

VA Central Iowa PGY1 Pharmacy Residency

We hope to answer some common questions below. If you have additional questions, please feel free to contact Jenny Phabmixay (jenny.phabmixay@va.gov)

QUESTION

In what ways can I customize my residency year? Is your program flexible?

ANSWER

The residency year is tailored to meet your interests, goals and needs. Residents complete the same core rotations but will choose three electives. You will closely collaborate with the residency program director (RPD) to develop your schedule. If you have strong interest in PGY2 training, we will do our best to modify your schedule to access those experiences earlier in the year. You will also have flexibility in selecting topics for your yearlong project, for required presentations and even within your rotations.

QUESTION

How do you incorporate feedback from past residents?

ANSWER

Input is sought from residents throughout the year. A learning experience evaluation is completed at the conclusion of each experience or quarterly for those that are longitudinal. At the end of each year, we also do an exit interview and ask residents to complete an anonymous survey. We are always refining our residency program. We have trialed different schedules for some rotations to optimize the experience. We have modified expectations/activities within our staffing experience to focus on consistent, core skills. We have also added several electives as our clinical services have continued to grow and expand.

QUESTION

What do your resident projects look like?

ANSWER

For our site, limited research experience is not a problem. We do not have an IRB on site so our projects are QI/QA based projects that reflect the interests of the residents and needs of the facility. You will present your project at professional meetings (poster and presentation).

During orientation, residents will receive a list of project ideas. If one does not fit their interests, we will explore additional options. Once the topic is determined, your project preceptor will be finalized. We also have a project mentor that supports both residents in development, design and analysis of your project.

QUESTION

What does staffing involve at your program?

ANSWER

Our residents staff every other Saturday typically beginning in July. Sundays are always off so you'll never work 12 days in a row. You also staff two holidays like President's Day or Martin Luther King, Jr Day. There are some weekends where no resident staffs to allow time to get away for travel to meetings or for major holidays.

Staffing involves inpatient and outpatient activities. For example, you'll process outpatient orders and counsel patients for ER or acute care discharges. You'll complete admission notes for new admits to the acute care units. You will work alongside an inpatient and outpatient pharmacist in addition to your technician team. You are never staffing solo.

Residents are NOT on call.

QUESTION

Are there teaching and precepting opportunities in the residency program?

ANSWER

You will have opportunities to precept during your residency year. This may occur in core or elective rotations. You will learn the four preceptor roles and be able to apply those to your interactions with students.

We collaborate with our local college of pharmacy, Drake University, on a teaching and learning curriculum. This is optional but is a tremendous opportunity and includes classroom teaching. This is a great chance to experience academia first hand and see if this is something you wish to pursue in your future career.

QUESTION

What types of things are your past resident doing now?

ANSWER

Our past residents have pursued a variety of paths including additional PGY-2 residency training, clinical pharmacy specialist positions (mental health, ambulatory care, pain management), clinical pharmacists and pharmacy management. Most of our residents (80%) have remained within the VA system and over 30% have remained at our site as a member of our team.

QUESTION

How do you promote resident wellness?

ANSWER

The residency year can be busy and at times stressful. We will maintain open communication to identify any adjustments that need to be made. You will be given time within your schedule to work on residency related activities and assignments. We will share resources to promote well-being and will be a source of support to you in navigating any challenges. You never work a full weekend so you are able to get some downtime away from the program.

QUESTION

What are relationships like with other members of the health care team?

ANSWER

The pharmacy service has great relationships with all interdisciplinary team members.

Members of our service have close relationships with providers and nursing but also respiratory therapy, dietitians, social workers, psychologists, quality and safety, informatics, administration and others. Pharmacy is well respected by other services and most importantly by the patient.

Some rotations allow you to round with an interdisciplinary team. On other rotations, the pharmacist serves in a mid-level provider role. On those rotations, you'll get extensive patient care experience but have more limited team experiences. This not to say you won't engage with other services, but your primary focus will be day-to-day patient care.

QUESTION

Is there a place to park? Do you have your own office?

ANSWER

Parking is available on site. Residents have an office that they share.