



Frequently Asked Questions: VANJHCS PGY-1 Pharmacy Residency

1. Is the VANJHCS PGY-1 Pharmacy Residency ASHP accredited?

Yes. The PGY-1 Pharmacy Residency conducted by VA New Jersey Healthcare System in East Orange, NJ is accredited by ASHP.

2. Where is the VA New Jersey Health Care System (VANJHCS) located?

Northern New Jersey. There are two campuses located in East Orange and Lyons plus ten Community Based Outpatient Clinics (CBOCs) located throughout northern and central New Jersey. East Orange is adjacent to the city of Newark. Lyons is 22 miles west of East Orange.

3. Is the VANJHCS a teaching facility?

Yes. We are affiliated with the Rutgers New Jersey Medical Schools and the Pharmacy Schools at Rutgers University School of Pharmacy, Philadelphia College of Pharmacy and Fairleigh Dickinson School of Pharmacy. Veterans Health Administration operates one of the largest health care systems in the world and provides training for a majority of America's medical, nursing, and allied health professionals. Roughly 60% of all medical residents obtain a portion of their training at VA hospitals.

4. What patient care services does VANJHCS provide?

Inpatient, outpatient, and extended care services. As an integrated health care system, we offer a wide variety of patient care settings.

Inpatient Services include:

130 inpatient acute care medical/surgical/psychiatric beds (includes a spinal cord injury unit)

240 nursing home/extended care beds

110 domiciliary & residential program beds

100 long term psychiatric beds

Outpatient Services include:

Primary Care – uses Patient Aligned Care Teams (PACT)

Specialty Care including cardiology, dental, dermatology, endocrinology, gastroenterology, hemodialysis, infectious diseases, oncology, orthopedics, pain management, physiatry, podiatry, psychiatry, pulmonology, renal, rheumatology, substance abuse treatment, urology, Women's Health

5. What is the strength of the VANJHCS PGY-1 Residency Program?

Ambulatory care practice. Our Residency program is ambulatory care focused. We offer a variety of rotations for residents to give a well-rounded experience in inpatient and outpatient practice settings but our program's strength is the variety of ambulatory care practice rotations we offer – primary care, anti-coagulation, psychiatry, and geriatrics.

6. What is Pharmacy’s reputation within VANJHCS?

Very well respected. Pharmacists are valued members of the healthcare team and key members of a variety of interdisciplinary teams and Committees. Pharmacists can practice at the top of their licenses. Most preceptors have scope of practice with prescribing privileges and work in pharmacist-run outpatient clinics.

7. How many PGY-1 Pharmacy Residency positions are available?

We currently have two positions available for our program.

8. Does the VANJHCS Residency Program participate in “the Match”?

Yes. We participate in the ASHP Resident Matching Program. Our PGY-1 Pharmacy Residency NMS Match Code is 235113.

9. How does an interested candidate apply for the VANJHCS residency?

By submitting the required application materials through ASHP’s Pharmacy Online Residency Centralized Application Service (PhORCAS). The PhORCAS website is available at <http://www.ashp.org/phorcas>.

10. When is the application deadline?

January 2nd at 11:59 PM. All application materials are due at that time including letters of recommendation. Incomplete applications will not be considered. It is important that you allow ample time for your letters of recommendation to be submitted to PhORCAS.

11. What are the applicant requirements?

- U.S. Citizenship at time of application
- Doctor of Pharmacy degree from an ACPE Accredited College of Pharmacy with a GPA of ≥ 3.3
- Eligible for licensure or licensed to practice pharmacy in a US state or territory or the District of Columbia
- English language proficiency

12. What are the application submission requirements?

- One page letter of intent that answers these three questions:
 - Why do you want to do this Residency?
 - What are your personal and professional strengths?
 - Where do you see yourself in five years?
- Curriculum Vitae
- College of Pharmacy transcripts
- Three letters of recommendation

13. How are applicants selected for an on-site interview?

Completed application packets are reviewed by members of the Residency Advisory Committee to determine the candidates who most closely match our program goals and opportunities. Your letter of intent, CV, pharmacy school transcript, and letters of recommendation are key components of the review. Work experience, career goals, leadership activities, teaching experience, and involvement in professional activities are major factors in our selection process.

14. If chosen for an interview, what is the interview process?

An on-site interview is required and takes place at the East Orange campus. Interviews are held from late January through the first week of March. Interviewees are responsible for their travel and lodging costs.

15. What should I expect during the on-site interview?

The interview process is a half day of meetings with the Residency Program Director, Pharmacy Service Chief, preceptors and the current residents (8am -12:30pm or 12pm -4:30pm). There are four scheduled meetings: Interview, Skills Assessment, Facility Tour and Presentation. The meetings are designed to assess a candidate's overall fit with our program based on personal career goals, ability to answer clinical and non-clinical questions, communication skills, and interpersonal skills. Applicants meet with multiple people and have ample opportunities to ask questions so they can determine if the VANJHCS program will be a good fit for them.

16. What is the salary offered for Residents?

Approximately \$47,567

17. What benefits are offered?

- A variety of insurance options are available (e.g. medical, dental, life).
- 10 paid Federal holidays, 13 vacation days, and 13 sick days.
- Residents share a large office area and each resident has a dedicated workspace computer, desk, telephone, and file space as well as a shared printer.
- Approved absence for the ASHP Midyear Clinical Meeting and the Eastern States Conference for Pharmacy Residents and Preceptors.
- Medical Library with electronic journal access.
- Laboratory coats.
- Free on-site parking.
- Free access to exercise facility at the East Orange campus.

18. What is the starting date of the residency program?

On or about July 1st.

19. How long do Residents have to obtain a pharmacist license?

90 days. Residents are required to obtain a pharmacist license in any state, US territory or District of Columbia by October 1st.

20. What happens if the Resident is not licensed within three months from the date of appointment?

S/he will receive communication that separation action may be initiated if licensure is not secured within three months from the date of appointment.

21. What are the required core rotations?

- Orientation
- Ambulatory (Primary) Care
- Anticoagulation
- Acute Care Internal Medicine
- Pharmacy Practice
- Pharmacy Service Administration & Leadership
- Rural Health/ Home Based Primary Care

23. What elective rotations are offered?

- Extension of core rotation(s)
- Ambulatory Care Infectious Disease
- Extended Care/Geriatrics
- Home Based Primary Care/Spinal Cord Injury
- Pharmacy Informatics
- Psychiatry
- Individualized rotation – designed based on the resident’s interest and VANJHCS preceptor resources to provide the rotation

Residents choose 5 elective rotations.

24. What are the required longitudinal experiences?

- Major Project -including ASHP poster presentation, Eastern States Residency Conference platform presentation and culminating in a publishable manuscript
- Medication Use Evaluation
- Medication Safety/Adverse Drug Event Reporting
- Non-formulary/Prior Authorization consult reviews
- Pharmacy practice experience (staffing)
- Pharmacy Resident Clinic -anti-coagulation and primary care patients followed throughout the residency
- Pharmacy Systems Process Project

25. Are all rotation preceptors pharmacists?

Yes. Your rotation preceptor is always a pharmacist. Most preceptors are residency trained and/or have specialty certifications.

26. How long are the rotations?

4 -5 weeks. Core rotations are 4 -5 week experiences. Elective rotations are 4 week experiences. The resident will complete 12 rotations (7 Core and 5 Elective).

27. Will all rotations be experienced at the East Orange campus?

No. Approximately 80% of a resident's time is spent on the East Orange campus and 20% at the Lyons campus. About one day per month is spent at the CBOC in Hackensack, NJ as part of the Resident Pharmacy Clinic longitudinal rotation.

28. Do you have pharmacist-run clinics?

Yes. Many of the preceptors have a Scope of Practice with prescribing privileges. These clinical pharmacists are credentialed to provide disease state and medication management for the patients in their clinic. The pharmacist-run clinics include primary care (management of diabetes, hypertension, dyslipidemia, smoking cessation), infectious disease, anti-coagulation and psychiatry. Residents are exposed to disease state and medication management in these areas during their rotations and longitudinal experiences.

29. Is the program flexible?

Yes. Everyone involved with the residency program is focused on ensuring that the residents are able to get the most out of the residency year. The Residency Program Director will do everything she can to work with you and the preceptors to change rotations if interests change throughout the year.

30. What skills will I develop during the residency?

Those needed to become a versatile practitioner. Learning experiences develop well-rounded pharmacists with strong leadership abilities, and skills in project management, critical thinking, and oral and written communication. Residents build on their PharmD education to apply the knowledge and skills gained in Pharmacy School to real patients and situations.

During the year you will:

- Learn to think critically
- Provide direct patient care in an ambulatory care setting
- Make appropriate drug therapy plans and patient care decisions
- Work collaboratively within an interdisciplinary team
- Develop organizational and management skills
- Develop problem solving and leadership skills
- Manage your time to organize and complete a major project
- Write a manuscript suitable for publication
- Provide education and in-services to a variety of health care staff
- Become proficient in oral and written communication
- Develop presentation and education skills
- Precept PharmD students

31. What support is provided for the Major Project?

Residents choose a project addressing a clinical question or pharmacy service issue. A list of suggested topics is generated by the pharmacy staff and past residents. You can select a topic from this list or you can select your own. Projects must be able to be completed in the 1-year time frame, be applicable to patient care, and be of value to the facility. The goal of the project is to expose residents to project design, data analysis and interpretation, and the publication of findings. You will have a team of two or more preceptors to guide you through the process.

32. What presentations are expected of residents?

Residents are expected to present two journal clubs, two case presentations, and one in-service to a multidisciplinary audience in addition to presentations and projects required for specific rotations. Residents will complete a medication use evaluation that is presented to the Pharmacy & Therapeutics Committee. Their major project will be presented as a poster at the ASHP Midyear Clinical Meeting and a platform presentation at the Eastern States Conference for Pharmacy Residents and Preceptors.

33. Does the residency have a staffing component?

Yes. As required for ASHP accreditation, there is a staffing component. This learning experience provides a practical and well-rounded experience in the complete process of drug delivery to patients and pharmacy operations management. Residents staff one weekend per month in the inpatient pharmacy and one day per month in the outpatient pharmacy.

34. What will I be doing during the staffing component?

Residents staff in the East Orange inpatient and outpatient pharmacies. Inpatient staffing includes medication order verification, IV medication preparation and discharge medication reconciliation. Outpatient staffing involves medication order verification, patient counseling and prescription checking.

35. Is there an “on-call” program?

No. The East Orange inpatient pharmacy operates 24/7 so there is no need for an “on-call” pharmacist.

36. What computer system is used at the VANJHCS?

The VA's VISTA (Veterans Health Information Systems and Technology Architecture) system. It provides an integrated inpatient and outpatient electronic health record and administrative tools to help deliver the best quality health care to our veterans. It is a fully computerized patient record system (CPRS) with physician order entry providing efficient and effective treatment of patients as well as simplified data collection for residency projects.

37. What clinical and drug information resources are available to me?

The VANJHCS computer network has a wide variety of resources including Lexi-Comp, Micromedex, Up-To-Date, PubMed and the electronic VA Library of many medical and pharmacy journals.

38. Will I have a mentor?

Yes. You will choose a mentor who will guide you through your residency. Your mentor serves as an additional go-to person for questions and support outside of the Residency Program Director.

39. Do the residents precept pharmacy students?

Yes. Residents will have opportunities to interact with pharmacy students from our affiliated Schools of Pharmacy.

40. Does the program offer a Teaching Certificate?

Yes. Residents are encouraged to earn a Teaching Certificate through our partnership with Rutgers University. The Rutgers program involves both didactic and experiential components. This is an optional program that is above and beyond the requirements of the residency program.

41. Is Basic Life Support (BLS) training mandatory?

Yes. BLS is required at the beginning of the residency.

42. Is Advanced Cardiovascular Life Support (ACLS) training mandatory?

No. ACLS training is optional and can be obtained during the residency.

Visit us at www.newjersey.va.gov/services/PharmacyResidency

