



VA Connecticut Health Care System - West Haven Campus

Residency in Ocular Disease

Emphasis Areas: Low Vision Rehabilitation and Brain Injury Rehabilitation

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PROGRAM ASSISTANT DIRECTOR: Theresa Zerilli, OD, FAAO

SITE LOCATION: West Haven Campus, CT

NUMBER OF POSITIONS: Four

ACCREDITATION STATUS: Accredited by ACOE

MISSION STATEMENT:

The residency in Ocular Disease/Low Vision Rehabilitation, affiliated with the New England College of Optometry, provides an intensive program dedicated to post-graduate experience in comprehensive eye care. It emphasizes both full-scope primary optometric care, ocular disease specialty care, tertiary low vision optometric care and Brain Injury Rehabilitation. Presented are clinical, educational and research opportunities which reflect these disciplines, and which reflect the profession of optometry in a broad sense.

RESIDENCY GOALS:

1. To provide the practitioner with extensive clinical experience in primary eye care and ocular disease in a hospital-based setting. This experience includes; ocular health evaluations; detection of ocular diseases and anomalies; treatment of ocular diseases and anomalies; modern and advanced diagnostic equipment; advanced therapeutic techniques; facility with the most recent therapeutic pharmaceuticals; interaction with other medical specialists; binocular vision dysfunctions.
2. To provide the practitioner with extensive advanced ocular disease experience through working in optometric specialty clinics and observing surgical procedures. The residents work directly with several Yale Ophthalmology specialists in retina, glaucoma, cornea and neuro-ophthalmology in order to gain knowledge of advanced diagnoses and treatment options.
3. To provide the practitioner with extensive clinical experience in low vision care/ Traumatic Brain Injury in a multi-professional setting. This experience includes optometric work-up of legally-blind patients; optometric treatment and education of legally-blind patients; modern and advanced low vision equipment and devices; interaction with other blind rehabilitation specialists; work-up and treatment of Traumatic/Acquired brain injured patients.
4. To provide the practitioner the opportunity to screen, diagnose and treat visual anomalies from acquired brain injury. This clinic is one of the tertiary clinics in the Low Vision Optometric Clinic.
5. To provide the practitioner the opportunity to be involved with research in the arena of visual anomalies from acquired brain injury. This work is done in the Low Vision Optometric Clinic.
6. To provide the practitioner with extensive didactic/educational programs which relate to optometric clinical care and which reflect the changes in the profession, both in primary care optometry and low vision rehabilitative optometry.



7. To provide the practitioner with experience in writing posters/papers and being involved in major optometric meetings such as the American Academy of optometry and The American Optometric Association.
8. To provide the practitioner with guidance and goals in establishing a clinical and/or research oriented professional project.
9. To provide the practitioner with the skills to critically review eye-care literature.
10. To provide the practitioner with the opportunity to supervise, instruct and teach optometric interns. This is provided in both a primary care optometric setting and a low vision rehabilitation optometric setting.

RESIDENCY OBJECTIVES:

1. To gain facility in managing the patient in a primary care and ocular disease outpatient clinical setting.
2. To gain facility in understanding the systemic needs of the patient and co-managing the patient with other health-care professionals.
3. To gain experience in diagnosing and managing the visual anomalies in the acquired brain injury population.
4. To gain experience in conducting optometric research in a rapidly evolving specialty population such as the brain injured.
5. To gain facility in referring the patient to other medical clinics within the hospital setting when deemed necessary.
6. To gain experience in presenting patients who require special follow-up care in specialty ophthalmology clinics.
7. To gain facility in managing the legally blind patient in a low vision clinical setting, the Eastern Blind Rehabilitation Center.
8. To gain facility in co-managing the legally blind patient with other professionals who participate in the rehabilitation of this patient.
9. To gain facility in critically evaluating recent literature and in discussing this literature in a professional conference setting.
10. To gain experience in writing a clinical paper and work on publishing.
11. To gain experience in writing a poster presentation and being involved in educational optometry.
12. To gain experience in supervising optometric students/externs in both primary care optometry and low vision optometry.

RESIDENCY ACTIVITIES:

1. The resident participates in full-scope primary eye care in a predominantly outpatient clinic. The resident detects ocular disorders through diagnostic skills and case presentation to the clinical supervisor. The resident manages ocular disorders through careful follow-up, therapeutic pharmaceutical agents, and co-management with other health-care providers.
2. The resident presents complex cases to specialists in Yale Ophthalmology's Retina, Cornea, Glaucoma, and neuro-ophthalmology Clinics. These clinics take place weekly and/or monthly here at the VA.
3. The resident is taught the use of supplemental diagnostic equipment, such as A- and B-scan ultrasonography, digital fundus photography, slit-lamp photography, OCT, pachymetry, ophthalmodynamometry, dilation and irrigation of the lacrimal system, punctal plugs. The



- resident may observe ocular surgeries and laser procedures (ALT, SLT, PI's, YAG, PRP, macular laser). There will be some involvement with fluorescein angiography.
4. The resident receives referrals from the medical clinic and other clinics within the hospital and will get the opportunity to rotate through other hospital clinics
 5. The resident participates in an extensive didactic curriculum: weekly meetings/Grand Rounds with the primary care optometric supervisor; weekly meetings/Grand Rounds with the low vision optometric supervisor; twice monthly attending of Yale Ophthalmology's Grand Rounds; 3-4 times a year attending of Yale Ophthalmology's educational symposia; monthly joint Optometry Grand Rounds; educational meetings at the New England College of Optometry.
 6. The resident participates in low vision optometric care in the Eastern Blind Rehabilitation Center. The resident thoroughly works-up, evaluates, and makes recommendations on low vision devices for the legally blind veteran. The resident engages in co-management with other Blind Rehabilitation specialists and participates in weekly meetings with these specialists.
 7. The resident is continually given assignments in reading, evaluating, and presenting the recent optometric and ophthalmologic literature. Recent journal articles and textbooks are stressed. Lectures by the resident are periodically given.
 8. The resident is assisted in writing a publishable quality paper. The ultimate goal is to submit for publication.
 9. The resident is assisted in creating a lecture on an interesting topic to be given at year's end at the New England College of Optometry.
 10. The resident will be assisted in writing a minimum of 1 poster presentation to be submitted and presented at a major optometric meeting such as AAO, SECO and AOA.
 11. The resident will supervise optometric students in both primary care and low vision clinics.
 12. The resident will present lectures on optometric topics to other health-care providers in the hospital.

*** note this year due to COVID-19 all didactic meetings have been switched to virtual instead of in-person.

LENGTH OF RESIDENCY:

One year, from July 1 through June 30 of the following year.

WEEKLY HOURS AND ON-CALL DUTIES:

The resident works 40 hours/week; there are no on-call responsibilities.

FINANCIAL DETAILS:

The resident will be paid a stipend of \$38,771 by the Department of Veterans Affairs. (Note: the stipend level is frequently reviewed for change.) Health insurance is available through the Federal Government. Liability insurance need not be purchased as the resident practices under the policy of the Federal Government.

LEAVE DETAILS:

Each pay-period (2 weeks); the resident earns 4 hours of Annual Leave and 4 hours of Sick Leave. The hours are permitted to accrue as the year progresses.



Educational/authorized leave is permitted for attending the American Academy of Optometry Annual Meeting and other educational symposia.

CRITERIA FOR COMPLETION OF RESIDENCY:

1. Patient care delivery in both the primary care/ocular disease optometry clinic and the low vision rehabilitation optometry clinic at a level deemed satisfactory by the clinical supervisors. This level is determined by Optometric Standards of Care and by Quality Assurance criteria.
2. A detailed patient log detailing each patient encounter.
3. A complete activity log of all didactic and non-clinical activities
4. Successful completion of lecture assignments.
5. Successful completion of 1 poster abstract submission.
6. Successful completion of a publishable quality clinical paper and year-end lecture at the New England College of Optometry.
7. Appropriate conduct and patient consideration as outlined in the VA Connecticut by-laws.
8. A certificate of completion from the New England College of Optometry and the Department of Veterans Affairs will be presented at year's end.

APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS:

1. An O.D. degree from an ACOE accredited school or college of optometry.
2. Successful completion of the Basic and Clinical Sciences portions of the National Board of Examiners in Optometry as well as the TMOD; an official transcript is required.
3. Curriculum vitae.
4. Official transcripts of optometric education.
5. A brief statement detailing your desire to complete a residency
6. Three letters of recommendation.
7. Application form, further instructions, and complete information about the application process must be sought through the OR Match Service www.natmatch.com/ormatch.
8. Application deadline is January 31, 2022.
9. An onsite interview is not required. Due to COVID-19 protocol all interviews will be conducted by videoconference. A tour of the facilities will also be provided virtually or in person by prior arrangement.

Note: The applicant must be a citizen of the United States to be eligible for residency consideration in a VA Medical Center.

FOR MORE INFORMATION PLEASE CONTACT:

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