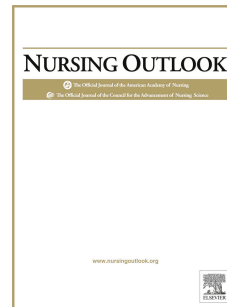


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Transforming Veterans Health Care through Academic-Practice Partnerships

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Abstract

The Veterans Health Affairs Office of Academic Affiliations (OAA) has invested in the creation of academic-practice partnerships to transform the care of Veterans and their families. This article details how a long-standing relationship between the University of Alabama at Birmingham School of Nursing and the Birmingham Veterans Affairs Medical Center grew into such a partnership. The three programs that now exist within the Birmingham Veterans Affairs Nursing Academic Partnership (VANAP) umbrella are described, including an undergraduate VA Nurse Scholars program that has sustained beyond OAA funding, a VANAP Graduate Education program for psychiatric-mental health nurse practitioners (NPs), and a Mental Health NP Residency. Key features of the programs are noted as are outcomes and lessons learned for building mutual goals and a sustainable academic-practice partnership. With the recent passage of the Veterans Choice Program, the importance of educating all nurses about Veterans and Veterans health is stressed.

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