

# Veterans - Best Practices for Effective Transitions into the Nursing Profession

Thursday, February 9, 2017  
12:00 pm – 1:00 pm  
Washington, DC 20006

Dr. Mary Jean Schumann  
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# Support for Veterans' Initiatives

- Obama Administration expanded educational opportunities for Veterans to transition
  - Through grant programs
  - Department of Health and Human Services
    - Provide incentives for physician assistant and nursing training programs to enroll veterans,
    - Key elements
      - Provide credit for vet's military experience
      - Provide the support needed to successfully complete nursing education

# Why Now? Why Nursing?

- US nursing (RNs) shortage projected - 260,000 by 2025<sup>1</sup>
- Over the next five years, approximately 1.5 million service members will separate from military<sup>2</sup>

Buerhaus, P.I., Auerbach D.I., @ Staiger D.O. (2009) The recent surge in nurse employment: causes and implications. *Health Affairs* 28(4) 657-688.<sup>1</sup>

Snyder, C., Wick, K., Skillman, S., & Fronger, B. (2016). Pathways for military veterans. *Center for Health Workforce Studies*, University of Washington.<sup>2</sup>

# HRSA Grant Overview

## July 2014-June 2017

- To increase veterans' enrollment, retention, graduation from nursing programs, and successful NCLEX pass rates
- Improving the numbers and quality of the nursing workforce
- Expedites path for military personnel to achieve a nursing (BSN) degree
- 3 cohorts for total of 31 schools

# Aims for GW SON VBSN Program

Aims were to design and incorporate:

- I. Career ladders to transition Veterans into nursing
- II. Faculty development into ABSN and other SON programs to enhance teaching strategies with Veteran students
- III. Methods to assess veterans' clinical knowledge, skills, and abilities, to facilitate awarding academic credit for prior health care training/experience
- IV. Evidence-based mentorship and supportive services into GW's VBSN program to address the unique challenges of Veteran students

# GW's Program

- Accelerated Bachelor of Science in Nursing (ABSN)
- Usual applicants already prepared with Bachelor's degree in another discipline
- Must have 6 prerequisites
- 4 semesters full time on site at VSTC- Ashburn, VA
- 15 month continuous program
- 60 credits - 12 credits are graduate level courses
  - Leadership; Policy; Evidenced-based practice (research); Health Information Technology

# Veterans at GW ABSN program

- No Degree Required
  - 60 Credit Minimum (including prerequisites)
- Both medical and non-medical veterans are eligible to apply
- Applications open 12 months in advance with heavy advising prior to admission
- Applicants reviewed on a rolling basis
- There is no cookie-cutter VBSN applicant/profile

# Veteran Characteristics

- Mature
  - Situational awareness
  - Problem solvers
  - Goal directed
- Leadership
- Driven by hands-on performance, not test grades
  - May not seek understanding around test score
- Follow directions (non-argumentative)
- Conditioned to endure strenuous work environments, i.e. personal protective equipment



# Faculty Role

- “Baggage to luggage in 15 months”
- Participate in faculty development to better understand needs of Veteran students
- Some faculty advise VBSN students
- Guide and direct academic and clinical progress
- Meet students where they enter – writing skills, study skills, math skills

# Strengths of Team Supporting Vets

- Preadmissions
  - Dedicated admissions officer
  - Preadmission webinars
  - Sponsors
  - American Council on Education (ACE)
    - Approved college credit for military experience and training
    - Prerequisites offered via GW online for reduced fees
- VBSN ongoing support
  - Dedicated student services on VSTC campus
  - VALOR (Office of Military and Veteran Student Services)

# Academic Support

- Academic (integrated with ABSN cohort throughout program)
- Cohort cohesion
  - Dedicated simulation lab group
  - Tutoring (grant supported)
    - Writing Lab resources brought from Main campus
    - Math tutoring
- Clinical options integrated
  - Priority registration for clinical groups
  - VA or DOD facilities in addition to civilian hospitals and agencies
- Faculty and instructors
  - Veterans in Nurse Corps/Guards/Reservists

# Financial and Transitional Support

- Transitional support
  - Mentoring and Counseling Experts
    - Expert in Veteran Affairs - Vietnam Veteran
    - Psychiatric nursing faculty with military background
- Financial Support and advising
  - GW history in support of Veterans
  - GW is a Yellow Ribbon University
  - Student services (staffed by experts in veteran services)
  - Academic partnerships with local Health systems for Scholarships/ tuition assistance

# By the numbers

	VBSN Spring 2015	VBSN Fall 2015	VBSN Spring 2016	VBSN Fall 2016	VBSN Spring 2017	VBSN Fall 2017
Applied	9	50	38	50	35	Ongoing
Admitted	3	24	26	26	21	
Enrolled	3	14	18	16	12	
Graduated	3	14	(N/A)	(N/A)	(N/A)	

# Our Students

Cohort #	Number of students	No Degree	Associates Degree	Bachelors Degree	Masters Degree
9	3	0	0	3	0
10	14	5	3	5	1
11	17	6	4	6	1
12	16	5	4	5	2
13	12	5	2	5	0
Totals	62	21	13	24	4

# Medical Specialty

Cohort #	Medical Designated Speciality	LPN	Non Medical
9	2	0	1
10	6	4	8
11	6	2	11
12	10	1	6
13	4	0	8
Totals	28	7 (counted in 28 medical)	34

# Student Diversity

	2014 Fall	2015 Fall	2016 Fall
Female	92%	91%	83%
Male	8%	9%	17%



# GW Best Practices

- Dedicated admission counselor
- Dedicated Program Director
- Commitment of Senior leadership and team to meeting unique needs of each Veteran
- Commitment of faculty to Veterans' success
- Uniqueness of clinical opportunities
  - Capstone at VA and WNMC
  - Faculty members with military experience

# GW Best Practices

- Dedicated lab groups to support cohort cohesion
- Student services and formal tutoring at VSTC
- VBSN Lounge
- Counseling and Mentorship from Vets/Military faculty
- Veterans increase overall student body diversity
- Exit Survey: average student ratings regarding program satisfaction as 4.7 on a 5 point scale

# “All Hands on Deck”



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# Goals Moving Forward

- HRSA grant in 3<sup>rd</sup> and final year
- 62 students (45 present: seventeen graduated)
- Continued recruitment
- Collaboration with Veterans Affairs system
- Long term sustainability
- Advancing research on best practices
- Key topics addressed to focus groups
  - Building on medical skills and training
  - Faculty development



# Contact Information

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