

VACIHCS Pharmacy Residency Program Preceptor Biographies

Megan Barajas, PharmD, BCPS, BCOP

Dr. Barajas is the Hematology/Oncology clinic Program Manager. Dr. Barajas earned her Doctor of Pharmacy degree from Drake University in 2011. Following graduation, she completed a PGY-1 Pharmacy Practice Residency at Mayo Clinic in Rochester, MN. She went on to complete a PGY-2 residency focused in hematology/oncology at Mayo Clinic as well. Following completion of residency, Dr. Barajas moved back to Des Moines and has worked at VA Central Iowa since July 2013 and currently practices in the Hematology/Oncology clinic.

Ashley E. Behrens, PharmD, BCPS

Dr. Behrens obtained her Doctor of Pharmacy degree from Creighton University in Omaha, NE. Following graduation, she completed a pharmacy practice residency at Iowa Methodist Medical Center in Des Moines, IA. In August 2010, Dr. Behrens transitioned to VA Central Iowa Health Care System and worked in many of the outpatient clinics. She transitioned to Geriatrics/Long Term Care in the Community Living Center (CLC) in June 2011. In December 2011 she received her BCPS certification.

Amanda Bellile, PharmD, BCPS

Dr. Bellile is a clinical pharmacy specialist in pain management. She earned her Doctor of Pharmacy Degree from Drake University in 2017. Following graduation, she completed a PGY-1 Pharmacy Practice Residency at the Central Arkansas Veterans Healthcare System in Little Rock, Arkansas. She went on to complete a PGY-2 residency focused in pain management/palliative care also at the Central Arkansas Veterans Healthcare System. Dr. Bellile then moved back to Des Moines and has worked at VA Central Iowa since July 2019 and currently practices in the whole health pain clinic and as pain management support for primary care. She received her board certification in pharmacotherapy in 2019.

Allison Berkland, PharmD, BCACP

Dr. Berkland is a Clinical Pharmacy Specialist in Ambulatory Care at the VA Central Iowa Health Care System in Des Moines, IA. She earned her Doctor of Pharmacy degree from the University of Iowa College of Pharmacy in 2007 and completed an ASHP accredited residency in Pharmacy Practice at the Kansas City Veterans Affairs Medical Center in Missouri. Upon completion of residency training, Dr. Berkland held the positions of Adjunct assistant Professor in Ambulatory Care at Drake University College of Pharmacy and Health Sciences where she practiced at Penn Avenue Internal Medicine Clinic. She provided medication therapy management services under a collaborative practice agreement in diabetes, hypertension, hyperlipidemia, and anticoagulation. At VA Central Iowa Health Care system, she currently practices in the primary care clinics as a Patient Aligned Care Team Pharmacy Specialist for the White and Geriatrics Teams. She provides medication management services for diabetes, hypertension, smoking cessation, and hyperlipidemia. Dr. Berkland is currently a member of the American Association of Diabetes Educators, and the Iowa Pharmacy Association.

Marysue Bjurstrom, PharmD, BCPS, BCGP

Marysue is a clinical pharmacy specialist in primary care—to include diabetes, hypertension, hyperlipidemia, and tobacco cessation. She received her doctorate in pharmacy at Drake University. She has experience practicing pharmacy in both retail and military. She is board certified in pharmacotherapy and geriatrics.

Jared Butler, PharmD, MS HIA, BCPS, DPLA

Dr. Butler is the Pharmacy Program Manager in Informatics and Medication Quality and Safety at the VA Central Iowa Health Care System. He received his Doctor of Pharmacy degree from Drake University in 2011. Following graduation, Dr. Butler completed a PGY-1 pharmacy practice residency at St. John's Hospital in Springfield, MO with a concentration in acute care. Following his PGY-1, Dr. Butler completed a PGY-2 Internal Medicine Specialty Residency at the Richard L. Roudebush Medical Center in Indianapolis, IN. At the conclusion of his residency, he worked as a Clinical Pharmacy Specialist at the Roudebush VA Medical Center providing primary coverage of ward surgery and acute rehab patients in addition to as needed coverage of medical and surgical ICUs and internal medicine patients. He returned to Des Moines in early 2018 as an Assistant Professor of Pharmacy Practice at Drake University with an acute care practice site at the Central Iowa VA Medical Center. He serves as the research project mentor for the longitudinal Research/Quality Improvement projects, and primary preceptor for an elective experience in Informatics and Medication Safety. His primary research interests include antimicrobial stewardship, transitions of care, Informatics, and quality improvement. (Pronouns: He/Him/His)

Julie Butler, PharmD, BCPS

Dr. Butler received her Doctor of Pharmacy degree from Drake University in 2011. Following graduation, she completed a pharmacy practice residency at Iowa Methodist Medical Center in Des Moines, Iowa. After residency, she joined the pharmacy team at the Richard L. Roudebush VA Medical Center in Indianapolis, Indiana as an inpatient clinical pharmacist. In April 2018, she returned to Des Moines and joined the VA Central Iowa as an outpatient clinical pharmacist. Her current areas of practice include working in the primary care clinics, formulary management, and community living center (CLC).

Abby Caslow, PharmD

Dr. Caslow earned her Doctor of Pharmacy degree from Drake University in 2019. Following graduation, she completed her PGY-1 Pharmacy Practice Residency at MercyOne Des Moines Medical Center in Des Moines, Iowa. In 2020, she joined the inpatient pharmacy team at the VA Central Iowa Healthcare System. In her role as an acute care clinical pharmacist, Dr. Caslow performs chart reviews and medication therapy management services for patients on the general and critical care units. Additionally, she has participated in expanding pharmacist services to the emergency room.

Amy Francis, PharmD, BCPS

Dr. Francis is the clinical pharmacy specialist in anticoagulation at VA Central Iowa Health Care System and the Program Manager of the outpatient centralized Anticoagulation Management Program. She performs both clinical and administrative activities in the Anticoagulation Clinic. She is the preceptor for the anticoagulation core rotation and assists with preceptor responsibilities of fourth year pharmacy students as an Adjunct Assistant Professor for Drake University College of Pharmacy and Health Sciences. She received her Doctor of Pharmacy degree from Drake University in Des Moines, IA. She received her board certification in pharmacotherapy in 2011.

Mindy Guerra, PharmD, BCGP

Dr. Guerra earned her Doctor of Pharmacy degree from Drake University in Des Moines, Iowa in 2008. Following graduation, she completed a PGY-1 pharmacy practice residency at the University of Iowa. Upon residency completion, Dr. Guerra took a pharmacy manager position at a Hy-Vee clinic focusing on medication therapy management, diabetic footwear, and immunization administration. She transitioned to an outpatient clinical pharmacist at the VA Central Iowa Healthcare System in 2013. Currently, Dr. Guerra works as a clinical pharmacy practitioner within the geriatric clinic and as an academic detailer for multiple VA medical centers. She is a Board Certified Geriatric Pharmacist (BCGP).

Natalie S. Gulbranson, PharmD, BCACP

Dr. Gulbranson earned her Doctor of Pharmacy degree from the University of Iowa College of Pharmacy in Iowa City, Iowa. Following graduation, she completed a PGY-1 pharmacy practice residency at the University of Nebraska Medical Center and Nebraska Health System. Upon residency completion, Dr. Gulbranson practiced as a Solid Organ Transplant Clinical Pharmacist at the University of Wisconsin Medical Center. Dr. Gulbranson has held many roles at the VA Central Iowa Healthcare System including outpatient clinical pharmacist servicing mental health and specialty clinics and long term care clinical pharmacist. Currently Dr. Gulbranson is credentialed to provide medication therapy management in the specialty clinics with a focus on Hepatitis C management, COPD, and anemia in chronic renal disease. She is a Board Certified Ambulatory Care Pharmacist (BCACP).

Karmen Jorgensen, PharmD, BCPS, BCACP

Dr. Jorgensen is a Clinical Pharmacy Specialist at the VA Central Iowa Health Care System. Dr. Jorgensen received her Bachelor of Science from Iowa State University in 1997 and her Doctor of Pharmacy degree from Drake University in 2006. She has a background in secondary science education and taught middle and high school prior to completing her Doctor of Pharmacy degree. She completed a Specialty Residency in Primary Care at the Iowa City VA Medical Center in 2007. Currently Dr. Jorgensen is credentialed to provide medication therapy management in the fields of pre-diabetes, diabetes, hypertension, dyslipidemia, asthma, and tobacco cessation. She is a Board Certified Ambulatory Care Pharmacist (BCACP) and a Board Certified Pharmacotherapy Specialist (BCPS). Dr. Jorgensen is currently an active member of the Iowa Pharmacy Association and serves as an Adjunct Assistant Professor for Drake University College of Pharmacy and Health Sciences. Dr. Jorgensen remains actively involved with precepting both pharmacy students and residents in the field of ambulatory care.

Vilailack Kheuakham, PharmD.

Dr. Kheuakham is the Antimicrobial Stewardship Program Manager. Dr. Kheuakham earned her Doctor of Pharmacy Degree from University of Iowa in 2018. Following her graduation, she completed a PGY-1 Pharmacy Residency at UnityPoint Health – Methodist in Des Moines, Iowa. She joined the VA team after residency in September 2019. She currently works in acute care and has precepted several resident yearlong projects.

Lisa Linder, PharmD, BCPS

Dr. Linder earned her Doctor of Pharmacy degree from Drake University in Des Moines, IA in 2010. Following graduation, she began working for Hy-Vee Pharmacy in West Des Moines, IA where she was pharmacist in charge for five years prior to coming to the VA. During her employment at Hy-Vee, she was involved in providing a variety of clinical services, including medication therapy management, immunization administration, and AADE certified diabetes education in conjunction with the registered dietitian. She joined the pharmacy staff at the Central Iowa VA as an outpatient clinical pharmacist in March 2017. Her current areas of practice include providing patient care in both the primary care and mental health clinics, in addition to formulary management and operational pharmacy processes. She is a Board Certified Pharmacotherapy Specialist (BCPS).

John Message, PharmD

Dr. Message is the Sterile/Non-Sterile Compounding and Hazardous Drugs Program Manager at the VA Central Iowa Health Care System. In his current role, he directs and oversees activities of all assigned operational, technical, and professional personnel, with an emphasis on assuring that all USP 795, 797, and 800 compounded sterile preparations (CSP) compliance requirements are met in

compounding and hazardous medication management. Dr. Message earned his Doctor of Pharmacy Degree from Drake University in 2015. Upon graduation, he transitioned from pharmacy intern to an inpatient clinical pharmacist, then to program manager.

Ashley Muff, PharmD, BCPS

Dr. Muff earned her Doctor of Pharmacy degree from the University of Iowa in 2011. In 2013 she completed a geriatrics focused residency with the North Florida/South Georgia Veterans Health System. Dr. Muff is a Board Certified Pharmacotherapy Specialist and member of the Iowa Pharmacy Association. She spent 9 years as an acute care clinical pharmacist at the VA Central Iowa Health Care System. She is now the Transitions of Care Pharmacy Program Manager and Clinical Pharmacist Practitioner. The Transitions of Care team at VA Central Iowa was established in 2022 and seeks to provide concentrated care to patients after discharge until they're fully stabilized to allow them to succeed at home. Dr. Muff provides MTM and works closely with the nurses, social workers, and nurse practitioner on the team to coordinate appropriate care for complex patient scenarios. (Pronouns: She/Her/Hers)

Elizabeth Paterson, PharmD, BCACP

Dr. Paterson earned her Doctor of Pharmacy degree from the University of Iowa College of Pharmacy in Iowa City, Iowa. Following graduation, she completed a PGY-1 pharmacy practice residency at the VA Central Iowa Health Care System. In July 2013, she continued her career at the Central Iowa VA as an outpatient clinical pharmacist working in the primary care clinics, pharmacy anticoagulation clinic, and Community Living Center (CLC). She accepted her current position as a Patient-Aligned Care Team (PACT) clinical pharmacy specialist in primary care in October of 2013. In her current role, she provides medication therapy management services focusing on diabetes, dyslipidemia, smoking cessation, hypertension, and anticoagulation management. She is a Board Certified Ambulatory Care Pharmacist (BCACP).

Jenny Phabmixay, PharmD, BCPS

Dr. Phabmixay is the PGY1 pharmacy residency program director and program manager for pharmacoconomics at VA Central Iowa Health Care System. In her current role with pharmacoconomics, she coordinates a variety of cost avoidance, cost savings and safety initiatives for the pharmacy department. In addition to serving as residency program director, she is a preceptor for the practice management, leadership and professional development and orientation learning experiences. She received her Doctor of Pharmacy degree at Drake University in Des Moines, IA. She completed a Pharmacy Practice Residency at Mercy Medical Center in Des Moines, IA. She received her board certification in pharmacotherapy in 2008. She is a past president of the Central Iowa Pharmacy Association (CIPA) and is a member of the Iowa Pharmacy Association and American Society of Health System Pharmacists. (Pronouns: She/Her/Hers)

Sabrina Phillips, PharmD, BCACP, BCGP

Dr. Phillips is a clinical pharmacy specialist in the Home Based Primary Care program (HBPC). She received her Doctor of Pharmacy degree from Drake University in 2005 and joined VA Central Iowa Health Care System in 2006. During her time at VACIH she has held many roles including outpatient clinical pharmacist servicing primary care, formulary management, community based outpatient clinics and community living center (CLC) prior to taking her role with HBPC. She currently maintains scope of practice to provide medication therapy management for any primary care disease states as well as anticoagulation clinic. She works closely with the interdisciplinary team. She is board certified in ambulatory care (BCACP) and geriatrics (BCGP).

Mary Rasmussen, PharmD, BCACP; Associate Chief of Pharmacy – Clinical

Dr. Rasmussen, PharmD, BCACP has worked with the VA since 2007 after graduation from Drake University. She worked in multiple areas of pharmacy including the pain clinic, non-formulary review team, CBOCs, and outpatient pharmacy before transitioning to a supervisor role in 2014 and to Associate Chief - Clinical role in 2018. As part of her current duties, she supervises the PGY-1 residents and Clinical Pharmacy Specialists and coordinates all the advance practice scopes and clinical pharmacy practice expansions for the pharmacy department. She is a member of a number of national or VISN committees and workgroups and is certified as an Agent in Place for the Field Accreditation Services through the VA Employee Education System. (Pronouns: She/Her/Hers)

Kim Redeker, PharmD, BCACP

Dr. Redeker earned her Doctor of Pharmacy degree from Drake University in Des Moines, IA in 2012. Following graduation, she completed a PGY-1 pharmacy practice residency with the VA Nebraska-Western Iowa Health Care System in Grand Island, NE. After residency, she joined the staff at the Central Iowa VA as an outpatient clinical pharmacist. Her current areas of practice include anticoagulation, formulary management, and general outpatient pharmacy responsibilities. She received her board certification in ambulatory care in 2015.

Ashley G. Smith Yehyaw, Pharm D, BCPP

Dr. Smith is a clinical pharmacy specialist in outpatient mental health at the VA Central Iowa Health Care System. She obtained her Doctor of Pharmacy degree from The University of Louisiana at Monroe in 2008. She completed a pharmacy practice residency at the Salem VA Medical Center in Salem, Virginia, followed by a psychiatric pharmacy residency with The University of Texas at the South Texas Veterans Health Care System. Prior to joining the staff at Central Iowa, Dr. Smith worked in long term care at the San Antonio State Supported Living Center followed by providing treatment in Mental Health Outpatient Services at the South Texas VA. She is a member of the American Association of Psychiatric Pharmacists and serves as a mental health subject matter expert for the Clinical Pharmacy Practice Office.

David Steim, BS Pharmacy & Health Sciences

Mr. Steim, RPh, is the Chief of Pharmacy at VA Central Iowa Healthcare System. He received his BS degree in Pharmacy & Health Sciences from Drake University. In his current role, he is responsible for oversight of pharmacy distributive and clinical services, pharmacy policies and procedures, regulatory compliance, budgetary and financial management, and quality management/quality improvement initiatives. Previous experience includes Associate Chief of Pharmacy, Inpatient Pharmacy Supervisor, and hospital-based clinical pharmacy practice with an emphasis in acute care, critical care, oncology, and geriatrics.