

**Specialty Residency in Geriatric Pharmacy Practice**  
**Program Director: Amie Taggart Blaszczyk, Pharm.D., CGP, FASCP**  
North Texas Veterans Health Care System &  
Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center School of Pharmacy  
Dallas, Texas

## **Philosophy:**

The specialty residency in Geriatrics at Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center School of Pharmacy Dallas/Ft. Worth Regional Campus is designed to produce practitioners who exhibit excellence in pharmaceutical care in the geriatric population. A Geriatric Pharmacotherapy Specialist should possess a mastery of clinical skills needed to practice in a wide range of patient care settings and a solid knowledge base in the special pharmacotherapeutic needs of the geriatric patient. The residency provides the environment necessary to achieve the knowledge and skills needed to care for patients with a wide range of disease states. The program will foster the development of an independent, versatile practitioner. The program is also designed to produce well rounded, independent professionals through experiences in teaching, research, and professional activities.

## **General Description:**

The 12-month program is designed to lead the resident through a variety of monthly and longitudinal practice experiences. By the end of the program, the resident should feel competent practicing in inpatient and outpatient settings involving geriatric pharmacotherapy. The residency includes core rotations that are chosen to establish a strong base in Geriatrics. Core Geriatric disease states within this residency include dementia and related disorders, Parkinson's disease, depression & hospice/palliative care, among others. The resident may choose electives based on his/her career goals. Although the residency is designed around core and elective monthly or longitudinal rotations, the focus of the training will be to master each of the disease states established within the ASHP Practice Standards for a Specialized Residency in Geriatrics.

## **Program Goals:**

- **Practice Excellence**
  - Develop a mastery of knowledge base in Geriatric pharmacotherapy
  - Develop solid geriatric patient care skills in both acute and chronic care settings
  - Develop a sound understanding of pharmacy practice management
  - Establish oneself as an integral member of a health care team
  
- **Scholastic Excellence**
  - Demonstrate proficiency in teaching in both didactic and small group learning environments
  - Develop effective precepting skills
  - Generate new knowledge in Geriatric Pharmacotherapy
  - Interpret and disseminate knowledge in Geriatric Pharmacotherapy

- **Individual Excellence**

- Develop a system of self assessment and development
- Demonstrate exemplary verbal and written communication skills
- Utilize a system for balancing multiple work-related and personal responsibilities
- Understand the importance of professionalism through participation in pharmacy

For additional information, please refer to the *ASHP Educational Goals and Learning Objectives for PGY2 Geriatric Pharmacy Residencies*.

## **Program Activities:**

### **Residency Rotations**

#### **Longitudinal Required Rotations:**

VA/UTSW Geriatric Care Outpatient Clinic (10% time)

Long-term Care Consulting (10% time)

Parkinson Disease Outreach (<5% time)

#### **Required Rotations:** (60% time)

Geriatric Psychiatry

Inpatient Rehab Service

Inpatient Palliative Care/Hospice

Home-based Primary Care

Geriatric Ambulatory Care Clinics

#### **Elective Rotations:** (~20% time)

Drug Information

ASCP Traineeship (1 week time)

Other learning opportunities which assist resident in career development

Research Project Development

## **Teaching Activities:**

Residents are appointed as Assistant Instructors with Texas Tech UHSC School of Pharmacy.

Teaching activities for residents are designed to complement practice activities while allowing the resident to experience a variety of teaching methods.

### **Clinician-Educator Training Program**

Structured throughout the residency, this program provides training for residents who are interested in developing their academic skills. The major goal of the training program is to supplement a strong clinical background with the skills needed to become a successful educator. The program includes didactic and web-based teaching models, mentored facilitator training for small-group problem-based learning, and precepting of third and fourth-year Doctor of Pharmacy students. Residents also receive instruction in grant writing, statistics, and clinical trial design; submit a project proposal to the institutional review board; and collect, interpret, and publish their results. Additional activities to enhance discovery, integration, and writing skills are described. The program also includes innovative discussion topics based upon needs previously identified by new faculty members. Examples include handling difficult students, writing test questions, developing consistent evaluation methods and balancing life outside of career.

## **Didactic Teaching**

One to two hours of formal didactic lecturing within the school of pharmacy programs is required of the PGY2 resident. The courses that are to be taught will be based on availability and resident interest.

## **Problem-Based Learning**

One semester as a group facilitator in case studies (P3 class). The case studies course is a student-directed exercise which focuses on pharmaceutical care for an individual patient. It is designed to be a problem based learning experience in which students see an initial patient presentation. They then spend the next 3 to 4 sessions developing a patient care plan and addressing self-identified learning issues. Both pathophysiology and therapeutic knowledge are incorporated. The facilitator's role is not to teach the students, but rather to facilitate their discussion. During the semester, this course meets twice a week for two hours.

## **Experiential Teaching**

Clerkship teaching (involving both P3 and P4 students) is integrated into the resident practice model. Early in the program, the resident will observe faculty clerkship preceptors and become integrated into various aspects of clerkship teaching. At the end of the residency program, residents have the opportunity to independently precept clerkship students

## **Residency Project:**

Residency Project: Residents will complete one project per year. Residents may choose any type of research project or quality improvement program, provided that the project:

- 1) includes generation of original data;
- 2) is suitable for publication or presentation at a national pharmacy meeting;
- 3) can reasonably be completed within the residency year.

## **Additional Activities:**

### **Manuscript Preparation**

Residents are required to submit one manuscript per year for publication in a refereed journal.

### **Southwestern Leadership Conference (ALCALDE)**

Residents participate in this regional residents meeting, also known as ALCALDE, in the Spring. Residents have the opportunity to present their project results for evaluation. It is also a great opportunity to interact with residents from other programs throughout the region.

## **Program Leadership:**

### **Amie Taggart Blaszczyk, Pharm.D., CGP, FASCP**

Assistant Professor of Pharmacy Practice Specializing in Geriatric Pharmacotherapy

Dr. Blaszczyk is an Assistant Professor of Pharmacy Practice specializing in the unique pharmacotherapeutic needs of older individuals. She earned her Doctor of Pharmacy degree from Duquesne University in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. Dr. Blaszczyk completed a pharmacy practice residency at the Clement J. Zablocki VA Medical Center in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, as well as a Specialty Residency in Geriatric Pharmacotherapy from the University of Maryland School of Pharmacy in Baltimore, Maryland. She earned her Certified Geriatric Pharmacist (CGP) certification in November 2005 and became a Fellow of the American Society of Consultant Pharmacists in December 2006.

Dr. Blaszczyk currently practices at the VA North Texas Health Care System in the Transitional Care Unit. There, she participates in assessing medication therapy profiles, both upon admission and monthly thereafter, for geriatric patients on her service. It is at this site where she precepts VANTHCS residents and 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> year pharmacy students from Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center School of Pharmacy. She also participates in community outreach in conjunction with the North Texas chapter of the American Parkinson Disease Association, as well as serves on their medical advisory board. Her quarterly newsletter column in *The Parkinson's Quarterly* has been well received, and she manages a Parkinson's disease drug information email service.

Dr. Blaszczyk's research interests include the motor and non-motor aspects of Parkinson's disease, as well as other neurodegenerative diseases affecting older individuals.

## **Information for Applicants:**

Qualifications: Residency applicants must have a Pharm.D. degree, be eligible for licensure in Texas, and be eligible for enrollment in Texas Tech University HSC School of Pharmacy. A PGY-1 residency or equivalent experience is necessary.

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## **Site Information:**

The Veterans Affairs North Texas Health Care System (VANTHSC) consists of three campuses including the Dallas VA Medical Center, Sam Rayburn Memorial Hospital in Bonham, and the Fort Worth Outpatient Clinic. The Dallas VA Medical Center, located 10 miles south of downtown Dallas, is a 571-bed inpatient facility with a new outpatient facility opened in 1999. The Dallas VAMC has a 48-bed Intensive Care area in the Clinical Addition, a state-of-the-art building that was completed in 1998. Intensive Care Units are divided into the Surgical ICU, Thoracic ICU, Medicine ICU, and Cardiology ICU. Each of the four Intensive Care Units have computerized medical charts, medical administration records (MAR), bedside computer monitors for each patient, and physician order entry capabilities. A 50-bed telemetry step-down unit is also housed within the Clinical Addition. The DVAMC is also a major training site for multiple health care professionals and is one the main teaching hospitals for residents and fellows from the University of Texas Southwestern (UTSW) Medical Center of Dallas. The UTSW is currently ranked 5<sup>th</sup> in the nation for research. Other Dallas training centers include the Children's Medical Center, Harris Methodist Hospital, Presbyterian Hospital, and the Poison Control Center at Parkland Memorial Hospital.