

Virtual Chapters

Many of you are familiar with our virtual chapter platform, an extension of our affiliate system. It's another way to structure a chapter using modern technology to provide an online connection between geographically dispersed members or members like currently serving officers who are transient and share interests. Below, Col. Jeri Graham, USA (Ret), president of MOAA's first virtual chapter and a member of national MOAA's board of directors, discusses how her chapter got its start.



The journey began when council and chapter leadership approached me and asked if I would take on the challenge with other Army nurses to chart a course for the development of functionally related interest groups into virtual chapters. I partnered with Lt. Col. Joe Gollasch, USA (Ret), who agreed to co-lead the development of a group focused on health care issues.

While we started out as the MOAA Army Nurse Advocates Virtual Chapter, we recognized the optimal organization would be a Uniformed Services Nurse Advocates Virtual Chapter (USNAVC). Our transition team included two members from the Army, Navy, Air Force, and Commissioned Corps of the U.S Public Health Service. The official date of the transition was March 1, 2017.

Our collegial relationship is built on common experiences caring for service-members — past and present — and their families within our excellent military health care delivery system and a dedication to “never stop serving.”

Requirements for virtual chapter membership include membership in national MOAA and current or past experience as a nurse in one of the uniformed services. We host monthly “telemeetings” using a fee-free conferencing system, which now includes a computer-based screen-sharing capability. We’ve developed a speaker program and schedule focused on health care-related topics. We also encourage membership outreach, participation in geographic MOAA chapters, and using MOAA’s Legislative Action Center, as a major chapter focus is on health care legislation.

Our membership is growing. To date, we have 31 military nurses spanning 16 states. Many of our members also belong to geographically based chapters and readily share health care information at those chapter meetings.

We believe the possibilities for future expansion of this type of chapter are endless. Just think of your own functionally related groups like aviation, logistics, and more. Virtual chapters also can work perfectly for active duty and National Guard and Reserve personnel when they have a PCS move or when they deploy; they can take their chapters with them.

Colonel Graham and members of the USNAVC have set the standard for the new virtual chapter model. If you're interested in more information or starting a virtual chapter, contact us at chapters@moaa.org.

— Col. Terri Coles, USA (Ret)
senior director, Council and Chapter Affairs