



## ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS FOR VIPER FELLOWS

To be eligible to participate in VIPER, applicants must have completed all requirements needed to be a fully credentialed independent practitioner in their field at the VA Pittsburgh Healthcare System (VAPHS). Exceptions to this criterion include certain associated health disciplines that require fellowship training prior to licensure. Applicants from clinical disciplines requiring Doctoral level education to qualify as an independent practitioner must possess the required degree (e.g., PhD, DDS, DPM, etc) to be eligible to participate in VIPER. Clinical fields that recognize practitioners possessing degree levels below that of a Master's degree (e.g., Registered Nurse or Registered Dietician) must have completed a *Master's degree* to be eligible for participation. Social workers and health care administrators, therefore, must possess at least a *Master's degree*.

The following criteria must be met to accept a VIPER Fellowship:

1. Demonstrate interest in pursuing a VA career with addiction treatment as a significant focus
2. Be a United States Citizen
3. Be employed, or in the process of being employed as a VIPER Fellow, at the VAPHS.

Additionally, the following ***discipline-specific criteria*** must be met to accept a VIPER Fellowship:

### **PROSPECTIVE ASSOCIATED HEALTH FELLOWS:**

Prior to the beginning of the Fellowship, VIPER Associated Health Fellows must meet the following criteria:

1. Complete all requirement needed to become a fully credentialed independent practitioner in their field at the VAPHS or possess a Doctoral degree in a field relevant to addiction treatment. This requirement includes one of the following, as applicable:
  - a. Have graduated from or having completed the degree requirement in an accredited program in the requisite Doctors degree program to qualify as an independent practitioner in disciplines requiring a Doctoral degree (e.g., DPM, OD, PhD). Psychology fellows must have completed an accredited Doctoral program, including an American Psychological Association (APA) accredited internship program

- b. Have at least a Master's degree from an accredited educational institution in disciplines requiring a Master's degree for independent practice (e.g., nursing, social work, physical therapy)
  - c. Clinical fields that recognize practitioners possessing degree levels below that of Master's Degree (e.g., Registered Nurse or Registered Dietitian) must have completed a Master's degree to be eligible for participation in VIPER. Nurses and health care administrators must, for example, possess at least a Master's degree.
2. Have an active, full, and unrestricted license to practice in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, if such licenses are required for initial VA employment. Notably, not all associated health disciplines require a license for initial VA employment.

**PROSPECTIVE PHYSICIAN VIPER FELLOWS:**

Prior to the beginning of the Fellowship, VIPER Physician Fellows must meet the following criteria:

1. Completion of a residency program that is accredited by the Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education (ACGME) or the Bureau of Professional Education (BPE) of the American Osteopathic Association
2. Not be enrolled simultaneously in any accredited physician residency/fellowship program
3. Have an active, full, and unrestricted license to practice in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania
4. Be board certified or eligible with demonstration of active pursuit of board certification
5. Be appropriately credentialed and privileged for independent clinical practice at the VA Pittsburgh Healthcare System
6. If a graduate from a foreign medical school, having evidence of Educational Commission for Foreign Medical Graduates (ECFMG) certification

Date Approved by VIPER Directors: June 7, 2013