CHAPTER FORMATION GUIDELINES

This book contains many of the tools you need for success. Your other resources are only a telephone call away. The NOVA Membership Secretary, VISN & chapter contacts, members of the Board of Directors and the National Office staff will gladly assist you.

47595 Watkins Island Square
Sterling, Virginia 20165
Phone (703) 444-5587
Fax (703) 444-5597
www.vanurse.org
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. Mission & Vision.................................................................(pg. 1)
2. “Who’s Who” in NOVA............................................................(pg. 2-4)
3. VISN & Chapter Contacts......................................................(pg. 5-11)
4. Membership Benefits...........................................................(pg. 12-13)
5. Payroll Deduction.................................................................(pg. 14)
6. Starting a Local NOVA Chapter..............................................(pg. 15)
7. Applying for Official Chapter Status.......................................(pg. 16)
8. Chapter Responsibilities & Ideas for Local Meetings...............(pg. 17-18)
9. Filing Annual Chapter Taxes with IRS.................................(pg. 19)
10. Attachments........................................................................(pg. 20-33)

   1. IRS Form SS-4.................................................................(pg. 21-22)
   2. Officers & Directors List and Agreement..............................(pg. 23)
   3. NOVA Bylaws .................................................................(pg. 24-29)
   4. Memo Re: Meeting on Station..............................................(pg. 30-33)
MISSION & VISION

The Nurses Organization of Veterans Affairs (NOVA) is a nationwide voluntary, nonprofit, professional organization composed of Registered Nurses employed by the Department of Veterans Affairs.

NOVA Mission:

To educate, communicate and advocate for the Department of Veterans Affairs nurse professionally, personally and legislatively.

NOVA Vision:

- VA nurses will provide high quality nursing care.
- VA nurses will have an optimal work environment.
- VA nurses will be well informed on relevant issues that impact VA healthcare and nursing practice.
- VA nurses will have a strong voice in the legislative arena.
- VA nurses will have a strong presence at the VHA corporate leadership level.
- VA nurses will be NOVA members.

NOVA – THE BEGINNING...

During the fall of 1980, the nationwide shortage of registered nurses reached crisis proportions. Nurses were leaving the profession in droves, enrollment in nursing schools was decreasing, and discontent was widespread. Discontent ranged from disillusionment with nursing as a profession to adversarial relationships with physicians and resulted in pronounced staffing shortages.

This unfortunate situation was no more pronounced than in the VA system. When PL 96-330 was passed by Congress without direct input from VA nurses, a small group of dedicated nurses at the Hines VA Hospital in Illinois decided that it was time for action. This decision marked the birth of the Nurses Organization of Veterans Affairs.

Earlier, in the spring of 1980, a proposal was drafted encompassing the concept of a nationwide professional nursing organization with an educational and legislative emphasis. Since it was founded, NOVA has grown to represent VA nurses from all over the United States. These nurses have pursued their goals resolutely and have been able to influence significantly our nation’s legislators on issues of Veterans’ health care.
WHO’S WHO IN NOVA

NOVA BOARD OF DIRECTORS

**President**
Sharon Johnson, MSN, RN  
VA Maryland Health Care System  
10 North Greene Street  
Baltimore, MD 21201  
Email: president@vanurse.org

**Vice President**
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Hunter Holmes McGuire VA Medical Center  
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Richmond, VA 23249  
Email: vicepresident@vanurse.org

**Secretary/Treasurer**
Kelly D. Skinner, MSN, RN, CRRN, WCC, NP-C, GNP-BC  
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1400 VFW Parkway  
West Roxbury, MA 02132  
Email: secretary-treasurer@vanurse.org

**Membership Secretary**
Taryn-Janae Wilcox-Olson, MHS, RN  
VA Black Hills Health Care System  
113 Comanche Road  
Ft. Meade, SD 57741  
Email: membershipsecretary@vanurse.org

**Immediate Past President**
Larry Lemos, DNP, MHA, RN, GCNS-BC, NE-BC  
VA Long Beach Health Care System  
5901 East 7th Street  
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Email: past-president@vanurse.org
Directors
Teresa Acosta, DNP, MSN, RN
*El Paso VA Health Care System*
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Email: directorfrancis@vanurse.org

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Email: directorholmes@vanurse.org

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*VA Connecticut Health Care System*
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Email: directornardi@vanurse.org

Ex-Officio
Cecilia McVey, BSN, MHA, CAN
*VA Boston Health Care System*
1400 VFW Parkway
West Roxbury, MA 02132
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Executive Director
Susan H. Dove
47595 Watkins Island Square
Sterling, VA 20165
Business: 703-444-5587
Fax: 703-444-5597
Email: sdove@vanurse.org
MANAGEMENT FIRM

**Dove Associates LLC** is our **Management Firm**. They handle the day-to-day operation of our organization. This includes processing membership applications and maintaining the membership database. They will assist you with your membership roster and any operational questions you may have. Dove Associates LLC is also our “eyes and ears” in Washington DC - they spearhead all of our legislative activities.

**Susan Dove** is the Executive Director of NOVA; **Luba Litvinova** is the Director, Membership & Administration, **Teresa Morris** is the Director, Advocacy & Government Relations, and **Luke Zorich** is the Director, Education and Meetings.

**Susan H. Dove**
Phone: (703) 444-5587  
Fax: (703) 444-5597  
Email: sdove@vanurse.org

**Luba Litvinova**
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Fax: (703) 444-5597  
Email: lzhouich@vanurse.org
NOVA VISN & CHAPTER CONTACTS AS OF MAY 2016

**VISN 1 - Kelly Skinner**

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<tr>
<th>VISN 1 NOVA Chapters</th>
<th>Chapter Contact</th>
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<tr>
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<td>Celeste Dealino-Perez</td>
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<td>224 Edith Nourse Rogers Memorial VAMC (MA)</td>
<td>Nancy Reagan</td>
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<td>226 VA Boston HCS (MA)</td>
<td>Donna DeMartino, Kelly Skinner, Carmen Concepcion</td>
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<td>Robert Edgley</td>
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<td>274 Manchester VAMC (NH)</td>
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<td>358 Providence VAMC (RI)</td>
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<td>416 White River Junction VAMC (VT)</td>
<td>Patricia Crimmin-Greenan, Julia Neily, Sandra Filiault, Stacey Collins</td>
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**VISN 2 – Paul Ormsby**

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<td>286 Bath VAMC (NY)</td>
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**VISN 3 – Priscilla Aponte, Bridget Maybury**

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<td>Nora Krick</td>
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<td>288 James J. Peters VAMC (NY)</td>
<td>Priscilla Aponte, Bridget Maybury</td>
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<td>290 VA New York Harbor HCS (NY)</td>
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<td>304 Northport VAMC (NY)</td>
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## VISN 4 – Janet Minard, Heron Warren

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<td>338 James E. Van Zandt VAMC (PA)</td>
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<td>340 VA Butler HCS (PA)</td>
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<td>342 Coatesville VAMC (PA)</td>
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<td>344 Erie VAMC (PA)</td>
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<td>346 Lebanon VAMC (PA)</td>
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<td>348 Corporal Michael Crescenz VAMC (PA)</td>
<td>Shantia McCoy-Jones, Juanita Tunstall</td>
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<td>352 VA Pittsburgh HCS (PA)</td>
<td>Patricia Akerly</td>
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## VISN 5 – Miriam Rogers

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<td>156 Washington DC VAMC</td>
<td>Andrea Adams</td>
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<td>218 VA Maryland HCS (MD)</td>
<td>Ilona Mallon, Miriam Holy Rogers</td>
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<td>440 Martinsburg VAMC (WV)</td>
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## VISN 6 – Vivian Jones, Thelma Roach-Serry, Beverly Ross

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<td>Amanda Graves</td>
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<td>310 Durham VAMC (NC)</td>
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<td>312 Fayetteville VAMC (NC)</td>
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<td>314 W.G. (Bill) Hefner VAMC (NC)</td>
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<td>418 Hampton VAMC (VA)</td>
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<td>VISN 7 – Karen Scott</td>
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<td>168 Charlie Norwood VAMC (GA)</td>
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<td>360 Ralph H. Johnson VAMC (SC)</td>
<td>Maureen Distler</td>
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<td>362 W.J. Bryan Dorn VAMC (SC)</td>
<td>Yvette Twum-Danso</td>
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### VISN 11 – Wendy Morrish

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<td>242 Oscar G. Johnson VAMC (MI)</td>
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<td>446 Clement J. Zablocki VAMC (WI)</td>
<td>Holly Francis</td>
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### VISN 15 – Melissa Nixon

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<td>202 VA Eastern Kansas HCS (KS)</td>
<td>Deborah Armay, Kathy Sharp, Cletus Steinlage</td>
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<td>204 Robert J. Dole VAMROC (KS)</td>
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<td>254 Harry S. Truman Memorial Hospital (MO)</td>
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### VISN 16 – Mary Kelly

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<td>Cindy Sloan</td>
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<td>118 Central Arkansas VA HCS</td>
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<td>210 Alexandria VAMC (LA)</td>
<td>Portia McDaniel</td>
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<td>212 Southeast Louisiana VA HCS (LA)</td>
<td>Chandra Ambrose, Carolyn Dunbar</td>
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<td>214 Overton Brooks VAMC (LA)</td>
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<td>250 VA Gulf Coast HCS (MS)</td>
<td>William Keber</td>
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<td>252 G. V. (Sonny) Montgomery VAMC (MS)</td>
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<td>328 Jack C. Montgomery VAMC (OK)</td>
<td>Jessica Whisenhunt</td>
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<td>388 Michael E. DeBakey VAMC (TX)</td>
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### VISN 17 – Tess Weaver

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<td>384 VA North Texas HCS</td>
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<td>406 South Texas VA HCS</td>
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### VISN 18 – Nancy Claflin

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<td>110 Phoenix VA HCS (AZ)</td>
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<td>114 Southern Arizona VA HCS</td>
<td>Carol Chavez</td>
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<td>280 New Mexico VA HCS</td>
<td>Jeanie Moore</td>
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<td>414 VA Salt Lake City HCS (UT)</td>
<td>Karey Johnson</td>
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### VISN 20 – Jo Ellen Anderson, Marie Fe Lazarte

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<td>173 VA Pacific Islands Health Care System</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>270 Nebraska - Western Iowa HCS</td>
<td>Robert Laws</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>364 Black Hills HCS (SD)</td>
<td>Taryn-Janae Wilcox-Olson</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
MEMBERSHIP BENEFITS

NOVA is a dynamic professional nursing organization dedicated to the mission of caring for America’s heroes and supporting the education, research, and scholarly endeavors of VA nurses in order to continue to provide the very best care to our nation’s Veterans. Joining NOVA will help support the nurses who are on the “front line” in hospitals and clinics across the United States. Joining NOVA provides outstanding networking opportunities, education and CEUs, current information on legislation affecting nurses and Veterans, and most of all, membership in a group of dedicated VA nurses who understand and support what you do and why you do it every day.

A Major Lobbying Power
NOVA has an agreement with Dove Associates LLC to ensure that NOVA has a powerful, independent voice in the Department of Veterans Affairs and on Capitol Hill. NOVA educates members of Congress about Veterans’ issues through an Annual Legislative Roundtable with Veterans’ Service Organizations, DVA and VHA leaders, including the Chief Nursing Officer and the Under Secretary of Health.

Educational Webinars
Earn CEUs while attending NOVA educational webinars.

Certification Discounts
NOVA has entered into a partnership with a number of nursing organizations to help NOVA membership its certification goals.

Tuition Discounts
The Nurses Organization of Veterans Affairs has partnered with several educational institutions to provide NOVA members pursuing nursing degrees with tuition discounts.

Nursing Scholarships
NOVA gives the opportunity to apply for NOVA scholarships. Available to NOVA members only.

NOVA News Electronic Newsletter
NOVA News keeps you informed of NOVA activities and is an excellent source of information on national health care policy, internal VA issues and their effect on the nursing field. Available to NOVA members only.

NOVA Website: www.vanurse.org
NOVA’s website is a place where you can find up-to-date information on NOVA’s many programs and activities, including:
• NOVA News electronic newsletter.
• NOVA Educational Webinars.
• NOVA position papers.
• Link to Facebook & Twitter
• How to join NOVA and pay membership dues online.
• How to register for the Annual and Regional Meetings.
• Information on the NOVA scholarships.
• How to participate in membership campaigns.
• PowerPoint presentations from NOVA conference speakers.
• Contact information for NOVA Board Members.
• NOVA history and a much more.

**NOVA on Facebook & Twitter**
Next time you are on Facebook, type NOVA’s address [https://www.facebook.com/VAnurse.org](https://www.facebook.com/VAnurse.org) and select the “like” button. This will make sure you receive a message anytime something is added to the NOVA page. If you are not currently a member of Facebook, it is free and a great way to follow NOVA activities as well as several other organizations. The Department of Veterans Affairs and several local VA facilities also have pages, so keep in touch with them too!

Follow us on Twitter: [https://twitter.com/novanurses](https://twitter.com/novanurses)

**Annual & Regional Meetings**
NOVA’s Annual and Regional Meetings present the opportunity for members and nonmembers to meet with colleagues across the nation, share and exchange professional ideas and experiences, and attend educational sessions with nationally recognized speakers. The meetings are also an excellent introduction to the health care industry’s latest pharmaceutical, educational and software innovations. Poster presentations offer members an opportunity to showcase initiatives at their facilities. NOVA members receive continuing education credits (CEs) for attending these programs.

**Enhanced Long-Term, Short-Term Disability & Life Insurance Programs** are available exclusively for NOVA members through Federal First.
PAYROLL DEDUCTION

One of the wonderful benefits of NOVA is that you can pay your national dues by payroll deduction. All you need to do is to complete a membership application (available on the NOVA web page at [www.vanurse.org](http://www.vanurse.org)), take it to payroll for them to get started, and mail a copy to the National Office at 47595 Watkins Island Square, Sterling, VA 20165.

If your payroll staff members are unfamiliar with processing dues for NOVA by payroll deduction, give them the following information. To process membership dues for NOVA members by payroll deduction, use the union dues screen with a VOB (V zero B), Option G, with the $5.77 payroll deduction for Registered Nurses; and VOB (V zero B), Option A, with $3.85 payroll deduction for LPN/LVN's. This is the same way as processing union dues.

Currently, the NOVA dues show up on your pay stub in the same line as union dues. It says ORG/UNION. If you are selected for a supervisory position, human resources or payroll staff may receive an automated message from the PAID system (the VHA system that records your data such as name, social security number, position, status, etc.) which tells them that you are a supervisor and can’t use payroll deduction for union dues. Based on this message, the human resources or payroll staff in your facility may assume that NOVA is a union and that supervisors can’t belong to NOVA. This is not the case; NOVA is not a union. NOVA is a professional nursing organization. Supervisors can belong to NOVA and can use payroll deduction. If you have problems with this, please contact NOVA’s President who will help you resolve this issue.

This is the link to the bulletin that spells it out: Office of Financial Policy issued OF Bulletin 02GA2.01 dated October 30, 2001.
<http://www.va.gov/publ/direc/finance/02GA2_01bul.htm>
STARTING A LOCAL NOVA CHAPTER

IF YOU CAN DREAM IT, YOU CAN DO IT!

If you believe in what NOVA can accomplish and you have passion and enthusiasm, you can start and grow your chapter. You do not have to do this alone. Enlist the help of your immediate co-workers or other nurses who share the same vision. You may be designated the leader until you have official elections.

MEMBERSHIP
Local chapter members must also be National NOVA members. Each chapter member should complete a NOVA membership application and send it to the National Office. An application needs to be sent with a check or credit card information for dues, if not paying by payroll deduction. If you are paying by payroll deduction, you still need to complete and submit an application. Take the original application to your payroll office and submit a copy to the National Office.

Many local chapters have dues; the revenue from dues may be used at the discretion of the chapter. National Office does not collect local dues.

MEETINGS
Some NOVA chapters meet monthly; others meet quarterly; others less often. Talk with your members and find a meeting schedule that fits your needs. You may meet on station (on your own time) in your facility. A memo from the Secretary of Veterans Affairs authorizes NOVA meetings on station. Or, you may meet off station in a restaurant or in a member’s home. Your first chapter meeting could be a getting-to-know-you meeting and a brainstorming session to decide goals you would like to meet or projects you would like to do as a group. We encourage you to contact your Nurse Executive to elicit support.

PUBLICIZE YOUR MEETINGS
Every facility is different in what they will and will not allow in the way of publicity. Check the policies of your facility and use bulletin boards and email, if allowed. Also, word of mouth is very effective.

HOLD ELECTIONS FOR CHAPTER OFFICERS & DIRECTORS
Some of your chapter members are natural leaders; others need to be nudged a little! At a minimum, you need to have a President, Vice President, Secretary, Membership Secretary, Treasurer and three (3) Directors. Submit the names of your Board of Directors to the NOVA National Office.

ESTABLISH CHAPTER BYLAWS
Use the enclosed NOVA bylaws as a basis upon which to draft your Chapter bylaws. Chapter bylaws should be in concert with and supportive of NOVA’s Mission and bylaws. Send a copy of your chapter bylaws to the NOVA National Office.
APPLYING FOR OFFICIAL CHAPTER STATUS

Once your chapter is established, you need to make it official! There are three easy steps:

1. Complete the attached Officers & Directors List and Agreement. Send the completed list to the NOVA National Office; retain a copy for your records.

2. Complete the Application for Employer Identification Number (IRS Form SS - 4). An application form and instructions are attached.

3. Send your completed chapter bylaws to the NOVA National Office; retain a copy for your records.

Mail all documents to:

NOVA National Office
47595 Watkins Island Square
Sterling, VA 20165

You may also choose to fax your papers at 703-444-5597 or send them via email to luba@vanurse.org or nova@vanurse.org

When your application for chapter status is approved, you will receive written notice from the National Office. Your new chapter will also be recognized during the NOVA Annual Meeting.
CHAPTER RESPONSIBILITIES

We want to know what your chapter is doing! Many innovative events and projects are happening around the country and we can all learn from one another. There are two ways of doing this:

1. Contribute an article for Chapter News in our newsletter, NOVA News.

2. Submit a poster from your chapter for presentation at the NOVA Annual Meeting.

We suggest you conduct your chapter meetings using parliamentary procedure. A standard reference book for this would be *Roberts Rules of Order* (available in any bookstore).

By becoming a part of NOVA as a local chapter, you are individually and collectively identified with NOVA and its primary objective of ensuring quality health care to all Veterans.

Locally, you portray what NOVA is and what NOVA can accomplish. We encourage your chapter members to volunteer for service on NOVA committees, which make the decisions that impact nursing care to Veterans. Chapter members should be a strong voice to your Nurse Executive and facility Director, as well as with local legislators.

IDEAS FOR LOCAL CHAPTER MEETINGS

*Timing is everything!* Poll your members; pick a convenient time and location for your meetings. You will never be able to accommodate the needs of every chapter member, but you should strive to reach a consensus.

If you choose to meet on station, please remember to do it on your own time. Some choices include:

- Breakfast: meet in the cafeteria before the workday begins; encourage night shift workers to attend.
- Lunchtime: everyone brings a “brown bag” lunch to eat while meeting. You could even do “Pot Luck” meals occasionally.
- After work: this is a little tricky because of varying work hours; pick a “happy medium.”
- Evening: meet off station at a restaurant or in a member’s home.

Here’s what other chapters are doing:

*An educational session offering CEUs:*

- You have many nurse experts in your facility; ask them to give a presentation on their field of expertise.
• Have a pharmaceutical company sponsor an educational program.
• Tap into nursing educational resources outside of your facility.
• Combine the educational program with a meal or/and other refreshments.

Meetings/events based on a celebratory theme:

• Christmas/Holiday Open House: invite all nurses and Veterans for refreshments and a look at what your chapter is doing.
• Valentine’s Day: give cards or flowers to all nurses and Veterans.
• Nurses Day: sponsor a celebration for all nurses to attend; have a table to display NOVA information and membership applications.
• Veterans Day: do something special for the inpatients or make a poster to display in outpatient reception rooms.

Several chapters hold an annual meeting. They select a clinical topic and speakers, offer CEUs and solicit support from pharmaceutical or medical equipment companies. They also hold their annual business meeting at this time.

Raffles: many chapters have raffles to raise money for chapter activities. Check your local policies. In some facilities, fundraising events need to be approved by management. Chapters raffle anything from flowers to gourmet gift baskets.

Community service: many chapters participate in community fundraisers for cancer programs, AIDS, diabetes and other causes.

National Board of Directors: invite a member of the NOVA Board to speak at your facility; combine this with a membership drive.

Make the meetings fun and informational. Make everyone feel welcomed and engaged. Keep minutes and share them with members who were not present (some chapters do this via email). Make every nurse wish they were a NOVA member!

YOU CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE!!
Annual Electronic IRS Filing Requirement for NOVA Chapters
Form 990-N (e-Postcard)

It is NOVA Chapters’ responsibility to file Form 990-N (e-Postcard) each year!
You must use your Chapter’s EIN to file Form 990-N (e-Postcard).

Who must file Form 990-N (e-Postcard)?

NOVA Chapters whose annual gross receipts are normally $50,000 or less are required to
electronically submit Form 990-N, also known as the e-Postcard.

What happens if I don’t file Form 990-N (e-Postcard)?

If your Chapter does not file e-Postcard on time, the IRS will send your Chapter’s representative
a reminder notice. There is no penalty assessment for late filing the e-Postcard, but a Chapter
that fails to file required e-Postcards for three consecutive years will automatically lose its tax-
exempt status. The revocation of the Chapter’s tax-exempt status will not take place until the
filing due date of the third year.

When is the due date of the e-Postcard?

The e-Postcard is due every year by the 15th day of the 5th month after the close of your tax
year. For example, if your Chapter’s tax year ended on December 31, the e-Postcard is due May
15 of the following year. If the due date falls on a Saturday, Sunday, or legal holiday, the due
date is the next business day. You cannot file the e-Postcard until after your tax year ends.

How can I file the e-Postcard?

Please visit http://epostcard.form990.org to file your Chapter’s e-Postcard.

For more information or any additional questions, please contact IRS at www.irs.gov. It is also
recommended that you contact a tax professional if you have any questions or concerns about
filing Form 990-N (e-Postcard).
ATTACHMENTS
DIRECTIONS FOR COMPLETING THE APPLICATION FOR EMPLOYER IDENTIFICATION NUMBER (SS-4) FORM

1. APPLY ONLINE
   Visit the IRS website at https://sa2.www4.irs.gov/modiein/individual/index.jsp and complete the online application.

2. APPLY VIA TOLL-FREE TELEPHONE SERVICE
   Chapters can obtain an EIN immediately by calling the IRS Business & Specialty Tax Line (800-829-4933). An assistant will take the information, assign the EIN, and provide your number.

3. APPLY BY FAX
   Chapters may fax the completed Form SS-4 to their state fax number (see Where to File - Business Forms and Filing Addresses), after ensuring that the Form SS-4 contains all of the required information. If it is determined that the chapter needs a new EIN, one will be assigned using the appropriate procedures for the entity type. If the chapter’s fax number is provided, a fax will be sent back with the EIN within four (4) business days.

4. APPLY BY MAIL
   The processing timeframe for an EIN application received by mail is four weeks. Ensure that the Form SS-4 contains all of the required information. If it is determined that the chapter needs a new EIN, one will be assigned using the appropriate procedures for the entity type and mailed to the chapter.
## Application for Employer Identification Number

(For use by employers, corporations, partnerships, trusts, estates, churches, government agencies, Indian tribal entities, certain individuals, and others.)

### Legal name of entity (or individual) for whom the EIN is being requested

### Trade name of business (if different from name on line 1)

### Executor, administrator, trustee, “care of” name

### Mailing address (room, apt., suite no. and street, or P.O. box)

### Street address (if different) (Do not enter a P.O. box.)

### City, state, and ZIP code (if foreign, see instructions)

### City, state, and ZIP code (if foreign, see instructions)

### County and state where principal business is located

### Name of responsible party

### SSN, ITIN, or EIN

### Is this application for a limited liability company (LLC) (or a foreign equivalent)?

### If 8a is "Yes," enter the number of LLC members

### Type of entity (check only one box). Caution. If 8a is "Yes," see the instructions for the correct box to check.

### Sole proprietor (SSN)

### Corporation (enter form number to be filed)

### Personal service corporation

### Church or church-controlled organization

### Other nonprofit organization (specify)

### Other (specify)

### If a corporation, name the state or foreign country (if applicable) where incorporated

### State

### Foreign country

### Reason for applying (check only one box)

### Started new business (specify type)

### Hired employees (Check the box and see line 13.)

### Compliance with IRS withholding regulations

### Other (specify)

### Date business started or acquired (month, day, year). See instructions.

### Closing month of accounting year

### Highest number of employees expected in the next 12 months (enter -0- if none).

### Agricultural

### Household

### Other

### First date wages or annuities were paid (month, day, year). Note. If applicant is a withholding agent, enter date income will first be paid to nonresident alien (month, day, year).

### Check one box that best describes the principal activity of your business.

### Check one box that best describes the principal activity of your business.

### Indicate principal line of merchandise sold, specific construction work done, products produced, or services provided.

### Has the applicant entity shown on line 1 ever applied for and received an EIN?

### Complete this section only if you want to authorize the named individual to receive the entity’s EIN and answer questions about the completion of this form.

### Designee’s name

### Designee’s telephone number (include area code)

### Designee’s fax number (include area code)

### Address and ZIP code

### Applicant’s telephone number (include area code)

### Applicant’s fax number (include area code)

### Signature

### Date

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For Privacy Act and Paperwork Reduction Act Notice, see separate instructions.
OFFICERS & DIRECTORS LIST AND AGREEMENT

We, the undersigned, are applying for a charter for the __________________________ Chapter of the Nurses Organization of Veterans Affairs. We have read the NOVA Bylaws and agree to abide by them.

<table>
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<th>NAME</th>
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<td><strong>Officers</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Directors</strong></td>
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<td><em>For Directors, NOVA recommends a minimum of three (3) Directors. Additional Directors may be added as chapter membership increases.</em></td>
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ARTICLE I. NAME AND OBJECTIVES

SECTION 1. Name
The name of this organization shall be the Nurses Organization of the Veterans Affairs, hereafter also referred to as "NOVA" or as the "Organization."

SECTION 2. Mission
NOVA’s Mission: Shaping and influencing healthcare in the Department of Veterans Affairs.

ARTICLE II. MEMBERSHIP

SECTION 1. Classifications
NOVA shall be composed of four classifications of members: Registered Nurse, LPN/LVN, Emeritus, and Associate.

SECTION 2. Qualifications and Privileges
A. Registered Nurse membership shall include any registered nurse employed full time, part time and/or intermittent status by VA. Registered Nurse members shall be eligible to vote, to hold office and to participate in all other membership benefits offered by the Organization.

B. LPN/LVN membership shall include any Licensed Professional/Vocational Nurse employed full time, part time, and/or intermittent status by VA. LPN/LVN members shall be eligible to vote and hold Director positions on the Board of Directors but may not succeed to Officer positions. LPN/LVN members shall be eligible to participate in all other membership benefits offered by the Organization.

C. Emeritus membership shall include any registered nurse, LPN or LVN retired from VA. Emeritus members shall have all the rights of membership except the right to hold office.

D. Associate Membership shall be awarded to supporters and sponsors of NOVA, including corporations and organizations. Associate Members shall include privileges of the Organization except the right to vote or hold office.

SECTION 3. Chapter Membership
Chapter members must be members of the National Organization.

SECTION 4. Nondiscrimination Policy
No person shall be denied membership on the basis of sex, race, age, religious beliefs, handicap, sexual orientation, marital status, national origin, political affiliation/belief or status as a veteran.

SECTION 5. Responsibilities
Each member shall abide by the provisions of the bylaws of NOVA, the Chapter's bylaws and such additional policies as may be established by the Organization.
SECTION 6. Dues

A. The annual dues for each membership classification shall be determined by the Board of Directors and shall be remitted in accordance with policies established by the Board of Directors.

B. Members who are ninety (90) days delinquent in payment of their dues shall automatically be dropped from the National and Chapter membership rolls.

C. Chapter dues shall not exceed the National dues.

D. Upon resignation, there shall be no refund of dues.

ARTICLE III. OFFICERS AND DIRECTORS

SECTION 1. Composition

The Officers and Directors of the Organization shall consist of an Immediate Past President, President, President-Elect, Vice-President, Secretary/Treasurer, Membership Secretary, and six (6) Directors.

SECTION 2. Term of Office

A. Officers and Directors shall begin their terms of office at the beginning of the Organization’s fiscal year.

B. Officers and Directors shall serve a two-year term except the President-Elect who shall serve a one-year term prior to succeeding to the Presidency.

C. Officers shall hold no more than one office at a time.

D. The President and President-Elect shall not serve for more than one (1) term in the same office. All other Officers and Directors shall not serve for more than two (2) consecutive terms in the same office.

SECTION 3. Election of Officers and Directors

The Membership Secretary, Secretary/Treasurer and three (3) Directors shall be elected in even numbered years and the President-Elect, Vice-President, and three (3) Directors shall be elected in odd numbered years.

SECTION 4. Qualifications

A. All candidates shall be a current member of NOVA.

B. All candidates shall have been a member of NOVA for two years prior to becoming a candidate.

C. President and Vice President shall have previously served on the Board of Directors for at least two (2) years prior to taking office.

D. All candidates shall comply with the requirements set forth by the Board of Directors.
SECTION 5. Vacancies

A. Unless stated otherwise in these bylaws, should an Officer or Director vacancy occur, the vacant office may remain vacant, or be filled by appointment of the President with Board approval, for the remainder of the term.

B. Should a vacancy occur in the office of President, the President Elect or Vice President shall fill the vacancy for the unexpired term. If the President Elect is unable to fill the office of President, the Vice President shall fill the vacancy for the unexpired term and shall subsequently serve in the position and for the term to which he/she was elected.

SECTION 6. Duties

Officers and Directors shall perform those duties prescribed by these bylaws and shall perform all such other duties as usually pertain to their respective offices or as directed by the President and Board of Directors.

A. President: Shall be the chief executive officer of the Organization and is designated as the Organization's primary spokesperson. The President shall be directly responsible to the Board for the overall administration of the Organization.

B. Vice President: Shall preside in the absence of the President.

C. Secretary/Treasurer: Shall be responsible for certifying the official minutes of the meetings of the Board of Directors. The Secretary/Treasurer shall ensure the maintenance of all the financial affairs of the Organization. The Secretary/Treasurer shall be the Chairperson of the Finance Committee.

E. The Membership Secretary shall serve as the Chairperson of the Membership Development Committee.

ARTICLE IV. ELECTIONS

SECTION 1.
The Nominating Committee shall solicit and select candidates for those offices that shall become vacant at the beginning of the Organization’s fiscal year.

SECTION 2.
The Nominating Committee shall present to the voting members a ballot of the candidates for office at least ninety (90) days prior to the beginning of the Organization’s fiscal year.

SECTION 3.
Write-in candidates shall be accepted and tallied.

SECTION 4.
Election results shall be determined by mail, fax, email ballot or electronic voting. The Nominating Committee shall establish a deadline for the return of ballots or completion of voting.

SECTION 5.
Candidates shall be elected by a majority of those eligible members voting.
SECTION 6.
Tie votes shall be decided by a special run-off election.

SECTION 7.
Rules and procedures for the conduct of all elections shall be recommended by the Nominating Committee and approved by the Board of Directors.

ARTICLE V. MEETINGS OF THE ORGANIZATION

SECTION 1.
All meetings of the Organization shall be in accordance with policies established by the Board of Directors.

ARTICLE VI. BOARD OF DIRECTORS

SECTION 1. Governance
A. The Board of Directors shall be the governing body of the Organization and shall establish policy, direct activities and approve all actions pertaining to the business of NOVA and its Chapters.

B. The Board shall reserve the right to charter Chapters.

C. The Board shall have the responsibility to conduct the fiduciary affairs of the Organization in a prudent manner in accord with its bylaws and the laws under which it is governed.

D. The Fiscal Year shall be determined by the Board of Directors.

E. The Board shall approve and authorize the official acts of the elected officials and its committees.

SECTION 2. Meetings of the Board of Directors
A. Regular meetings of the Board of Directors shall be held at least twice annually.

B. Special meetings of the Board of Directors may be called by the President, or upon written request of three (3) members of the Board. The purpose of the meeting shall be stated in both the request and in the notice of special meeting.

C. A quorum for meetings of the Board of Directors shall be constituted by a majority of the members of the Board of Directors.

SECTION 3. Compensation
No members, including officers and directors of the Board of Directors, shall be compensated for their service to the Organization, except for reimbursement of usual and proper expenses incurred in the attendance of Board meetings and those other necessary activities in the course of duties in accordance with the policies set forth by the Board of Directors.
ARTICLE VII. CHAPTERS

SECTION 1.
Members in each VA medical facility shall be granted Chapter status provided that:

A. The established policies and procedures for Chapter status application have been completed.

B. The Chapter bylaws and board list are on file with the NOVA National Office.

ARTICLE VIII. COMMITTEES

SECTION 1.
All Special Committees shall be appointed by the President and approved by the Board of Directors.

SECTION 2.
The composition, duties and responsibilities of all committees shall be determined by the Board of Directors, except where specifically delineated in these bylaws.

SECTION 3.
Special Committee members shall be appointed for a term of one year and shall be made on a year-to-year basis.

SECTION 4.
The President or his/her designee shall be an ex-officio member of committees other than the Standing Committees.

SECTION 5.
The Standing Committees shall include the Executive Committee, Finance Committee, and Nominating Committee. The Finance Committee shall be chaired by the Secretary/Treasurer and will include the President, President-Elect, Vice President, and Executive Director. The Immediate Past President will chair the Nominating Committee. Special Committees may be determined by the Board of Directors.

SECTION 6. Executive Committee
The Executive Committee of the Board shall consist of the Officers of the Organization: Immediate Past President, President, President-Elect, Vice-President, Secretary/Treasurer, and Membership Secretary. The Executive Committee shall be empowered to act for the Board between meetings of the Board of Directors as needed. All actions of the Executive Committee shall be reported to the Board of Directors at its next scheduled meeting.

ARTICLE IX. INDEMNIFICATION
The Organization shall indemnify any and all persons who may serve or who have served at any time as a director, officer, committee chairperson or staff member of the Organization and their respective heirs, administrators, successors and assigns, against any and all expenses incurred by
such a person in connection with any action, suit or other proceeding, including any settlement thereof approved by the Board of Directors, by reason of such person's having been a director or officer of the Organization. The directors and officers shall not be liable to the Organization or its members for any mistake of judgment, negligence or for any other reason except in the case of bad faith or willful misconduct on the part of any such person. The officers and directors shall have no personal liability for any contract or other commitment made by them, in good faith, and the Organization shall indemnify and forever hold each such director or officer harmless against any and all liability to others on account of any such contract or commitment.

ARTICLE X. PARLIAMENTARY AUTHORITY
The rules contained in the current edition of the Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised shall govern the Organization in all cases to which they are applicable and which they are not inconsistent with the bylaws of NOVA and any special rules of order the Organization may adopt.

ARTICLE XI. DISSOLUTION
In the event of the dissolution of the Organization, all assets shall be disposed of in keeping with its tax exempt status and governing laws.

ARTICLE XII. INCORPORATION AND NON-PROFIT STATUS
The Nurses Organization of Veterans Affairs was incorporated in the State of Illinois under the General Not for Profit Corporation Act of January 1944, on December 10, 1980. The Organization is an exempt, non-profit Organization under the Internal Revenue Code, Section 501(c)(6).

ARTICLE XIII. AMENDMENTS
These bylaws may be amended by a majority of the voting membership who shall be given at least thirty (30) days to submit their vote electronically, by email, fax, or regular mail.

Adopted October 2, 1982
Amended November 7, 1984
Amended October 4, 1986
Amended April 14, 1988
Amended April 15, 1989
Amended April 11, 1992
Amended April 17, 1993
Amended April 16, 1994
Amended April 22, 1997
Amended October 29, 2010
Amended June 21, 2013
Amended January 1, 2015
Memorandum

Date: July 2, 2003

From: Secretary (00)

To: Under Secretary for Health (10)

Subject: Nurses Organization of Veterans Affairs (NOVA) Use of VA Facilities

1. In an opinion dated June 27, 2003, the General Counsel recently addressed the question of whether or not it is appropriate for NOVA to use VA facilities for meetings and/or other activities of its organization members. This question has arisen at VA medical centers because of concerns raised by bargaining units whose membership includes VA nurses at those facilities. In this decision, the General Counsel noted that NOVA is a non-union professional association comprised of VA nurses and that its objectives do not include matters that are appropriately within the purview of an exclusive bargaining unit. As such, NOVA may use VA facilities for their professional association activities, as long as these activities remain outside the scope of any exclusive collective bargaining unit’s purview.

2. Please ensure that all VISN Directors, Medical Center Directors, and all other VHA officials are promptly notified of this decision and that reasonable accommodations are made to afford NOVA access to VA facilities to post notices of and hold legitimate meetings of their members. Copies of the General Counsel’s opinion should also be made available to provide implementing guidance to VHA officials.

Anthony J. Principi

Attachment

cc: Cathy Rick
QUESTION PRESENTED:

Whether VHA could lawfully (1) exclude the Nurses Organization of Veterans Affairs (NOVA) from use of VA rooms for meeting and (2) prohibit NOVA from posting flyers on bulletin boards?

DISCUSSION:

1. The Executive Director of NOVA requested clarification from the Secretary regarding a decision by VHA Veterans Health Administration Medical Center (MC) Director and Human Resources (HR) Director in Altoona, PA to prevent NOVA’s use of VA facilities, specifically use of meeting rooms and bulletin boards. The same problem has apparently arisen at other facilities as well.

2. According to NOVA, the VHA MC and HR Directors in Altoona indicated that their decision was, in part, motivated by the increasing number of grievances filed by the union representing the Altoona nurses, and a deteriorating labor-management relationship. NOVA also indicated that the union apparently pointed to VHA IL 10-81-42 (dated October 29, 1981) and a memorandum dated April 20, 1990 to all VHA directors in support of its position that NOVA should be prohibited from using the facilities.

3. We understand NOVA to be a non-union professional association comprised exclusively of VA nurses. The NOVA bylaws indicate that membership consists primarily of registered nurses, without distinction of whether they are bargaining unit members or eligible. Its objectives are to:
   - provide for quality nursing care to the veteran patient,
   - facilitate open communication among all VA nurses and those persons or organizations impacting on VA Health Care System
   - influence the recruitment and retention of professional nurses,
   - provide learning opportunities for NOVA members,
   - foster a high level of professional nursing practice, and
   - foster research and academic excellence in VA Nursing Service.

4. Access to use of VA facilities for activities relating to or promoting professional employee associations is a First Amendment issue. See generally, *Good News Club v.*
Milford Cent. Sch., 533 U.S. 98 (2001). VA could legally bar all professional employee associations from using VA facilities. However, VA policies specifically permit a professional employee associations’ access to departmental facilities. See VA Handbooks 5023 and 5025. VA must therefore provide equal access to VA facilities for all professional associations. However, VA may prescribe limitations. Id.

VA Handbook 5023 (Labor-Management Relations) and 5025 (Legal) indicate that VA may cooperate with professional associations under certain circumstances. Indeed, VA voluntarily assumes a cooperative role in encouraging and assisting employee associations. VA Handbook 5025, Part X, 6. VA’s cooperative role includes permitting employee professional associations to use Department facilities, such as bulletin boards and meeting rooms, where the activities are purely social, fraternal or professional, and do not relate to issues within the purview of an exclusive collective bargaining unit. VA Handbook 5025, Part X, 8. Both Handbooks recognize certain limitations to VA’s involvement with associations. A pertinent example is VA Handbook 5023, Part 1, Chapter 1, 4. It dictates that these dealings must “not assume the character of negotiations or discussion on matters of human resources policy or practice or other general conditions of employment covering employees in the unit.”

These guidelines arise from the statutory and case law authorities which govern labor relations law. See e.g. 5 U.S.C. §§ 7114, 7116(a). Under current law, an employer commits an unfair labor practice if it permits a non-exclusive representative labor organization use of facilities in other than a routine or customary manner. See e.g. Social Security Administration and NTEU, 55 F.L.R.A. 964 (1999).

VHA IL 10-81-42 (dated October 29, 1981) and memorandum dated April 20, 1990 to all VHA directors, which the union referred to correctly apply the law.

Our review of current Federal sector case law precedence found no case on point. However a parallel issue was addressed in Dep’t. of Agric. and AFGE, Local 3325, 1987 FLRA Lexis 423, 423 FLRA ALJ Dec. No. 68 (June 26, 1987), a non-authoritative administrative judge (AJ) decision. In that case professional and non-professional associations for agency employees were permitted to use the office mail to transmit communications relating to conditions of employment. The union, which was not the exclusive representative, was precluded from using the mail for the same reasons. The Administrative Law Judge found the agency had committed an unfair labor practice in precluding the union from using the office mail.

It is thus clear that professional associations for VA employees may use Department facilities to promote their goals for a limited scope of activities. Such activities may include, but are not limited to, such things as improvement of the exchange of information (e.g. news relating to the professional position), improvement of effectiveness of the professionals in question (e.g. information about additional training or education), and establishment of policies or practices other than those relating to working conditions (e.g. best practices). See e.g. Dep’t. of Agric., supra. However, the scope of activities which a professional associations may conduct using departmental facilities is however limited to exclude activities which are covered by the representation of an exclusive bargaining unit for the professional association employee members, e.g. anything involving personnel policies, practices, or matters involving conditions of employment.
Where there is no professional collective bargaining unit, a professional association is not so constrained in its use of Department facilities. VA Handbook 5025, Part X. Similarly, where the professional association’s activities relate to purely social, fraternal and professional issues, outside the scope of any applicable collective bargaining unit’s purview, the department facilities may be utilized even where there is an exclusive collective bargaining unit. Id.

5. We reviewed NOVA’s website (www.vanurse.org/). Some of NOVA’s activities relate to the Congressionally mandated Commission on VA Nursing, which was created in response to the “Call to Action” to improve VA’s recruitment and retention of nurses. See Pub. L. 107-135; see also A Call to Action: VA’s Response to the National Nursing Shortage (VA VHA, November 2001). The work focuses on improving the working conditions for nurses within the Department. To the extent that NOVA’s activities relate to changing the conditions of employment of VA nurses, a subject which is under the purview of an exclusive collective bargaining unit at the pertinent facility, they could be excluded from using Department facilities.

6. If NOVA seeks access to Department facilities or access to bulletin boards to perform activities limited to such areas as continuing education, training or professional development, VA must provide access to Department facilities and bulletin boards to the same extent as provided to other professional associations.

Tim S. McClain