

**VA**



U.S. Department  
of Veterans Affairs

Veterans Health  
Administration

Southern Arizona VA Health Care System (SAVAHCS)

**Pharmacy Residency Program (PGY2) – Oncology**  
Accredited by the American Society of Health-System Pharmacists  
since 2010

# Welcome to the VA Tucson-Southern AZ VA Health Care System!



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## PGY2 Program Purpose

PGY2 residency programs build upon Doctor of Pharmacy (PharmD) education and PGY1 pharmacy residency training to develop pharmacist practitioners with knowledge, skills, and abilities as defined in the educational competency areas, goals, and objectives for advanced practice areas. Residents who successfully complete PGY2 residency programs are prepared for advanced patient care or other specialized positions, and board certification in the advanced practice area, if available.

## Residency Goals and Objectives

The goals of the VA Tucson-Southern AZ VA Health Care System PGY2 oncology pharmacy residency program are to provide specialty training for pharmacists to develop the skills necessary to ensure optimal drug therapy to cancer patients, to analyze and disseminate drug information to other health care professionals and patients, to investigate and solve complex therapeutic problems in a scientific manner, and to further enhance the verbal and written communication skills of the resident. The resident is expected to provide care to cancer patients in a wide variety of clinical environments, including outpatient care, surgical, acute care, and hospice/palliative care setting. Graduates of this 52-week training program should be able to provide a high level of direct patient care, ultimately leading to competence commensurate with Board Certification in Oncology Pharmacy Practice by the Board of Pharmaceutical Specialties and obtain employment as a Clinical Pharmacy Specialist in Oncology

## Residency Preceptors

The PGY2 residency program director serves as the primary preceptor for this second-year specialty residency, along with the other oncology pharmacist practitioner, but the resident may still spend time in some other areas of the health care system with other preceptors. This occurs primarily during elective rotations, administrative projects, and teaching settings.

Preceptors place a high value on the residents and are always accessible.



## Brief Description of 4-8 Week Experiences

- **Orientation:** During this first rotational experience (4-weeks) the resident will be orientated to the residency program including introductions to the health care system and to the pharmacy department systems and processes. The primary goal of orientation is for the resident to understand the basics of workflow and patient care for oncology, establish teaching and research expectations and understand the requirements of residency.
- **Outpatient Oncology:** This is a 8-week experience in which the resident will ensure patients are receiving appropriate drug therapy by completing patient interviews, performing medication counseling on new anti-neoplastic therapies and supportive care medications, and reviewing computerized medical records. The resident will also assist nursing and providers in providing or implementing supportive care measures that are

appropriate for that individual patient. This rotation is repeated to allow the resident more time/experience with management/coordination activities for outpatient oncology in the 2<sup>nd</sup> half of the residency.

- Hem/Onc Consults: During this experience (4-weeks) the resident will learn how to evaluate a patient with a new malignancy diagnosis and/or new treatment request to determine the best management according to guidelines, criteria for use and/or primary literature. The resident will work closely with hem/onc physicians by reviewing new cancer diagnoses in the inpatient and outpatient setting to determine the best treatment approach for that individual patient based on co-morbidities and performance status. This experience is repeated to allow the resident more independence with reviewing consults and helping coordinate treatment/therapy approvals in the 2<sup>nd</sup> half of the residency.
- Palliative/Hospice Care: The resident will be responsible for evaluating and working closely with the palliative oncology patients admitted to the unit that may be having toxicities/issues with chemotherapy, radiation and/or their underlying cancer in addition to seeing patients in the palliative outpatient clinic working closely with our palliative care physician.
- BMT: The resident will be involved in providing direct patient care to Marrow Transplant Unit (MTU) patients in collaboration with the multidisciplinary team at off-site VA (at Nashville, TN or VA Puget Sound Health Care System in Seattle, WA). Responsibilities include TPN management, making recommendations to optimize patients' drug therapy throughout the transplant process, and counseling opportunities. Note: all costs are paid by the resident (financial assistance may be available)
- Gyn/Onc (virtual): The resident will participate with other PGY2 oncology pharmacy residents in a virtual didactic lecture series focused on gynecology oncology topics and will have the opportunity to present a journal club and discuss case presentations.

## Extended Experiences (longer than 8 weeks)

- Oncology Staffing (one half day per week for Aug. and Sept.)
- Surgical Oncology
- Inpatient Oncology
- Medication Use Evaluation (MUE)
- Provider Newsletter
- Patient Newsletter
- PBM Experience (2)
- CE Presentation
- Oncology Investigational Research
- Management Conference
- Journal Club

## Longitudinal Experiences (longer than 32 weeks)

- Teaching/Education
- Residency Project (block 1 & 2)
- Oral Anti-Neoplastic Clinic (one half day per week)
- Oncology Pharmacy Administration
- ADR Reporting

## Teaching Experience Activities

The pharmacy resident delivers multiple educational presentations during the residency program. Examples of required presentations include:

- Disease state and/or medication management topic presentations (2 presentations)
- Journal clubs (4 presentations)
- ACPE-accredited continuing education presentations (one 1-hour ACPE presentation)
- PGY2 VA oncology presentations focused on various malignancies (3-4 per year)
- Pharmacy School Lectures for therapeutics on oncology topics (2 per year)

The PGY2 resident has the opportunity to attend University of Arizona Cancer Center (grand rounds) for additional didactic learning.

The PGY2 oncology pharmacy residents will co-precept and teach pharmacy students as well as PGY1 residents on their elective rotation in hem/onc.

## Elective Opportunities

The resident may choose **two electives** during the residency year. This elective time is used to either tailor additional specific interests of the resident or to further improve upon an already completed rotation. Potential electives available include academia, informatics, hematology, ID, and mental health. Electives can also be designed based on the resident's interest and the resident may repeat a previous experience.

## Residency Project

A completed residency project is required during the residency program. The resident presents the project at a regional or national meeting, as well as submits a written finalized manuscript before the conclusion of the residency program in a format suitable for publication. There are three weeks scheduled with the program for research. One week is during the first quarter of the program focusing on protocol and project approval process. Two weeks are scheduled during the beginning of the third quarter for data collection and analysis. The project is submitted in a written finalized report before the conclusion of the residency program in a format suitable for publication.

A list of recently completed residency projects completed by PGY2 pharmacy residents is outlined below:

- Retrospective Review of Rasburicase in a Veteran Population
- Evaluation of cisplatin/gemcitabine/nab-paclitaxel versus gemcitabine/nab-paclitaxel in advanced/metastatic pancreatic cancer
- A Retrospective Review of Venous Thromboembolism Prophylaxis in Veterans Receiving Immunomodulatory Therapy for Multiple Myeloma: SAVED VETS Study
- Review of Efficacy and Safety Outcomes of Ibrutinib in a Veteran Population with Chronic Lymphocytic Leukemia
- A multi-center retrospective study evaluating palliative antineoplastic therapy administered and medication de-escalation in Veteran cancer patients toward the end-of-life
- Cancer-associated thrombosis and bleeding in veterans on direct oral anticoagulants
- Use of targeted therapies for advanced renal cell carcinoma in the Veterans Health Administration



## Benefits

Residents receive an estimated stipend of \$51,364 per annum. The PGY2 resident meets the eligibility requirements for the Federal Employee Health Benefits (FEHB) and Federal Employees Group Life Insurance (FEGI) . [Link to Federal employee benefits](#) Residents can enroll in FEHB their first days at the VA. Residents do not meet the eligibility of requirements for the following: Family, Medical Leave, including paid parental leave and Flex Spending Accounts (FSAFEDS). Residents accrue 4 hours per pay period (13 days) of annual leave (vacation) and 4 hours per pay period (13 days) of sick leave during the residency program. Additional benefits include: 11 paid Federal holidays and free parking on the SAVAHCS campus and urban Community Based Outpatient Clinics. (CBOC)

Professional Meetings



- Authorized Absence (leave with pay) to attend selected meetings
- Financial support for the registration fees for meetings related to the residency program (e.g. ASHP, HOPA)
- Funds may be available to onset some of the travel expenses to these meetings

## Commonly Asked Questions

Q: Do I need to be licensed in Arizona for the SAVAHCS residency?

A: For VA residencies, including SAVAHCS, you may obtain pharmacist licensure in any of the United States. It is not a requirement for you to be licensed specifically in Arizona for the SAVAHCS residency.

Q: I do not have US citizenship but have a green card. Am I eligible for the residency program?

A: Unfortunately, as a Federal Employer, we only accept residents with US citizenship. We are unable to accept potential residents with a green card.

Q: What are the staffing requirements for this program?

A: Generally, this is once per week in the morning in the IV room overseeing compounding of chemotherapy and other anti-neoplastic therapies. Staffing consists of working together with technicians and other pharmacists in the inpatient pharmacy to triage clinical questions and preparing treatments as requested for hem/onc patients.

Q: May I do an elective experience that is not listed?

A: Elective experiences may be created on site if there is a qualified residency preceptor for that experience. Electives may potentially be arranged by the resident and RPD in advance (a minimum of six months in advance) for unestablished off-site elective. There are several factors involved for creating an elective off-site with a qualified residency preceptor (e.g. resident licensure, ability for SAVAHCS to contract with the off-site).

Q: Does the PGY2 program participate in early commitment?

A: SAVAHCS PGY2 program does participate in early commitment with current PGY1 residents. Please contact residency program director to confirm if early commitment has been met this year.

Q: Does the SAVAHCS PGY2 residency program involve teaching and/or offers teaching certificates?

A: The PGY2 residency program does offer a teaching certificate if resident is interested and did not receive one during PGY1 residency. The Pharmacy Resident Scholars in Teaching and Learning (PRSTL) program is offered and coordinated by the University of Arizona College of Pharmacy. Additionally, precepting and educational activities are longitudinal experiences during the residency program.

Q: Do you participate in CareerPharm's Personnel Placement Service (PPS) at the ASHP Clinical Midyear meeting?

A: We do not participate in PPS.

Q: Is it possible to speak with a current pharmacy resident?

A: Of course! Please email [Nicholas.Little1@va.gov](mailto:Nicholas.Little1@va.gov)

We hope you will join us at the VA Tucson-Southern AZ VA Health Care System for your specialized residency training. We look forward to receiving your application! Please contact the director of the PGY2 residency program for additional information.

## Contact

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