

The Veterans Affairs MISSION Act of 2018,

signed into law on June 6, will strengthen VA's ability to deliver the quality care and timely service Veterans have earned.

The VA health care system will:



Ensure easy and reliable access to care when Veterans need it.



Provide exceptional care to Veterans anytime, anywhere.



Serve as a trusted, caring partner, helping Veterans and their families be healthy and well.



About the Office of Academic Affiliations

Since 1946, the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) has conducted education programs for trainees in over 40 different health professions. This statutory mission is accomplished through coordinated programs and activities in partnership with over 1,800 affiliated U.S. colleges and universities. VA plays a leadership role in educating future healthcare professionals to meet the changing needs of healthcare delivery for Veterans and the nation.

These education initiatives are in partnership with VA's Office of Workforce Management and Consulting. For more information, contact the Office of Academic Affiliations:

- www.va.gov/oaa
- www.vacareers.va.gov/Benefits/EducationSupport
- (202) 461-9490

Veterans Affairs Educational Initiatives

- **Medical and Dental Scholarships**
- **Education Debt Reduction Program**
- **Specialty Education Loan Repayment Program**
- **Veterans Healing Veterans Program**
- **Graduate Medical Education Expansion into Rural Areas**



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Veterans Affairs MISSION Act of 2018 Office of Academic Affiliations Educational Initiatives

Congress enacted five educational initiatives as part of the VA MISSION Act of 2018 to recruit and retain physicians. The VA MISSION Act empowers VA to improve recruitment through scholarships and loan repayments. VA particularly needs professionals:

- **From underrepresented populations.**
- **Who are Veterans.**
- **Willing to practice in underserved and rural areas.**
- **In specialties critically needed by VA.**

These initiatives, authorized by Congress in 2018, are under development.



Medical and Dental Scholarships

- VA's **Health Professionals Scholarship Program** provides scholarships to medical and dental students in exchange for service at VA.
- Includes tuition, fees, books and equipment, and a stipend for 2 to 4 years with an obligation of 18 months of service for each year of support.
- Applicants must agree to specialize in a field applicable to VA and are required to complete training leading to licensure and board eligibility.
- Minimum number of scholarships is 50 annually, or 10% of VA's physician shortage when that number falls below 500.
- Anticipated beginning date of the program is FY 2020.



Education Loan Repayment

- The MISSION Act increased debt relief available through the **Education Debt Reduction Program** to full- or part-time providers from \$24,000 to \$40,000 annually, and a maximum level of support from \$120,000 to \$200,000 over five years. Search "EDRP" in USAJobs.gov for positions offering EDRP.
- Authorizes VA to establish a new **Specialty Education Loan Repayment Program** to recent medical school graduates with at least 2 years remaining in residency in exchange for a service obligation at VA facilities.
 - The commitment for service is one year for each \$40,000 of loan repayment with a minimum obligation of 2 years.
 - Qualified loans must be for educational expenses, with a maximum limit of \$160,000.
 - Applicants must be in a specialty applicable to VA and must agree to complete training leading to licensure and board eligibility.
 - Specialties and locations will be determined by VA based on projected staffing needs.
 - Anticipated beginning date of the program is July 2021.



Veterans Healing Veterans Program

- Creates a pilot program to provide scholarship support to two Veteran medical students at each of the five Teague-Cranston and the four Historically Black College and University medical schools in exchange for a four-year service obligation at a VA facility.
- Scholarships cover tuition, fees, equipment and books, a stipend, and costs for two rotations at a VA facility during the senior year of medical school.
- Recipient must not have separated from the Armed Forces for greater than 10 years, not be simultaneously receiving GI Bill benefits, agree to maintain acceptable academic progress, and complete residency training leading to board eligibility in a specialty that is applicable to VA.
- Participating schools must agree to reserve two seats for the highest-ranking Veteran applicants who meet the acceptance criteria for that school.
- Unused scholarships may be transferrable to the other covered schools.
- Anticipated start date for this program is for the entering class of 2020.



Graduate Medical Education Expansion into Rural Areas

- Authorizes VA to assist in the expansion or creation of graduate medical education programs in certain underserved settings.
- Allows VA to support residents' costs, at covered non-VA facilities.
- Supports startup costs for qualified new graduate medical education residency training programs, such as faculty recruitment, accreditation costs, and curriculum development.
- Covered facilities include those operated by tribal organizations, the Indian Health Service, VA, Federally Qualified Health Centers, Department of Defense, and other qualified centers.
- Uses numerous selection criteria; priority will be given to Indian and tribal organizations and those in other underserved regions.
- Anticipated beginning date of the program is 2024.

For More Information:

- www.va.gov/oa
- www.vacareers.va.gov/Benefits/EducationSupport
- (202) 461-9490