

**8<sup>th</sup> Executive Fellowship in  
Patient Safety  
Program Outline**

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**Offered by the Williamson Institute for Healthcare Leadership,  
Department of Health Administration, Virginia Commonwealth University**

**June 2009 – May 2010**

This distance learning program begins with a 4 day on-campus introduction to the course on **June 24<sup>th</sup> thru June 27<sup>th</sup>, 2009**, followed by online modules taught by nationally renowned faculty, and concludes with a 3 day on-campus session and graduation. The program's on-campus sessions will be held on the Medical College of Virginia Campus of VCU. The June session will introduce the fellows to each other, some of the teaching faculty, our academic Blackboard system used for the online sessions and our outstanding VCU online academic library system. The concluding on-campus session is held in conjunction with the annual patient safety conference in Richmond sponsored by VIPC&S (Virginian's Improving Patient Care & Safety.) ([www.vipcs.org](http://www.vipcs.org).) During this time all fellows will present PowerPoint presentations to the class describing their projects, methodology and tools. Fellows will attend the VIPC&S conference and will graduate in an on-campus ceremony. For more information about the City of Richmond and Virginia Commonwealth University visit our website at [www.vcu.edu](http://www.vcu.edu) or the Department of Health Administration's website at [www.had.vcu.edu](http://www.had.vcu.edu).

### Fellows

The program focuses on professionals working in the healthcare industry who are involved in patient safety issues. Our 200+ fellow alumni from our programs represent a variety of professionals including physicians, nurses, patient safety officers, researchers, pharmacists, lawyers, policy makers, risk managers, and academic professors to name a few. They represent almost every state in the country, including Alaska, and countries including Brazil, Canada, New Zealand, India, and Saudi Arabia. We encourage a variety of professionals from various backgrounds and experience in aspects of patient safety to apply to the program, as these people bring as much expertise to share with each other as do the faculty teaching the program.

Fellows are required to design and implement a patient safety project in their facility with faculty mentors and a coordinating advisor assigned to assist.

## Faculty

The Internet based program allows nationally renowned faculty with select expertise in patient safety techniques to participate. The faculty consists of a mix of fulltime academic faculty and affiliate faculty who are practitioners in the field. Currently about half of the faculty are from Virginia Commonwealth University and are selected not only because of their expertise but because of their deep commitment to effective distance learning techniques. Faculty represented by other universities includes the University of Florida, Tulane University, University of Wisconsin-Madison, and University of Virginia. Faculty from organizations with particular expertise in the patient safety field includes The Institute of Safe Medication Practices (ISMP), the United States Air Force, Healthcare Performance Improvement (HPI) and members of various state and federal Health Departments involved in patient safety. Most significantly, some of the very best of our alumni are asked to become faculty members to carry on the tradition of incorporating clinical practice with teaching. These faculty members are evaluated every year and continually update their modules to incorporate the latest research and literature on the tools and techniques of patient safety.

## Curriculum

On-campus topics taught during the fellowship include integrating patient safety into the community, making a business case for patient safety, effective elements of teamwork and communication skills for medical professionals, human factors engineering, relationship between medical malpractice and patient safety, and how to develop an idea for a patient safety project. Online sessions include topics designed for both beginner and advanced patient safety officers and include:

Fundamentals of Patient Safety & 2008 research	Evidence Based Guidelines
State & Federal Regulation impacting on Patient Safety Initiatives	Methodology & Tools for Success
Medication Safety & Methods	Human Factors Engineering
Advanced Issues in Error Reporting Systems	Impact on Laws in Developing Patient Safety Techniques
Leadership and it's Impact on Patient Safety	Financial Analysis Impact of Patient Safety Initiatives
Peer Review, Credentialing and Patient Safety	Use of Technology for Patient Safety Success

## Online Sessions taught through Blackboard

After the initial on-campus session, fellows continue course work at their home/work site using a carefully planned array of distance learning technologies. The program uses the Internet as the primary mode of communication. This technology allows students and faculty to communicate with one another asynchronously through personal computers equipped with Internet access. Thus, courses can be accessed anywhere via a local Internet provider or online service.

The Fellowship Program has its own separate "electronic classroom" which serves as the primary channel to conduct online sessions and discuss assignments and projects. This electronic classroom is also used to distribute announcements, hold meetings, and facilitate informal communication among faculty and students.

Fellows and faculty who use Blackboard do not require knowledge of programming or web page development. Blackboard consists of course documents, discussion boards, virtual classrooms, email facilities and other helpful information such as faculty and fellow information.

The faculty posts the session syllabus, readings and assignments in Course Documents. The file can include documents created on the computer (plain text, word processing files, presentations, spreadsheets, etc.), images, citations, links to other web sites, etc.

The Discussion Board is where much of the interaction between students and instructors takes place. Participating in a discussion is similar to sending e-mail, but all participants can view every message. Messages are submitted through standard web forms. Reading messages is as simple as clicking on the desired message. Blackboard also provides a facility for fellows and faculty to send email to everyone in the group or to selected members only.

Despite the heavy emphasis on computer communications, only basic familiarity with the use of personal computers is necessary. Training on the program's communications and other software is done during the initial on-campus session.

### Equipment Requirements

All students admitted to the program must have access to a modern personal computer. Detailed specifications for new and existing computers are available on the [Student Computer Initiative specifications page](#) (link opens in a new window). In addition, students must have a regular Internet connection throughout the course of the program. The Microsoft Office Suite (including Word, Excel, and PowerPoint) is also required. For more information about this and other software, visit the [Student Computer Initiative](#) website.

### Tuition and Application

#### Program Fees

Single Fellow	\$6,500 per person
Team of 3 or more Fellows	\$6,000 per person

#### **Application deadline: May 1, 2009**

Because of the unique nature of distance learning education, the class of fellows will be limited. Applications are accepted on a first come basis, and when the class is full subsequent applications will be placed on a waiting list.

The Program Fee is exclusive of some books which faculty may highly recommend. In addition fellows are responsible for their own travel, hotel and expenses for the on campus sessions. Most fellows are financially supported by their institutions. We encourage this as it will be the institution as much as the fellow who will benefit from the implementation of a patient safety project. Program payment should be made payable to VCU/HAD. Those wishing to reserve a spot in the upcoming 2009-2010 Fellowship should complete and return the application, facility reference letter, and CV. The facility reference letter is required to show support from the facility to the fellow that the facility will allow the fellow to design and implement a patient safety project in the facility and that such facility will give adequate support in time, effort and other resources to help ensure the success of the project.

**For more information** please contact Professor Karen Swisher at [kswisher@vcu.edu](mailto:kswisher@vcu.edu)

## The Williamson Institute for Healthcare Leadership

The David G. Williamson, Jr. Institute for Healthcare Leadership was founded in 1987 to serve as a mechanism and forum for collaboration among the academic, administrative and clinical elements of the healthcare industry. The Institute's members who all serve as faculty for the Department of Health Administration at VCU offer unique expertise that has influenced policymaking, strategic planning, and management decisions in healthcare systems throughout the world. The Williamson Institute serves as a catalyst for research innovation and postgraduate continuing education to VCU alumni and friends by offering data collection services, management training programs, and sponsored research projects in healthcare

## Department of Health Administration

Since 1949, many of our nation's leading healthcare executives received their education and training from Virginia Commonwealth University's Department of Health Administration. Today, we continue to be among the nation's top health administration programs. According to U.S. News & World Report our MSHA Program ranks among the best in the United States as a top business graduate school for physician-executives.

For more than 55 years, the Department has maintained and strengthened its mission of educating men and women to lead complex healthcare organizations. Through our three degree programs and our several dual degree offerings, through our continuing education programs in the Williamson Institute for Healthcare Leadership, through the involvement of our superb alumni, and through our scholarship, the Department is at the leading edge of education, service, and research to enhance the performance of management and organization in healthcare delivery.

## VCU and the VCU Medical Center

Located on two downtown campuses in Richmond, Virginia Commonwealth University ranks among the top 100 universities in the country in sponsored research and enrolls 30,000 students in more than 180 certificate, undergraduate, graduate, professional and doctoral programs in the arts, sciences and humanities in 15 schools and one college. Sixty of the university's programs are unique in Virginia, and 20 graduate and professional programs have been ranked by U.S. News & World Report as among the best of their kind. MCV Hospitals, clinics and the health sciences schools of Virginia Commonwealth University compose the VCU Medical Center, one of the leading academic medical centers in the country. For more, see [www.vcu.edu](http://www.vcu.edu).