assist you in meeting your goal.