VA Boston Healthcare System

Residency in Vision Rehabilitation

Emphasis Areas: Low Vision Rehabilitation
Brain Injury Rehabilitation

PROGRAM COORDINATOR: Jennifer A. Gustafson, OD, FAAO
PROGRAM SITES: VA Boston Healthcare System and local affiliated sites
NUMBER OF POSITIONS: One

MISSION STATEMENT:

The mission of the Optometric Residency in Vision Rehabilitation at the VA Boston Healthcare System is to provide comprehensive training in the delivery of the highest quality, compassionate low vision and brain injury vision rehabilitation services in a multidisciplinary hospital-based environment. The Residency will provide advanced clinical training and opportunities for clinical teaching, educational activities, and didactic learning to cultivate understanding and proficiency in providing full-scope tertiary eye care. The residency program offers a comprehensive program that includes low vision rehabilitation, brain injury rehabilitation, vision therapy, and primary eye care.

RESIDENCY GOALS:

Goal One: The resident will gain extensive clinical experience in advanced low vision care to adults in an outpatient hospital setting, as part of an interdisciplinary team.

Objectives:

1. The resident will gain facility in examining and managing visually impaired and legally blind patients with a variety of conditions and functional deficits.
2. The resident will complete requests for eye care encounters made by other health care providers.
3. The resident will participate in the development of rehabilitation plans as part of an interdisciplinary team.

Goal Two: The resident will screen, diagnose and treat visual abnormalities from acquired brain injury.

Objective:

1. The resident will gain facility in screening, diagnosing, and managing visual sequelae related to acquired brain injury.

Goal Three: The resident will acquire advanced competency in primary eye care in a hospital-based outpatient setting.

Objectives:

1. The resident will acquire competency in managing the patient in a primary eye care setting.

2. The resident will develop expertise in the diagnosis and management of a large variety of clinical conditions within ocular disease, including anterior and posterior segment conditions, glaucoma, and acquired (mainly traumatic) brain injury.

Goal Four: The resident will be trained in specialty clinics (i.e. Retina, Cornea, Speciality/Medical Contact Lenses, Glaucoma, Uveitis, Oculoplastics) in order to gain knowledge of advanced diagnoses and treatment options, as well as a firm understanding of how ocular pathologies and anomalies relate to visual function.

Objective:

1. The resident will rotate through specialty ophthalmology clinics at the Jamaica Plain campus and/or other sites off campus.

Goal Five: The resident will rotate through external low vision clinics in order to gain additional experience in providing low vision care to patients in other settings such as private practice.

Objective:

1. The resident will rotate through external clinics and participate in the evaluation and treatment of patients with low vision and blindness in other settings outside the VA.

Goal Six: The resident will participate in a wide range of didactic experiences, to foster critical thinking and set a strong foundation for lifelong learning.

Objectives:

1. The resident will attend weekly optometry grand rounds, continuing education courses, and other didactic activities including New England College of Optometry residency conferences.
2. The resident will periodically present case reports during optometry grand rounds.
3. The resident will develop habits of lifelong learning and critical thinking through review of ophthalmic literature, which the resident shall present at optometry grand rounds.

Goal Seven: The resident will participate in scholarly activities that encourage scholastic contributions.

Objectives:

1. The resident will participate in formal low vision instruction to optometry students in a laboratory/classroom setting.
2. The resident will complete a submission of an abstract and/or poster presentation at a regional or national meeting.
3. The resident will complete and submit a research paper, literature review, or clinical case reports of publishable quality to the residency coordinator by the end of the residency.

Goal Eight: The resident will participate in clinical precepting of optometric interns.

Objective:
1. The resident will precept fourth year optometry interns in the low vision clinic at the discretion of the Residency Coordinator(s).

LENGTH OF RESIDENCY:
The residency is one year in length commencing July 1st and ending June 30th of the following year.

WEEKLY HOURS AND ON-CALL DUTIES:
The resident is responsible for 40 duty hours per week. Regular clinic hours are M-F 8:00AM to 5:00 PM, excepting emergencies. There are no on-call duties.

FINANCIAL DETAILS:
The current salary is $52,150.

HEALTH BENEFITS:
Medical health insurance benefits are offered through the VA.

LEAVE:
Each pay period (2 weeks), the resident earns 4 hours of Annual Leave (vacation time) and 4 hours of Sick Leave, for a total of 13 days paid Annual Leave and 13 days paid Sick Leave per year.

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

PROFESSIONAL LIABILITY PROTECTION:
Resident is covered by the Federal Tort Claims Act while practicing at the VA as a United States government employee.

CRITERIA FOR COMPLETION OF RESIDENCY:

1. Per VHA Directive 1121, 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." State licenses require passage of the NBEO exams.
2. The resident is required to deliver patient care services at a level deemed satisfactory by the clinical supervisors, and consistent with the rules and regulations governing the Department of Veterans Affairs and the New England College of Optometry.
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 New England College of Optometry
4. Maintain a detailed and accurate log of all patient care encounters.
5. Complete assigned didactic activities: Friday grand rounds, literature review, NECO residency conferences, TMS trainings.
6. Complete assigned scholarly activities: Co-instruct low vision lab at NECO, complete publishable quality paper, complete 2 one-hour CE lectures, submit a poster abstract to AAO or similar conference

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

A certificate of completion from the New England College of Optometry and the Department of Veterans Affairs will be presented upon completion.

APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS:

- 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 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.
- Applicants ideally have passed all parts of the NBEO prior to the residency start date. Any NBEO exam that has not been passed must be taken and passed prior to the end of the residency year. Individuals accepted into a residency program should obtain a license to practice optometry as early as possible in the residency year. Licensure in a state, territory or commonwealth of the United States must be obtained by the end of the residency year in order to obtain a completion certificate.
- All resident 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:
    - Cover letter/Letter of Intent
    - Curriculum vitae
    - NBEO scores (when available)
    - Official optometry school transcript
    - 3 letters of recommendation
- Interviews will be arranged for qualified candidates either face to face or remotely at the discretion of the program supervisors.

SELECTION PROCESS

1. The residency program coordinator and faculty review the applications received and determine which candidates will be invited to an interview. Onsite interviews are preferred, but virtual interviews may be granted at the discretion of the program coordinator.

2. After completion of the interviews, the residency coordinator ranks the applicants based on their application and interview performance. Emphasis is placed on clinical and academic credentials, letters of recommendation, interpersonal skills and interest in the program. Rankings are submitted to ORMatch by the deadline. All ORMatch rules and processes are followed throughout the application process, match and post-match periods.

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 Vision Rehabilitation 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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