VA Maine HealthCare System

Residency in Ocular Disease

PROGRAM DIRECTORS: Dr. Laura Dowd (laura.dowd@va.gov)
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NUMBER OF POSITIONS: Two
ESTABLISHED IN: 2008

This program is sponsored by the Department of Veterans Affairs and is affiliated with The New England College of Optometry. VA Maine and NECO do not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national or ethnic origin, age, religion, disability, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, veteran status or any other characteristic protected under applicable federal or state law.

MISSION STATEMENT: The mission of the Optometric Residency in Ocular Disease is to provide advanced clinical training in ocular disease, primary care and systemic disease for post-graduate optometrists. Upon completion of the program, residents are prepared to pursue professional opportunities that require a high level of clinical expertise. The resident provides care to a complex patient population, enhances didactic skills and completes scholarly activities.

RESIDENCY GOALS:

1. Provide the resident with advanced clinical experience in the diagnosis and management of ocular disease.
2. Integrate the resident into a multidisciplinary health care team.
3. Enhance the resident's clinical and didactic instructional skills.
4. Stimulate an ongoing commitment to scholarly pursuits in the resident.
5. Encourage the resident to contribute to the body of optometric knowledge.

RESIDENCY ACTIVITIES: The residency year is split between the Togus VA Medical Center and the Portland Community Based Outpatient Clinic (CBOC). The primary activity of residents at each location is to provide direct care to a large number of patients. Both clinics are open Monday through Friday 7:00 am to 5:30 pm. Residents are expected to perform program-related activities between 40 to 50 hours per week on a 10 hour day, 4 days per week, tour of duty. These activities include but are not limited to:

- providing comprehensive, full-scope medical eye care to the Veterans of VA Maine HCS
- diagnosing and managing complex cases of ocular disease and ocular manifestations of systemic disease
- precepting fourth-year optometry students in the clinical setting
- educating other health professionals with regards to optometric care in the clinical setting
- performing low vision evaluations for Veterans with special visual needs
- providing consultations for eye care requested by other health care providers
- working with staff ophthalmologists on difficult cases of ocular disease

- participating in weekly eye clinic seminars, and medical center and surgical staff grand rounds
- observing ophthalmologic surgery
- rotating through various health care disciplines including internal medicine, rheumatology, and vascular surgery
- attending New England College of Optometry residency conferences
- completing a publishable-quality research paper, literature review, or clinical case report

LENGTH OF RESIDENCY: This is a one year residency that begins on July 1 and ends on June 30. There are no on-call hours.

STIPEND: The annual salary for this position will be $52,150.

BENEFITS:

Annual Leave:
Vacation time: 10 days
Sick leave: 10 days
Excused absences may be allowed for educational seminars and other professional activities
Professional liability coverage: Provided for all official duties by the VA through the Federal Torts Reform Act
Health Insurance: Health insurance is offered

CRITERIA FOR COMPLETION OF RESIDENCY:

- Demonstration of advanced clinical competency at a level satisfactory to the supervisor of the residency program
- Satisfactory or better performance on periodic formal reviews
- Completion of patient and activity logs that detail experiences acquired during the residency
- Completion of a manuscript of publishable quality related to the resident's experience in the program
- Completion of all required NECO evaluations and attendance at all NECO Residency Conferences.
- Passage of Parts I, II, and III of the National Board of Examiners in Optometry examination series prior to the completion of the residency program
- Licensure to practice optometry in a state, territory or commonwealth of the United States by the end of the residency year.

APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS:

- Each candidate must complete an ORMatch (Optometry Residency Match) application at http://www.natmatch.com/ormatch/. The deadline for ORMatch is **January 30, 2026.**
- Candidates must submit the following to ORMatch (See below):
    a. letter of interest
    b. curriculum vitae
    c. official copy of NBEO scores
    d. official copy of optometry school transcript
    e. 3 letters of recommendation
- The candidate must be a citizen of the United States.

- A personal interview is strongly encouraged
- Prior to beginning the program the successful candidate must hold an O.D. degree from a school or college of optometry with an ACOE accreditation status.
- Applicants must have taken and passed parts I, II, and III of the National Board of Examiners in Optometry prior to the completion of the residency program

ACCREDITATION STATUS: The Accreditation Council on Optometric Education (ACOE) has granted VA Maine Healthcare System Residency in Ocular Disease the accreditation status of "Accredited." Accredited is a classification granted to an educational program indicating that the program generally meets the Standards for accreditation. For more information, see the ACOE's website at www.theACOE.org or contact the ACOE at accredit@theacoe.org.

FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE CONTACT:

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