

**Department of  
Veterans Affairs**

**Memorandum**

Date: APR 18 2008

From: Deputy Under Secretary for Health for Operations and Management (10N)

Subj: Education Funding for non-certified Physician Assistants

To: Network Director (10N 1-23)

1. The Department of Veterans Affairs highly values the services of physician assistants (PAs) and their contributions in providing quality health care to our nations' veterans. To ensure that physician assistants in VHA are of the highest caliber, current Certification by the National Commission on Certification of Physician Assistants (NCCPA) is required for all PAs employed by Veterans Health Administration (VHA). There are a small number of non-certified PAs that were on agency rolls prior to implementation of this requirement on March 13, 1993. This group of PAs are exempted from the NCCPA certification requirement and are referred to as "grandfathered PAs".
2. Non-certified PAs who hold a current, active, full, and unrestricted state license were also exempted from the medication prescribing requirement for current NCCPA certification. This exemption will expire December 31, 2009. After this date, all PAs must be currently certified to prescribe any medication regardless of licensure status.
3. Non-certified PAs' loss of their ability to prescribe medications would have a significant negative impact on patient care. To minimize this impact, and to assist grandfathered PAs in obtaining NCCPA certification, I am requesting that funding be provided by the VISN for registration and travel costs to attend a comprehensive training course designed to prepare physician assistants for the NCCPA PA National Certifying Examination (PANCE) or the PA National Recertifying Examination (PANRE). The courses should be comprehensive in scope and include an exam practice test workshop component.
4. To qualify for this funding, the PA should meet NCCPA eligibility requirements to take the PANCE or PANRE examination and be willing to pursue efforts to obtain certification. Attached is a listing of non-certified PAs employed in each VISN for which funding is requested.

5. Your cooperation in participating in the program would be greatly appreciated. Should you require further information, please contact Denni J. Woodmansee PA-C at [denni.woodmansee@va.gov](mailto:denni.woodmansee@va.gov)

*William F. Feeley*

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VHA  
Certified Physici

Attachment: