

SOUTHEAST LOUISIANA VETERANS HEALTH CARE SYSTEM

New Orleans, LA



INVESTING IN FRONTLINE WORKERS ENSURES HIGH QUALITY CARE FOR VETERANS

Southeast Louisiana Veterans Health Care System (SLVHCS) provides quality health care to veteran patients throughout 23 parishes in southeast Louisiana. Services include a community living center, primary care, mental health, tele-health, medicine, surgery and other specialty care. In the last year alone, SLVHCS served nearly 45,000 veterans. The primary goal of the Department of Veterans Affairs is to provide the highest quality of care and service to veterans. At SLVHCS this goal is accomplished through investments in frontline workforce development programs and employee engagement.

Innovative Programming for Veterans

Nearly 30% of SLVHCS employees are veterans, and investing in employee skill development improves the lives of veterans both as employees and patients. Within the structure of the VA system, SLVHCS implements two entry-level programs: Emerging VA Leaders Program and The Hudson Thomas Program. The Emerging VA Leaders Program is a comprehensive program designed to identify employees who want to grow their careers within the VA and have demonstrated leadership potential. Participants are paired with a mentor and work to enhance their skills in alignment with VA values and priorities. Unique to SLVHCS, The Hudson Thomas Program combines skill development, career coaching, and mentorship. Nearly 83% of participants are veterans. Both programs are fundamental to SLVHCS' commitment to career advancement for frontline workers.

Making Career Advancement Accessible

The Hudson Thomas Program prepares current entry-level employees with the fundamental skills needed for upward mobility within the VA system. The three-month, work-based program includes basic academic skills, interpersonal and soft skills, financial literacy, job shadowing and career coaching, and mentorship. Recognizing a continuum of skill level among participants, the program allows individuals to increase skills and knowledge at their own pace with intensive one-on-one support from the course instructor, navigator, and mentor. Although SLVHCS is prohibited from guaranteeing promotions for employees who complete a training program, nearly 60% of program alumni have received promotions within and across departments to date. Since 2015, SLVHCS has retained 92% of Hudson Thomas participants. The program

gives entry-level staff in positions like housekeeping aides and medical support assistants an opportunity to broaden their skillset and prepare for the next position.

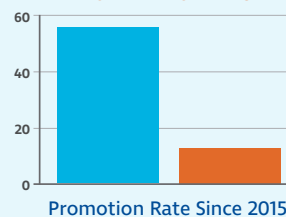
Integration into Business Operations

By fully integrating workforce development programming into business operations, SLVHCS ensures sustainability and signals commitment to providing accessible career advancement opportunities for frontline workers. The Hudson Thomas workforce development program was partially funded by the Greater New Orleans Foundation, via a partnership with Delgado Community College. As the grant funds decreased, senior leadership made a financial commitment to continue the programs. In fact, the next cohort will be fully supported with facility funding and the availability of programming during work hours will continue.

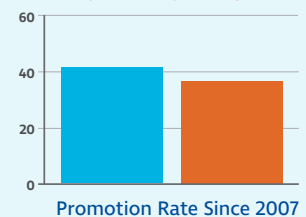
PROGRAM DATA

Since 2015, 29 frontline staff participated in Emerging VA Leaders, 38 people in the Hudson Thomas Program; 179 people participated in the two programs since 2007.

HUDSON THOMAS PROGRAM PARTICIPANTS VS. NON-PARTICIPANTS



EMERGING VA LEADERS PARTICIPANTS VS. NON-PARTICIPANTS



Basic Skill Development

Offering basic skills instruction in the workplace helps to remove barriers to advancement for entry-level frontline workers. At the beginning and end of the program, Hudson Thomas participants are given an adult basic education assessment. Quantitative data shows an increase among participants in grade-level performance in reading, grammar, and math. Incorporating computer and soft skills training enables participants to gain skills that will enhance their job performance. Job shadowing is offered at the program's mid-point, and participants learn job-specific skills related to their career interests. Participants look forward to this part of the program, and some employees received promotions into the departments where they job shadowed.



Frontline Success Story

Grace Landry is a graduate of the third cohort of The Hudson Thomas Program. She started working at the VA in 2015 in medical administration. Since completing the program, Grace has been promoted to fiscal services. When asked how the program helped her, Grace said, "I was able to reinforce my Excel and PowerPoint skills and improve my presentation and people skills. During the graduation, I was able to meet staff I may not interact with on a regular basis, and they were able to see our achievements and accomplishments." Grace is one of the biggest advocates and supporters of the program.

BUSINESS IMPACT

Program Retention Rates

- > Hudson Thomas Program since 2015 **92%**
- > Emerging VA Leaders since 2007 **79%**



NOTE FROM LEADERSHIP



The primary goal of Veterans Affairs is to provide the highest quality of care and service to veterans. This goal is accomplished, in part, through investments in employee engagement and development programs, which is a critical component of our "Four Cultures" initiative to make SLVHCS the best place to work. To date, 179 employees have been through one of our development programs, with an additional 24 enrolled in the 2018 Hudson Thomas class and six enrolled in the 2018 EVAL class. While this is a success in and of itself, this number does not capture the larger sample of patients who have been impacted by employee training. To better serve our veterans, it is necessary to create spaces that are conducive to the growth and satisfaction of our employees.

- Fernando O. Rivera, FACHE
SLVHCS Medical Center Director

Number of Employees: 2517
Number of Frontline Workers: 623



The Frontline Healthcare Worker Champion Peer Recognition Program:

CareerSTAT's Frontline Healthcare Worker Champion program recognizes healthcare organizations investing in the skills and career of their frontline workers. Organizations are designated as Champions and Emerging Champions. Champions meet all of CareerSTAT's recognition criteria, including making skill and career development accessible, offering programs at a significant scale, measuring program business impact, and building sustainable programs, while Emerging Champions are in earlier stages of investment and working with CareerSTAT leaderships to strengthen their programs. Learn more at www.NationalFund.org/CareerSTAT.