

VA/Vet Center Social Work Field Practicum Placements
Report on Anonymous Poll of NADD Members
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Survey: In February 2013, NADD distributed an online survey to NADD members, on behalf of Cathleen Lewandowski, member, VA's National Advisory Committee on the Readjustment of Veterans. The survey was conducted using Google docs, and was an anonymous poll. A few respondents sent their response by email, and these were incorporated into survey results.

Findings: Of the approximate 243 MSW programs accredited by the Council on Social Work Education, 59 responded to the poll. Of these, 54 schools reported that they had student interns placed in a VA. In addition to placements at the VA, 36 schools reported having student interns placed at a Vet Center. It is also worth noting that 53 of the 56 schools reported having veterans enrolled as students in their program. Of these, 18 schools reported having 10 or more veterans enrolled; 17 had 5 – 9 veterans, and 20 had 1 - 4 veterans enrolled as students in their social work program.

Responders' Comments: Respondents overall found that VA and Vet Center placements provided excellent learning opportunities for students and that these placements were highly valued. Some schools reported difficulties in placing students at Vet Centers due to difficulties reported by their VA/VISN with signing affiliation agreements.

Next Steps: Findings have been shared with NADD, CSWE, and with other members of the VA's National Advisory Committee on the Readjustment of Veterans, where this issue is being discussed. The committee is working on its annual report to Congress. I anticipate that these findings will be included in the committee's report, with a recommendation that VA policies regarding affiliation agreements in VAs and Vet Centers be made clear. In addition to social work, the Committee's recommendations would also address placements of psychology students and other related disciplines who may seek internships at VAs and Vet Centers.