VA Boston Healthcare System

Residency in Ocular Disease
Emphasis Areas: Ocular Disease/Primary Care Optometry

PROGRAM SUPERVISORS:

Jamaica Plain: Tak Chau, OD (Tak.Chau@va.gov)
West Roxbury: Joseph Kane, OD (Joseph.Kane@va.gov)
Brockton: Anne Bertolet, OD (Anne.Bertolet@va.gov)

NUMBER OF POSITIONS: Nine (9)

RESIDENTS WILL BE BASED AT ONE CAMPUS AS OUTLINED BELOW:

3 at Jamaica Plain VA
2 at West Roxbury VA
4 at Brockton VA

This program is jointly sponsored by the Department of Veteran Affairs (VA) and New England College of Optometry (NECO) with accreditation by the Accreditation Council on Optometric Education (contact accredit@theacoe.org or 1-800-365-2219).

MISSION STATEMENT OF THE OPTOMETRY SECTION:

The mission of the Residency in Ocular Disease with emphasis in Primary Eye Care and Ocular Disease at the VA Boston Healthcare System is to foster the residents' development of advanced diagnostic and patient management skills in the care of patients with visual problems, ocular disease, and ocular manifestations of systemic disease in a multidisciplinary hospital-based setting. This is accomplished by mentored clinical training and facilitation of resident involvement in an interdisciplinary approach to patient care and is supported by a strong didactic curriculum.

RESIDENCY GOALS AND OBJECTIVES:

Goal One: The resident will develop advanced competency in the evaluation and management of patients presenting for primary eye care and management of ocular disease.

- **Objective 1.1:** The resident will evaluate and manage many patients, a majority of whom will require management of an ocular disease/condition.
- **Objective 1.2:** The resident will develop advanced competency in the evaluation and management of patients presenting for primary and secondary retinal eye care.
- **Objective 1.3:** The resident will develop advanced competency in the evaluation and management of patients presenting with glaucoma and suspected glaucoma.
- **Objective 1.4**: The resident will gain experience and training in advanced specialty care areas, including cornea/specialty contact lenses, oculoplastic, glaucoma, retina as well as post-operative cataracts.

Goal Two: The resident will gain exposure to optometry in a hospital-based setting.

- **Objective 2.1:** The resident will demonstrate the ability to coordinate care and foster communications with the interdisciplinary team to maximize patient outcomes.
- **Objective 2.2:** The resident will participate as a working member of hospital staff by prescribing medications as well as ordering and interpreting laboratory and radiological studies.

Objective 2.3: The resident will gain experience in managing off-hours on-call care as well as triaging same day urgent referrals.

Goal Three: The resident will gain experience in mentorship and/or teaching to supplement their clinical training and help them determine whether they wish to pursue a career in clinical teaching.

Objective 3.1: The resident will gain experience mentoring and/or supervising optometry students on rotation from our affiliates.

Goal Four: The resident will enhance baseline knowledge of ocular disease and primary eye care through didactic activities during the residency program.

Objective 4.1: The resident will enhance baseline knowledge of ocular disease and primary eye care through a regular VA Boston Optometry grand rounds/lecture series. Additional opportunities to attend VA-wide and hospital lectures or conferences will be provided.

Objective 4.2: The residents will enhance baseline knowledge of ocular disease and primary eye care by attending regular conferences, including at least one national conference (ex. AAO) during their residency year.

Goal Five: The resident will gain experience in contributing to the body of knowledge of the profession through participation in scholarly activities in hopes to foster life-long self-study.

Objective 5.1: The resident will gain experience in developing continuing education lecture(s).

Objective 5.2: The resident will develop the skills to prepare an abstract submission to a national conference.

Objective 5.3: The resident will develop the skills to prepare and present case reports to colleagues.

Objective 5.4: The resident will develop the research and writing skills necessary to contribute to the optometric profession.

Objective 5.5: The resident will develop analytical literature review skills to evaluate new research to become lifelong learners in this profession.

RESIDENT ACTIVITIES:

- **Clinic**: Residents will provide primary and secondary eyecare to both outpatients and inpatients. Common diagnoses that residents will gain expertise include **glaucoma** (primary, low tension, and secondary), **age-related macular degeneration**, and **retinovascular complications** including diabetic retinopathy. Residents will also support the **emergency room/urgent care** and respond to **emergent inpatient consultation requests**, including a rotating **after-hours on-call coverage** to the hospital for all eye care needs presenting after normal business hours.
- **Advanced Skills**: Residents are trained in a variety of **advanced clinical skills** and **ocular imaging modalities**, including anterior and posterior segment OCT, OCT angiography, ophthalmic ultrasonography, slit lamp and fundus photography, interpretation of fluorescein angiography, automated perimetry interpretation, scleral depression, and gonioscopy with fundus contact lens exam In addition, residents will also be trained to incorporate **laboratory tests** and other **diagnostic imaging modalities** (CT, MRI, MRA, Carotid Duplex, etc.) into patient care.
- **Rotations**: Residents will rotate through VA Boston Specialty Rotations, including **Retina**, **Glaucoma**, **Cornea**, **Oculoplastics**, **Uveitis** and **Specialty/Medical Contact Lenses**. In addition, residents will rotate through **BostonSight** where they are exposed to an international patient base contending with advanced and uncommon surface pathologies (e.g. graft versus host disease, Stevens Johnson syndrome) and acquire an appreciation of the utility of the scleral contact lens.
- **Collaborations and Clinical Teaching:** Residents will have the **opportunity to collaborate with various medical and surgical subspecialties** including neurology, neurosurgery, vascular, geriatrics, and dermatology. A close working relationship with primary care physicians, sub-specialists, and other health care providers produces an environment fostering growth of knowledge in systemic diseases and associated ocular manifestations and facilitates an appreciation for the complete package of care required to manage complex issues. Residents may **supervise optometry students** in the second half of the year. **Paid clinical and didactic tutoring opportunities** have been available through New England College of Optometry.
- **Didactic and Scholarly Activities:** The core of the resident experience at VA Boston Healthcare System is our **Optometry Grand Rounds** conducted on Friday afternoons. Content includes lectures from ODs, MDs and other health professionals, thrice yearly literature reviews, informal case reports and CE lectures.

Four NECO sponsored conferences occur throughout the year. Residents will attend the **American Academy of Optometry Annual Meeting** and participation in other in-house medical and surgical grand rounds and conferences are encouraged, including **optometry/neurosurgery case collaborations**. Additional **scholarly activities** required by the resident include:

- Submitting an abstract to the Resident's Program at the American Academy of Optometry's Meeting, with poster/paper presentation contingent upon acceptance
- Resident Informal Case Reports
- Two Resident One-Hour CE Presentations
- Participation in Thrice Annual Literature Review
- Writing a Publishable-Quality Manuscript

TIME COMMITMENT:

This residency is one calendar year in length, commencing on July 1, 2027, and running through June 30, 2028. Clinic hours are M-F 8:00AM to 5:00PM, excepting emergencies. Each resident is on-call every 9th week.

STIPEND

The current salary is $52,150.

HEALTH BENEFITS:

Health insurance benefits are offered through the VA.

LEAVE:

Annual leave (vacation): 13 days

Sick leave: 13 days

Administrative leave: Official business, such as taking a state licensing exam or attending an educational meeting, can be requested as administrative leave (not charged against vacation time) and is usually granted if not excessive or in conflict with our ability to provide patient care.

PROFESSIONAL LIABILITY INSURANCE:

Liability insurance is not needed while working for the VA in your capacity as a United States government employee, therefore, the VA does not provide liability insurance. While at NECO affiliated clinics, coverage is provided under the College's umbrella policy.

CRITERIA FOR COMPLETION OF THE RESIDENCY:

1. Per VHA Directive 1121(2), residents must "obtain licensure in a State, territory, or Commonwealth of the United States, or in the District of Columbia before completion of the first year of VA residency."
2. The resident is required to deliver patient care services which demonstrate the advanced clinical skills, knowledge, and expertise required to meet the goals and objectives of the program, as determined by the residency supervisor and faculty.
3. The resident is expected to perform in a professional manner in the delivery of patient care services and to observe those proprieties of conduct and courtesies that are consistent with the rules and regulations governing the Department of Veterans Affairs and the College.
4. The resident is required to keep a log of all patient care encounters, specifying if referral for subspecialty care was needed.

5. The resident is required to participate in the didactic activities enumerated above and to complete all required scholarly activities in a satisfactory manner.

Periodic evaluations will take place to ensure that appropriate progress is being made and that all deficiencies are addressed in a timely manner.

APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS:

Please note that each Boston campus (Jamaica Plain, West Roxbury, and Brockton) is a separate match entry in ORMatch. We strongly recommend that all candidates interested in the Boston program apply to all 3 campuses (Jamaica Plain, West Roxbury, and Brockton) in ORMatch.

- United States citizenship is required to qualify for VHA appointment in a paid VA optometry resident position funded by the Office of Academic Affiliations.
  Reference: VA Handbook 5005/57, Part II, Chapter 3, Paragraph 3.g.(1) & (5)(c), dated June 14, 2012.
- Applicants must have earned an OD degree from a school or college of optometry with an ACOE accreditation status prior to the onset of the program year.
- Applicants ideally have passed parts I, II, and III of the National Board of Examiners in Optometry prior to the July 1st start date. Any National Board of Examiners in Optometry exam that has not been passed prior to July 1st must be taken and passed prior to completion.
- All candidates must apply through the National Matching Services application at www.natmatch.com/ormatch. The deadline for submission will be January 29, 2027.
- Applications must include the following:
  a) Cover letter
  b) Curriculum vitae
  c) NBEO scores (when available)
  d) Official optometry school transcript
  e) 3 letters of recommendation

Applications are reviewed on a rolling basis by the co-supervisors. Interviews will be arranged for qualified candidates either face to face or remotely at the discretion of the program supervisors. The participating institutions and VA comply with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, Public Law 104-91, and the Age Discrimination Act of 1975, and all related regulations, and assures that they do not, and will not, discriminate against any person on the basis of race, color, sex, disability, or age under any program or activity receiving federal financial assistance.

ACCREDITATION STATUS:

The Accreditation Council on Optometric Education (ACOE) has granted VA Boston 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 FURTHER INFORMATION PLEASE CONTACT:

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