

## April 10, 2009 - VA Partners with University for Nurse Training

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The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs has selected the Waynesburg University School of Nursing and the VA Pittsburgh Healthcare System as a site for the VA Nursing Academy's Enhancing Academic Partnership Program.

Under the partnership program, Waynesburg's School of Nursing will begin offering on-site educational classes at the VA Pittsburgh Healthcare System on Highland Drive in Pittsburgh.

The purpose of the program is to encourage VA nurses to return to school to complete their bachelor of science degree in nursing.

The on-site program will offer a 30- to 48-credit curriculum, which can be completed in three to four years.

"The Pittsburgh VA-Waynesburg University nursing partnership will provide our nurses with the education and training they need to deliver the first-class medical care our veterans rightfully deserve," said U.S. Rep John P. Murtha, D-Johnstown, who announced the partnership Thursday.

"Utilizing the research and educational strengths offered by such partnerships will better enable the VA to meet future needs of highly skilled health-care professionals by helping to cultivate and retain an educated work force locally," said Gen. Eric K. Shinseki, secretary of Veterans Affairs, in a letter to Murtha. "It will allow our young men and women in the local area to stay close to their homes and receive the education necessary to assist our veterans."

Waynesburg was one of five new partnerships established by the Department of Veterans Affairs. With these new partnerships, the VA Nursing Academy will expand the number of collaborations between the department and nursing schools from 10 to 15.

The VA Nursing Academy is a virtual five-year pilot program with central administration in Washington, D.C. It expands learning opportunities for nursing students at VA facilities and funds faculty development of VA staff.

The five-year, \$59 million program began in 2007.

The American Association of Colleges of Nursing has reported that, in 2007, more than 36,000 qualified applicants were turned away from entry-level baccalaureate programs in nursing schools because of insufficient numbers of faculty, clinical sites, classroom space and clinical mentors. VA currently provides clinical education for approximately 100,000 health professional trainees annually, including students from more than 600 schools of nursing.

Further information about the program can be obtained from VA's Office of Academic Affiliations Web site at [www.va.gov/oa](http://www.va.gov/oa).