VA Connecticut Healthcare System - West Haven Campus

Residency in Ocular Disease
Emphasis Areas: Low Vision Rehabilitation and Brain Injury Rehabilitation

PROGRAM COORDINATOR: Nancy Shenouda-Awad OD, FAAO
(Nancy.shenouda-awad@va.gov)
ASSISTANT PROGRAM COORDINATOR: Theresa Zerilli, OD, FAAO
SITE LOCATION: West Haven Campus, CT
NUMBER OF POSITIONS: Four paid, one unpaid

MISSION STATEMENT:

The residency in Ocular Disease with emphasis areas: Low Vision Rehabilitation and Brain Injury 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:

GOAL 1: To provide the residents with extensive clinical experience in comprehensive eye care and specialty ocular disease care in a hospital-based setting to gain knowledge of advanced diagnoses and treatment options.

GOAL 2: To provide the residents with extensive clinical experience in conducting comprehensive LV care in a multi-professional setting at the Eastern Blind Rehabilitation Center inpatient as well as outpatient programs.

GOAL 3: To provide the residents with extensive didactic/educational opportunities to supplement their clinical experience. These opportunities reflect the profession of optometry and the changes which take place within the profession.

GOAL 4: Depending on skill set gained and confidence level developed during the residency, the resident may be offered the opportunity to supervise, work alongside, instruct and/or teach optometric interns. This is provided mainly in the Optometry Eye Clinic.

GOAL 5: To provide the residents with the skills to critically read, review, and evaluate the eye-care literature.

GOAL 6: To provide the residents experience in pursuing scholarly activities.

GOAL 7: The residents will gain experience and comfort in working in a multi-disciplinary healthcare setting.

GOAL 8: The residents will gain clinical and educational experience in the Optometry Acquired Brain Injury clinic, housed within the Blind Center, and located in the Optometry LV clinic.

RESIDENCY ACTIVITIES:

1. The resident participates in full-scope comprehensive/ocular disease 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, uveitis 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, and punctal plugs. The resident may get the opportunity to observe ocular surgeries and laser procedures (ALT, SLT, PI's, YAG, PRP, macular laser). There will be some involvement in ordering and observing fluorescein angiography.
4. The resident receives referrals from medical clinics 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; few times a year attending of Yale Ophthalmology's educational symposia; monthly joint Optometry Grand Rounds; and 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 it for publication if the resident desires.
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 and national VA Webinar.
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 may be given the opportunity if desired to work with and supervise optometric students mainly in primary care optometric setting under the direction of an attending.
12. The resident will present lectures on optometric topics to other health-care providers in the hospital.

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 $54,263 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/use 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. Appropriate conduct and patient consideration as outlined in the VA Connecticut by-laws.
3. A detailed patient log detailing each patient encounter.
4. A complete activity log of all didactic and non-clinical activities.
5. Successful completion of lecture assignments.
6. Successful completion of 1 poster abstract submission.
7. Successful completion of a publishable quality clinical paper
8. Successful completion of a year-end lecture at the New England College of Optometry.
9. 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."

A certificate of completion from the New England College of Optometry and the Department of Veterans Affairs will be presented at year's end upon meeting completion requirements.

APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS:

1. 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.

2. Applicants must have earned a Doctor of Optometry degree from a school or college of optometry with an ACOE accreditation status prior to the onset of the program year.

3. The Department of Veterans Affairs evaluates applicants without regard to gender, race, color, creed, age or national origin (https://www.eeoc.gov/fact-sheet/federal-laws-prohibiting-job-discrimination-questions-and-answers).

4. Application form, further instructions, and complete information about the application process must be sought through the ORMatch Service www.natmatch.com/ormatch.
5. Applications must include the following:
    a. Curriculum vitae
    b. Official transcripts of optometric education
    c. NBEO Scores: Applicants ideally have passed all parts of the NBEO prior to the July 1st start date. Any NBEO exam that has not been passed prior to July 1st must be taken and passed prior to the end of the residency.
    d. A brief personal statement detailing your desire to complete a residency.
    e. Three official letters of recommendation.
6. Application deadline is January 29, 2027.
7. An onsite or virtual interview when requested is required

ACCREDITATION STATUS:

The Accreditation Council on Optometric Education (ACOE) has granted VA Connecticut Healthcare System-West Haven Campus 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:

Dr. Nancy Shenouda-Awad
Residency Director
VA Connecticut Healthcare System-West Haven Campus
950 Campbell Avenue
West Haven, CT 06515
(203) 932-5711 ext. 2759 or 2760
Nancy.shenouda-awad@va.gov

Or

Dr. Nicole Quinn
Director of Residencies
New England College of Optometry
424 Beacon Street

Boston, MA 02115
(617) 587-5752
QuinnN@neco.edu