

1. Shared Governance and Open Communication

In 2007, the Northeast Region VA Nursing Alliance (NERVANA) was founded. NERVANA is an academic-practice partnership between the VA Boston/Bedford Health Care Systems and six schools of nursing: Boston College, Northeastern University, Regis College, Simmons College, University of Massachusetts Boston and University of Massachusetts Lowell. NERVANA's mission, derived from the VA's parent mission, "To employ an innovative educational model to expand and enrich nursing student and faculty, to educate nursing students in the care of veterans, and to expose nursing students to the advanced model of medical informatics, patient safety, quality improvement and integrated systems of care employed by the VA's National Healthcare System. The NERVANA schools are among some of the most prestigious in the nation and located in the heart of a healthcare mecca, none is a component of an academic medical center. This alliance offers unique opportunities both for the schools and the VA Boston/Bedford alike.

NERVANA's success requires a mutually agreed upon vision for sustainability and future growth. During the past ten years NERVANA has provided the stability with the biannual NERVANA Steering committee meetings. NERVANA initiatives have included Veteran Colloquia Educational Series, increased BSN student clinical rotations, and growth of clinical expert staff nurses serving as clinical adjunct faculty. Evidence based practice initiatives have been initiated and sustained in the clinical areas. Through a shared governance model, NERVANA was successful in obtaining CCNE accreditation for the RN Residency program, the first in the Northeast.

2. Supportive Resources and Infrastructure

In accordance with the AACN-AONE Task Force on Academic-Practice Partnerships (2012), the guiding principles of NERVANA are to strengthen nursing practice by enhancing the educational preparation of nursing students and promoting career advancement for clinical nurses within the VA Healthcare System. The goals of NERVANA are to increase recruitment and retention of VA nurses, strengthen faculty infrastructure for nursing education, encourage the entry of veterans into the nursing

profession, and enhance the nursing care of veterans. The academic practice partnership has fostered collaborative relationships based on mutual respect and a shared vision of the future of nursing.

Simmons College has developed a 2 year executive DNP program for Nursing Leadership which includes VA Boston HCS practice leaders, as well as an onsite Simmons College RN-BSN program for VA Staff.

Boston College has partnered with VA Boston Healthcare system in the development of a Psychiatric Mental Health Nurse Practitioner (PMHNP) Residency program. The six academic partners have facilitated assistance with the development of adjunct faculty and preceptors. Since 2007 there has been a 600% increase in BSN prepared students as the VA has increased student experiences for NERVANA partners. The Post Baccalaureate Nurse Residency was developed and is accredited by the CCNE.

National and International Nursing presentations on the work of NERVANA have been presented and NERVANA initiatives have been published in national nursing journals. Invitations from outside groups are now being garnered such as, the Harvard University-Beth Israel Geriatric Fellowship program for participation of VA RN residents in weekly interprofessional clinical reasoning sessions. There is a joint commitment from Academic-Practice partners to fully participate in all activities.