

**General Practice Residency in  
Dentistry Program**

**VA**



**U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs**

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Veterans Health Administration

**VA Portland Health Care System**

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**VA Portland Health Care System  
General Practice Residency in Dentistry  
UPDATED 3/2023**



**ABOUT THE PORTLAND VA HEALTH CARE SYSTEM**

The [VA Portland Health Care System](#) is located on a hillside within Sam Jackson Park and overlooks the city of Portland and the Cascade Range, including Mt. Hood and Mt. St. Helens. This area is known as the medical and dental center for the entire state of Oregon and southwestern Washington. In addition to the Veterans Affairs Medical Center, the University Hospitals and the Oregon Health Sciences University Schools of Dentistry, Medicine, and Nursing are located nearby.

VAPORHCS includes a tertiary-care hospital located near downtown Portland, Oregon and the Vancouver Division, located near downtown Vancouver, Washington. VAPORHCS also operates eight Community Based Outpatient/ Outreach clinics which together serve the Portland/Vancouver metropolitan area, NW Oregon, the central Willamette Valley, Central Oregon, and SW Washington State. The Portland campus is a tertiary care, teaching, and research facility classified by VHA as a 1a complexity level facility, which along with the Puget Sound Healthcare system in Seattle acts one of two referral facilities for the entire Northwest Network VISN 20.

Over 400 residents rotate through VAPORHCS each year in the various specialties of medicine and allied health fields. VAPORHCS and its satellite outpatient clinics provide over 218,000 outpatient visits annually. There is an active research program, excellent medical library, and a full-service medical media department.

**DENTAL CLINIC FACILITIES**

The main clinic is located in VAPORHCS's hospital building which opened in 1988. This 23-operator clinic includes dedicated operatories for periodontics, implants, oral surgery, maxillofacial prosthodontics, and dental hygiene. Our Portland clinic was remodeled in 2020 with new floors, cabinetry, and xray units for each operatory as well as new surgical chairs and delivery systems. Additional features of our clinic include digital radiography with Cone Beam CT, Omnicam digital intraoral scanners, Dentsply MCXL milling units, new Valo curing lights, Dryshield isolation, new Aseptico surgical handpieces, and a full service in-house lab.

A dental operatory and assistant is assigned to each resident during their residency year, so that they can

practice dentistry most efficiently. This arrangement provides valuable experience to facilitate the residents' eventual transition to a private practice upon completion of their training.

We also have a dental clinic located at our Vancouver, Washington division of the Portland VAMC. This is a 12 chair clinic where each resident works for approximately 3 months out of the year in a block rotation. This site is located 13 miles north of the main hospital; no transportation is available for the resident between the two sites.

Additional training and experience is provided at the OHSU Schools of Medicine and Dentistry, where the resident will attend courses and seminars.

VAPORHCS has a comprehensive library containing over 7600 books and 660 journal titles, including a collection of dental journals. The libraries of the medical and dental schools are also available to the GP resident. Residents have access to online resources. The VA has an institutional license w/ Lexi-Comp.

## PORTLAND VA GPR GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

1. Act as a primary care provider for individuals and groups of patients. This includes: providing emergency and multidisciplinary comprehensive oral health care; providing patient focused care that is coordinated by the general practitioner; directing health promotion and disease prevention activities; and using advanced dental treatment modalities.
2. Plan and provide multidisciplinary oral health care for a wide variety of patients including patients with special needs.
3. Manage the delivery of oral health care by applying concepts of patient and practice management and quality improvement that are responsive to a dynamic health care environment.
4. Function effectively within the hospital and other health care environments.
5. Function effectively within interdisciplinary health care teams.
6. Apply scientific principles to learning and oral health care. This includes using critical thinking, evidence or outcomes-based clinical decision-making, and technology-based information retrieval systems.
7. Utilize the values of professional ethics, lifelong learning, patient centered care, adaptability, and acceptance of cultural diversity in professional practice.
8. Understand the oral health needs of communities and engage in community service.



## RESIDENCY PROGRAM OVERVIEW

The VAPORHCS general practice residency is a comprehensive post-graduate dental educational program designed to provide practical clinical and didactic experience. This residency is approved by the American Dental Association's Commission on Dental Accreditation (CODA). We accept 4 residents each year into our program.

This residency will provide clinical experience in all aspects of general dentistry as practiced in a hospital setting. In addition to refining skills in clinical dentistry, the dental resident will learn to manage patients with complex medical histories and how to communicate effectively with other hospital professionals in a larger scale hospital setting.

### *Clinical Dentistry Disciplines*

#### **1. Restorative Dentistry:**

Clinical work in this specialty provides the resident with varied experiences to improve his/her proficiency in operative procedures. This includes experience in composite/amalgam restorations, crown and bridge, and implant restorations. Lectures and demonstrations by the staff members on special techniques are presented throughout the year.

#### **2. Oral Surgery:**

Oral surgery is one of our program's particular strengths and residents can expect to gain a great deal of skill and experience during their year here. Each resident will spend between 1-2 days a week in oral surgery clinic under the supervision of our oral surgeon and full-time attending staff. Residents will perform extractions and be trained in surgical procedures in the dental clinic and the hospital operating rooms. Other than routine extractions, oral surgery performed and/or observed will include removal of impacted teeth, tori removal, osseous and soft tissue surgery, biopsies, and implant surgical placement. Some exposure to IV sedation will be provided including a didactic course and practical experience with the oral surgeon, however IV sedation is not a primary focus of our residency and most residents will not complete enough cases for certification. Residents will also perform a limited number of surgical cases in the operating room.

#### **3. Prosthodontics:**

The resident will spend plentiful time in this specialty. The program is particularly strong in this field, as there are a great number of prosthodontic cases available. The resident experiences all phases in the fabrication of full dentures, partial dentures, crowns, bridges, immediate dentures, and special prostheses for patients who have undergone surgical removal of tumors of the oral cavity and face. Implant experience will be provided in treatment planning, implant restorations, and surgical placement. Residents can expect to place around 10-20 implants depending on interest level.

#### **4. Periodontics:**

Diagnosis, etiology and rationale of periodontal treatment are presented. The importance of follow-up home care and professional maintenance is stressed. Specific periodontal treatment is presented by lecture, demonstration and supervised treatment. Residents will be trained in periodontal surgical techniques by our staff periodontists. Experience in both emergency cases and management of chronic periodontal disease is available.

#### **5. Implant Placement:**

Dedicated time is set aside for implant placement alongside our staff periodontist during Vancouver rotations. Each resident will have approximately 12 scheduled sessions and will place 1 or more implants during each clinic session. Some additional legwork is required as residents will need to effectively coordinate the restorative/surgical workups and post-op appointments. Residents may opt out of implant placement if they prefer not to do the additional work, as implant placement is not a requirement for successful completion of the residency. Residents who have a particular interest in implant placement may also find additional times to place implants outside of these scheduled times.

#### **6. Endodontics:**

The staff dentists supervise this specialty; at this time we do not have an endodontist on staff but our general dentists are experienced with all phases of endodontic treatment. We do occasionally refer out our more difficult endodontic cases to specialists in the community. We are also looking at adding a part-time endodontist to our staff but cannot guarantee if and when that will happen. Training in use of our rotary systems, lateral condensation and warm vertical obturation is provided. A microscope is also available for use. Residents will have scheduled endodontic clinic one half day per week.

#### **7. Geriatric Dentistry/Extended Care:**

An integral part of the resident's Vancouver rotation will be working with an extended care population consisting of a 120-bed nursing home, an adult day care program (about 63 active patients), a Rehabilitation Program (20 in-patient beds), a Chemical Addiction Rehabilitation Service (30 beds), a newly opened Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder Program (15 beds) and a facility for patients awaiting liver transplants. The Dental Service also serves as a consultant for the home care program, and the Community Nursing Home program; both based in Vancouver. Upon completion of the extended-care rotation, we expect residents to demonstrate increased competency in patient assessment (medical and dental), interdisciplinary communication skills, patient transfer techniques, and planning and dental treatment of these complex patients.

#### **8. Consult Clinic:**

One half-day per week, residents are responsible for completing consults from other hospital services. These will include evaluations prior to bisphosphonate therapy, head and neck radiation, joint and heart valve replacements as well as severe dental infections, oral mandibular advancement devices for sleep apnea, and others.

When not assigned to oral surgery, consult or endodontic clinic, residents will be treating comprehensive care patients in their own patient pool, however the schedule can be tweaked as desired to provide more exposure in areas of particular interest.

### ***Off-Service Rotations***

#### **1. Anesthesiology:**

Eighty (80) hours are devoted to an anesthesiology rotation in the VAMC operating rooms. Residents will experience starting IV's, intubation, and monitoring patients during general anesthesia. Resident will also help perform pre-op assessments with guidance from anesthesiology staff.

#### **2. ENT:**

This 36-hour block assignment to the VAMC Ear, Nose & Throat Service provides clinical experience in medical and social history, physical evaluation, examination and clinical management of a variety of ear, nose and throat disorders beyond the scope of a general dentist including management of dysphagia and malignancy.

**3. Liver Transplant:**

This 40-hour block assignment provides clinical experience in risk assessment, history and physicals, admission, discharge and care of inpatients and outpatients pre and post transplant.

**4. Multidisciplinary Clinic and Tumor Board:**

This is an 18 hour rotation taking place over three Thursdays. In the morning, residents will join our maxillofacial prosthodontist (Dr. Joy Wang) in completing pre-radiation dental evaluations. In the afternoon, residents will join Dr. Wang and the Multidisciplinary cancer care team as they complete an in-person evaluation of cancer patients in which a physical and medical evaluation is performed, followed by a discussion of possible treatment options and patient education. Finally, residents will attend the tumor board at which all findings are presented and again discussed among providers to make a final treatment decision.

**5. Community Service**

Dental residents will be involved in providing dental education and screenings for the Veterans in possible VA Stand Down services which take place in different locations at different years. In addition, during Cancer Awareness Week in April, dental residents will participate with Oregon Health Sciences University in providing Head and Neck Screening exams to the community.

***Didactic Program*****1. Moderate Sedation Course (54 hours)**

Course offered by the Oregon Academy of General Dentistry and the OHSU School of Dentistry, aimed at providing a comprehensive foundation for how to administer intravenous sedation. Topics range from pharmacology to venipuncture technique to conducting a history and physical.

**2. Advanced Cardiac Life Support**

Successful completion of this course will result in certification in ACLS which is required for performing IV sedations.

**3. Literature Reviews and Journal Clubs**

Residents abstract and report on classic and current literature related to assigned topics. Staff dentists run sessions on a variety of dental topics.

**4. Hospital Dentistry Seminars**

Residents will prepare presentations on various pertinent medical topics as they affect the oral structures and dentistry.

**5. Prosthodontic Curriculum**

Our maxillofacial prosthodontist (Joy Wang DDS MSD) will give a regular lecture series reviewing basic removable and fixed prosthodontic techniques, as well as discussion of advanced techniques. This includes a 6-week hands-on Denture Fabrication course in which each resident will fabricate a complete set of upper and lower dentures.

**6. Implant Curriculum**

Residents will meet with staff periodontists and general dentists early in residency to begin learning the basics of CBCT interpretation, planning, and implant placement with the Straumann system used at our dental clinics.

Staff restorative dentists, implant surgeons, and residents meet monthly to discuss implant cases and

approve patients for implant surgery. Discussions will involve the medical, restorative, and surgical facets of treatment planning implant cases.

#### **7. Continuing Education Courses**

Residents will have the chance to attend the annual session of the Oregon Dental Association held each spring. This will allow residents not only to attend a variety of courses but also allow networking with local dentists in the area.

#### **8. Treatment Planning Seminars**

This seminar is aimed to provide advice and guidance on complex treatment plans that residents encounter. Prosthodontists and general dentists will be available to consult different approaches to treatment plans. Each resident will be expected to present 2 cases during the year. We will have additional treatment planning sessions utilizing Spear Online courses which our residents may also access throughout the year.

#### **9. Obstructive Sleep Apnea**

Residents will receive didactic training on assessment and fabrication of TAPIII appliances and will treat these patients during dedicated clinic time.

#### **10. Oral Pathology and Biopsy**

Residents will receive training on biopsy and suturing techniques from Portland VA periodontal attendings as well as hands-on experience. Residents will also participate in a quarterly Clinical Pathological Correlation Conference hosted by Dr. Jill White (Oral Maxillofacial Pathologist, SFVA) and involving 6 other VA residency programs nationwide. Prior to each conference, residents will evaluate and biopsy lesions which will be sent to Dr. White for interpretation and histology. At each conference session, residents from each participating site will present and these cases for discussion and learning. Each resident is expected to present a minimum of 1 case during the year.

#### **11. CAD/CAM**

Residents will receive didactic and hands-on training on the fabrication of CEREC crowns using our Omnicam and MCXL milling unit. E.max and feldspathic materials are available. An Omnicam and MCXL are available in both Portland and Vancouver clinics.

In addition to the above, various lectures from attending providers will be given throughout the year on topics such as bisphosphonate therapy, hospital credentialing and privileging, and others. Several other consultants will also provide instruction, such as representatives from Straumann, practice management firms, and financial advisors.

### **FACULTY AND ATTENDINGS**

Octavia Lively, DDS (University of Washington)

Albert Fu, DDS (University of the Pacific)

David Armin, DDS (Ohio)

Kathleen Hanson, DMD (OHSU)

Carolyn Harakal, DDS (Maryland / Portland VA)

Thomas Kaiser, DDS (Virginia Commonwealth University)

Kevin Larsen, DMD (OHSU)

Trang Pham, DDS (UCLA / OHSU)

(interviews in progress)

Nels Walther, DMD (OHSU)

GPR Program Director

Chief

Assistant chief

Staff Dentist

Staff Prosthodontist

Staff Dentist

Fee-Basis Dentist

Staff Periodontist

Staff Periodontist

Staff Dentist



Joy Wang, DDS, MSD (Buffalo / UT Houston)  
Theodore Weesner, DDS (Minnesota / UT San Antonio)  
Craig Wong, DMD (OHSU / E. Orange NJ VAMC)  
Matt Coen, DDS (Iowa)

Staff Maxillofacial Prosthodontist  
Staff Periodontist  
Staff Oral Surgeon  
Staff Dentist

### **DUTY, LEAVE AND CALL**

Appointment as a resident is for one year starting July 1st. The normal tour of duty will be 7:30AM-5:00PM Mon-Thurs and 7:30-4:00 on Friday, with every other Friday off. Residents frequently stay late on Mondays when working alongside our oral surgeon in Portland.

Residents take call for 2 weeks at a time with an attending on 2<sup>nd</sup> call. Residents will be expected to be available by cell phone and within 30 minutes of the hospital 24/7 while on call. The VA is not a trauma center so calls are relatively infrequent, and coming in after-hours or on weekends is rare.

Thirteen days of annual leave (vacation) is granted per year at the convenience of the Dental Service as well as 13 days of sick leave and 11 federal holidays.

The current stipend for residents is approximately \$62,000. Other benefits include: medical insurance, dental insurance, malpractice coverage, scrubs, and free parking.

### **EXPECTATIONS AND CULTURE**

As a service we value work-life balance and prioritize a collegial and positive relationship between our residents and attendings/staff. We enjoy getting to know our residents on a personal level and it's not unusual for attendings and residents to meet up after work for happy hour or social events. Our attendings are dedicated, experienced and enthusiastic teachers and our residents can expect to be treated respectfully, even when constructive criticism or guidance is required.

Because it's important to us that our resident class relate well to patients, each other, and our clinic staff, we value a **positive attitude, teamwork and good communication/interpersonal skills** very highly in our applicants (in addition to scholastic and clinical achievements). Residents are expected to arrive on time and attend all didactic sessions and rotations, even if they fall outside normally scheduled hours. You may also need to come early or stay late to prepare for your patients, finish notes, or assist a coresident/attending who is running over.

A certificate is awarded by the Department of Veterans Affairs upon satisfactory completion of all program requirements.

## APPLICATION INFORMATION

### Residents must meet the following requirements:

- Be a citizen of the United States of America
- Be a student in good standing or a graduate of a United States dental school which has been approved by the American Dental Association council on Dental Education
- Have passed the NDBE (part I and II) or the INDBE by matriculation date
- Acquire a Postdoctoral Dental Match Program Code.

All qualified candidates will receive equal consideration without regard to race, religion, color, national origin, sex, politics, marital status, non-disqualifying or mental handicap, age or membership or non-membership in a labor organization.

Our Dental Service participates in the American Dental Education Association Postdoctoral Application Support Service, (ADEA PASS) and only accept applications through PASS. In addition, we participate in the Match Program.

### **To Apply for This Residency, Complete the Following by October 1<sup>st</sup> of application year:**

- Complete an official application through the Postdoctoral Application Support Service: ADEA PASS website. <http://www.adea.org/PASSapp/>
- Register in the Match Program: <https://natmatch.com/dentres/>
- Submit required supplemental materials:
  - VA application for Health Profession Trainees ([VA Form 10-2850d](#)).
  - 2x2 photo

All supplemental materials should be sent to:

Portland VA Health Care System  
Dental Service P-3-Dent  
ATTN: Dental GPR Director  
3710 SW U.S. Veterans Hospital Road  
Portland, OR 97239

Phone: (503) 220-8262 x 52008  
Fax: (503) 220-3442  
E-mail [VHAPOR-DentalGPRProgram@va.gov](mailto:VHAPOR-DentalGPRProgram@va.gov)

Applications will be reviewed in the order they are received; preference may be given to those applications submitted earlier.

### Interviews:

Interviews will be arranged by invitation from the Program Director once all your application materials have been received. These interviews are normally scheduled in November. We may also do a first-round interview prior, via Microsoft Teams.