

Frequently Asked Questions

Q: How many residents are in the program?

A: The program has two (2) PGY1 residents and one (1) PGY2 specialty resident (ambulatory care).

Q: How are residents selected for your program?

A: Resident selection involves an application process and an onsite interview. All applications are reviewed by a group including at least the residency program director, clinical coordinator, and the current residents. We review Letter of Intent, CV, Letters of Recommendation, and Transcripts. The group identifies the candidates we would like to bring in for an interview. Interviews are generally held in late January through early March. During the interview, we try to get to know the applicant and assess his/her communication skills, interpersonal skills, problem solving skills, goals, and whether or not he/she is a good fit for our program. As an ASHP-affiliated program, participation in the National Matching Program is mandatory. A formalized, objective, and competitive selection process is utilized for ranking of residents.

Q: What does the on-site interview include?

A: The on-site interview is generally a half day (8:30am-1pm). Applicants will receive a tour of both the Castle Point and FDR/Montrose campuses, with interviews at each site. Typically interviews are with the residency program director, clinical coordinator, pharmacy supervisor, available clinical pharmacy specialists/preceptors, and our current residents. Applicants meet with multiple people and sit in on various patient encounters/clinics, so they can determine if the residency and the VA HVHCS is a good fit for them as well. We do not specifically address clinical skills and will not give you a case to write-up. The goal of the interview is for the applicant and the program to assess fit and determine if it is a good match. Applicants are required to give a formal 10-15 minute presentation.

Q: What transcripts are required when applying?

A: College of pharmacy only.

Q: How is the PGY1 resident's year organized?

A: The first four (4) weeks of residency are spent in orientation with introduction to various computer programs, policy review, logistics, residency structure, and development of customized training plans. During this timeframe, residents will meet individually with the Residency Program Director to plan the year's schedule. The training year is resident specific, developed to meet residents' professional goals. Required training generally makes up 3/4 of the training year with 1/4 devoted to electives. While certain rotations are required, the wide availability of electives provides a unique experience for each resident, and more time may be allocated to individual areas of interest.

Q: How flexible is the program if interests change throughout the year?

A: Incredibly flexible. The residency program director will do everything she can to work with you and the preceptors to change rotations and arrange for electives (within the scope of VA HVHCS) if interests change throughout the year. Everyone involved with the program is focused on ensuring the residents are able to get the most out of the residency year. A wide range of electives are available to choose from. Electives may be scheduled throughout the year and do not have to wait until the end of training. The duration of elective rotations is customized and can range from 2-16 weeks. If an elective is not currently available in an area of interest, great efforts will be made to create an opportunity. Required learning experiences may be repeated with further focus if desired.

Q: How are residents evaluated?

A: Residents receive a list of goals and objectives at the beginning of each learning experiences. Our program utilizes Resitrak™ for our resident evaluation system. Residents receive frequent verbal feedback from their preceptors throughout the learning experiences, but formal written evaluations are completed by the resident and preceptor at the end of the rotation. For longitudinal training, written evaluations are required quarterly. Snapshot evaluations are also assigned by preceptors periodically to evaluate a specific learning objective. On a quarterly basis, the Residency Program Director provides also residents with an evaluation of their progress. The objective of the frequent evaluations is to provide constructive feedback to the resident on their progress to maximize the opportunity for learning.

Q: What is the staffing requirement?

A: The only staffing PGY1 residents partake in is as a component of their Staffing/Pharmacy Service rotation. VA HVHCS residents have no extra staffing responsibilities. In fact, our residents are scheduled: Monday through Friday, 8:00am to 4:30pm, NO nights, NO weekends, NO on-call duty, NO extra staffing! Sound too good to be true? Wondering what the catch is? No catch! Duty hours are from 8:00am to 4:30pm. However, successful residents will be expected to work outside these hours to be fully prepared for rotations and complete projects. The amount of time spent outside of standard working hours varies on many factors, including the current rotation and other projects/responsibilities. Residents are required to follow the ASHP Duty hours, which provide requirements for total work time for training hours, residency related work after duty hours, and any moonlighting at or outside the hospital. PGY2 residents have no official Staffing requirement, but will be exposed to the Pharmacy workflow during Orientation and deemed necessary throughout the year.

Q: Is there an opportunity as a PGY1 resident to early commit to the PGY2 program?

A: Yes. The Residency Program Director will notify all PGY1 residents of the option to express interest in our PGY2 Ambulatory Care Pharmacy Residency.

Q: Do residents receive financial support to attend professional meetings?

A: Financial support has traditionally been available for travel to required meetings such as ASHP Midyear Clinical Meeting and the Eastern States Pharmacy Residents and Preceptors Conference.

Q: Do residents have library privileges?

A: Residents have access to the VA HVHCS onsite library, VISN #3 Online Digital Library (which offers access to various medical and pharmacy journals), Micromedex, Up-to-date, and various other clinical resources.

Q: Do residents have access to the Internet and email?

A: Residents will have their own desks and computers in a shared resident workspace, and will have access to both internet and email.

Q: Where do residents park?

A: Free onsite parking for all residents.

Q: What types of positions have former residents accepted?

A: Our former PGY1 residents have successfully pursued a diverse range of positions, including clinical pharmacist positions at university hospitals. Several former residents have remained with the VA system. Since the inception of our PGY1 residency program in 2008, two (2) of the seven (7) total residents have been hired on here at VA HVHCS after the completion of the residency. Three (3) of our PGY1 residents have gone on to complete PGY2 training in various specialties, including geriatrics, infectious disease, and ambulatory care.