Agency Priority Goal | Action Plan | FY 22 – Q2

Rural Health Workforce

Goal Leader(s):
Dr. Thomas Klobucar, Executive Director, VHA Office of Rural Health
Jessica Bonjorni, VHA Chief, Human Capital Management
Goal Overview

Goal statement
- VA will improve rural healthcare workforce staffing levels which impacts the care VA delivers to rural Veterans including American Indian and Alaska Native Veterans. By September 30, 2023, VA will ensure 90% of rural dwelling Veterans are satisfied with their access to healthcare when and where they need it.

Problem to Be Solved
- Decreased access to rural health care caused by lagging retention of providers
- Decreased access to rural health care as a result of rural provider recruitment shortfalls

What Success Looks Like
- Increased Veteran patient satisfaction with access to rural health care as measured by existing satisfaction surveys
- An increase in provider staffing in rural-based hospitals and clinics as compared to current staffing levels.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Achievement statement</th>
<th>Key indicator(s)</th>
<th>Quantify progress</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>By…</td>
<td>We will…</td>
<td>Name of indicator</td>
<td>Target value</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>09/30/23</td>
<td>Ensure 90% of rural dwelling Veterans are satisfied with their access to healthcare when and where they need it.</td>
<td>% Patient Satisfaction</td>
<td>90%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Goal Team

**Rural Health Initiative Funded Staff**

**Lead:** Thomas Klobucar (Executive Director, VHA Office of Rural Health)

**Rural Health Initiative-Funded Enterprise-Wide Initiatives**

**Lead:** Thomas Klobucar (Executive Director, VHA Office of Rural Health)

**Rural Health Initiative-funded rural Career Development Awards and Rural Quality Scholars grants**

**Lead:** Thomas Klobucar (Executive Director, VHA Office of Rural Health)

**Loans and Scholarships**

Co-Leads:

Jessica Bonjorni (VHA Chief, Human Capital Management)

Karen Sanders, (Senior Adviser, Office of Academic Affiliations)

**VHA Tribal Health Office**

**Lead:** Lisa Pape (Senior Adviser to the Under Secretary for Health)

**Cultural Competency Assessment**

**Lead:** Thomas Klobucar (Executive Director, VHA Office of Rural Health)
Goal Strategies

- VA will increase rural workforce staffing levels to improve rural Veteran satisfaction by:
  - Expanding the number of sites offering Rural Health Initiative-funded rural Career Development Awards and Rural Quality Scholars grants from six to seven.
  - Providing additional health professions scholarships to medical students and additional loan repayments for residents serving rural Veterans.
  - Standing up a new VHA office of Tribal Health with the mission of ensuring equitable access to care for American Indian/Alaska Native Veterans.
  - Completing a needs assessment on the effectiveness of American Indian/Alaska Native (AI/AN) Veteran cultural competency instruction and content available across the enterprise, to include both existing programs and new rural- and Native American-facing programs. We will brief leadership on the results of the assessment and create an action plan to address shortcomings. This impacts the overall goal statement because culturally competent care is a basic human right.
% Rural Veteran Patient Satisfaction

% of rural dwelling Veterans that are satisfied with their access to healthcare when and where they need it.

% of Rural Dwelling Veterans

Target: 90%
Baseline: 85%
Increasing the number of providers and staff, including physicians, nurses, allied health professionals, and support personnel participating in new Office of Rural Health Enterprise-wide Initiatives, by 5%, will result in increased retention of providers and staff.

Target: 30,240
(5% increase)

Baseline: 28,800

FY22Q1 FY22Q2 FY22Q3 FY22Q4 FY23Q1 FY23Q2 FY23Q3 FY23Q4

% Increase in Rural Health Initiative Funded (RHIF) Staff
(Supporting Metric)
Increasing the number of Veteran patients impacted by rural-focused enterprise-wide initiatives (EWI) funded through the Rural Health Initiative Budget (RHIB) results in increased access to care.

- Target: 2 million (10% increase)
- Baseline: 1.8 million
Providing health professions scholarships to medical students and loan repayments for students and residents serving Veterans. The selections will impact the overall goal statement as it will expand the healthcare workforce pipeline in rural settings.
Providing health professions scholarships to medical students and loan repayments for students and residents serving Veterans. The selections will impact the overall goal statement as it will expand the healthcare workforce pipeline in rural settings.
The Specialty Education Loan Repayment Program (SELRP), launched in FY 2021, is a loan repayment program offered to physician residents.
- The Health Professional Scholarship Program (HPSP) offers scholarships to applicants pursuing degrees in health care disciplines for which recruitment and retention of qualified personnel are difficult.
- In FY 2021, the HPSP expanded to include medical students.
- This milestone describes efforts to use scholarships and loan repayment to develop a pipeline of talent to keep up with the demand in rural healthcare settings.

### HPSP/SELRP Key milestones

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key Milestone</th>
<th>Milestone Due Date</th>
<th>Milestone Scholarships Awarded</th>
<th>Change from last quarter</th>
<th>Owner</th>
<th>Comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Marketing /Outreach Efforts to identify potential applicants for SELRP; First round of HPSP Selections.</td>
<td>Q1 FY2022</td>
<td>63</td>
<td></td>
<td>WMC</td>
<td>Complete</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Additional HPSP scholarship selections to meet or exceed milestone.</td>
<td>Q2 FY2022</td>
<td>213</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>WMC</td>
<td>Complete</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Continue Marketing /Outreach Efforts to identify potential applicants for SELRP; additional HPSP scholarship selections to meet or exceed milestone.</td>
<td>Q3 FY2022</td>
<td>50*</td>
<td></td>
<td>WMC</td>
<td>*On Track</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Review and select SELRP candidates; Select additional HPSP scholarship selections to meet or exceed milestone.</td>
<td>Q4 FY2022</td>
<td>57*</td>
<td></td>
<td>WMC</td>
<td>*On Track</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
- Additional HPSP scholarship selections will be made during Q2
- HPSP is on track to meet or exceed the target
- SELRP continues to review applications and market the program
- AMA Match Day is mid-March where potential residents will apply for the program

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Key Milestone</th>
<th>Milestone Due Date</th>
<th>Milestone Status</th>
<th>Change from last quarter</th>
<th>Owner</th>
<th>Comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Complete needs assessment.</td>
<td>Q4, FY 2023</td>
<td>On Track</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Tribal Health Office (below) is expected to complete a needs assessment on the effectiveness of American Indian/Alaska Native (AI/AN) Veteran cultural competency instruction in FY 2023.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Stand up a new VHA office of Tribal Health with the mission of ensuring equitable access to care for American Indian/Alaska Native Veterans.</td>
<td>Q4, FY 2023</td>
<td>On Track</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Tribal Health Office is approved and determination of workforce structure is underway</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expand # of sites offering Rural Health Initiative-funded rural Career Development Awards and Rural Quality Scholars grants from six to seven.</td>
<td>Q4, FY 2023</td>
<td>On track</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Development of FY 2023 program parameters is underway and VA expects to meet or exceed this goal in 2023.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
During Quarter 1, HPSP received a total of 83 new applications. In Q2, 63 new scholarship awards were offered and accepted for the following clinical occupations:

- Medical students – 34
- Nurses – 11
- Physician Assistants – 5
- Medical Technologists – 13
**Contributing Programs**
Organizations: None
Program Activities: None
President's Management Agenda: None
Regulations: None
Tax Expenditures: None
Policies: None
Other Federal Activities: None

**Stakeholder / Congressional Consultations**
None