

**VETERANS HEALTH ADMINISTRATION**  
**Health Care Executive Fellow (HCEF) Program**  
**Curriculum Overview**

The HCEF Program follows a structured curriculum to prepare the Fellow for success in a senior leadership position in VHA as an Associate Director, Nurse Executive or Chief of Staff. It addresses core leadership competencies enhanced with healthcare discipline-specific elements that are technical in nature. After assessment, a training plan (TP) and a personal development plan (PDP) is developed which allows the Fellow to track core and discipline-specific curriculum, both didactic and experiential. The PDP will also provide a mechanism for the Fellow to develop individual assignments in order to concentrate on areas that address their own technical and developmental needs as a healthcare executive.

Training elements include an opportunity to lead teams or special projects and to serve in an acting capacity. Fellows will attend an executive orientation and serve on a VHA system wide review team. Participants may be detailed to other locations for short periods of time to gain additional experience. Fellows will also be encouraged to participate in an appropriate professional organization such as the American College of Healthcare Executives (ACHE), the American Organization of Nurse Executives (AONE) or the American College of Physician Executives (ACPE).

Structured curriculum is offered using various training modalities with training within each area geared to the experiences and needs of the Fellow. The topics include:

- Budget/Finance/Decision Support Systems
- Human Resources/Employee Relations/Labor/Equal Employment Opportunity & Diversity
- Patient Safety/Quality Management/Risk Management
- Performance Management/Performance Improvement/Systems Redesign/Continuous Improvement
- Workload management/Strategic Planning/Organizational and Tactical planning
- Facilities Management/Environment of Care/Capital and Construction
- Research/Affiliations
- Acquisitions/Contracting/Logistics/IT
- VA/Communications/Public Affairs/Community Relations/Congressional Relations
- Discipline specific topics

One important program element is the guidance and experience they will receive by working with a successful team of healthcare executives at a large, complex VA Medical Center with a wide range of medical and other various services for our Veterans. The Fellow will join a national coaching group, a community of practice, and be assigned a certified mentor that is an experienced senior healthcare executive.

In addition, Fellows will attend a developmental Assessment Center provided by the National Center for Organization Development in collaboration with the HTM and EES offices. The HCEF Assessment Center is a three or four-day program, held during the first half of the candidates' fellowship year, that uses simulations and other experiential activities to assess relevant skills and assist Fellows in focusing their developmental efforts over the remainder of the year. Each candidate is accompanied by his/her assigned mentor, as well as his/her preceptor from their training facility. The mentors and preceptors act as assessors, while the NCOD staff serves as faculty, facilitators, and executive coaches during the assessment center.

The progress of the Fellow will be monitored through regular reporting to the National Preceptor Board.

For questions regarding the VHA HCEF Program please contact the [VHAHCEFProgram@va.gov](mailto:VHAHCEFProgram@va.gov)