

# Primary Care Residency

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Category: Primary Care

Emphasis: Ocular Disease, Geriatrics

To provide advanced competency training in primary care optometry through direct patient care, continued education, and scholarly pursuits

- **Program Site:** Jackie Walorski VA Clinic (formerly St. Joseph County VA Clinic), Mishawaka, IN
- **Program Coordinator:** Christopher Bugajski, OD, FAAO ([christopher.bugajski@va.gov](mailto:christopher.bugajski@va.gov))
- **Residency Director:** Christine Allison, OD, FAAO
- **Number of Positions:** 1
- **Program Dates:** July 1 – June 30
- **ORMatch:** 43810
- Seeking Accreditation (first year program)
- ACOE is the accrediting body, [www.theACOE.org](http://www.theACOE.org)

## Program Background

Jackie Walorski VA Clinic (JWC), formerly St. Joseph County VA Clinic, is a 71,000-square-foot facility, which opened in 2017 in Mishawaka, IN. The facility is a multi-specialty outpatient clinic within VA Northern Indiana Health Care System (VANIHCS). Currently, the JWC Eye Clinic has five fully equipped exam lanes, two optometric technician pre-testing rooms, four imaging rooms, as well as dedicated office space with access to appropriate

administrative equipment (i.e., computer, desk, telephone, etc.). By the end of 2024, it is expected that the Eye Clinic will have two more fully equipped exam lanes, one new technician work-up room, low vision optometry services, and a fee-basis ophthalmologist (performing in-office laser treatments for Veterans with specific

needs). The current professional staff is comprised of 3.0 FTE optometrists and up to 4-pre-degree optometry students while ancillary staff includes 2.0 FTE advanced medical support assistants (AMSA), 3.0 FTE ophthalmic technicians, and an additional fee-basis optometrist. The Eye Clinic also has full-time contracted opticians to assist Veterans with ordering and adjusting glasses.



Jackie Walorski VA Clinic's residency is affiliated with Illinois College of Optometry. The optometry residency at VANIHCS – JWC will provide post-doctoral clinic exposure resulting in advanced competency in the evaluation, treatment, and management in primary care optometry with an emphasis on ocular disease. The residency will equip the resident with necessary tools for lifelong learning, thereby enabling continued advanced level competency throughout his or her professional

career. Furthermore, the residency will highlight the responsibility for future contributions to the profession of optometry. The residency will cultivate an enlightening clinical environment and enable VA to develop, recruit, and retain high quality optometric staff benefiting Veterans across the country.

## Program Description

The resident will:

- Provide care for a large number of patient encounters using evidence-based medicine (EBM), with much of the patient base presenting with one of more chronic ocular conditions including, but not limited to the following: Age-related macular degeneration, glaucoma, ocular hypertension, retinal vascular disease, and cataract
  - Primary eye care, including screenings, wellness exams, and diagnosis/treatment of vision disorders
  - Diagnosis and treatment of ocular diseases, including emergency and urgent care
  - Diagnosis and treatment of ocular manifestations of systemic diseases
- Manage an array of complex and/or multiple ocular problems
- Become proficient in performing and interpreting advanced diagnostic procedures:
  - Optical coherence tomography (Heidelberg HRA+OCT SPECTRALIS with glaucoma, anterior segment, infrared reflectance, multi-color, widefield imaging, enhanced depth imaging, fundus autofluorescence, and OCT angiography modules)
  - Humphrey visual field (Zeiss Humphrey Field Analyzer 3)
  - Haag Streit BX photo slit lamp
  - Zeiss Atlas corneal topographer
  - Topcon TRC 50DX fundus camera
  - VuPad SonomedEscalon ultrasound
  - OCULUS Park 1
- Order and interpret laboratory, radiology, and other diagnostic studies
- Counsel patients and their families
- Interact with other health care providers to ensure continuity of care, including consultations, referrals, and follow-ups

### WEEKLY HOURS

Monday: 7:45am – 4:15pm	Clinic all day
Tuesday: 7:45am – 4:15pm	Clinic all day
Wednesday: 7:45am – 4:15pm	Clinic all day
Thursday: 7:45am – 4:15pm	Didactic Education/Administrative Time – AM Clinic – PM
Friday: 7:45am – 4:15pm	Clinic – AM Didactic Education/Administrative Time– PM*

The resident spends an average of 40-45 hours/week on residency-related activities. There are no on-call duties.

\*Resident will either have clinic or administrative time (to be determined by the residency coordinator) when ICO presentations are not offered virtually

## Educational Conferences

Principles of evidence-based medicine will be reinforced with didactic education through journal clubs, lectures, case reviews, ground rounds presentations, etc. at JWC. Additional opportunity will exist for virtual collaboration with VANIHCS – Fort Wayne Veterans Affairs Medical Center (VAMC) and Battle Creek VAMC for some of these didactic sessions. The resident will also be able to attend optometric/interdisciplinary lectures virtually hosted by Illinois College of Optometry when offered virtually. The resident is encouraged to attend the annual American Academy of Optometry meeting.

## Salary

\$43,924

## Benefits

- **Insurance:** Eligible to participate in the Federal Employees Health Benefits Program and the Federal Employees Group Life Insurance Program
- **Holidays:** All federal holidays are observed (New Year's Day, Birthday of Martin Luther King, Jr., Washington's Birthday, Memorial Day, Juneteenth National Independence Day, Independence Day, Labor Day, Columbus Day, Veterans Day, Thanksgiving Day, Christmas Day)
- **Educational Travel:** "Authorized absence" may be granted at the supervisor's discretion for purposes of attending professional activities that are part of the formal program curriculum
- **Leave:**
  - 13 days of paid annual leave, accrued at a rate of 4 hours per pay period
    - Unused leave may be "cashed out" at the conclusion of the program
  - 13 days of paid sick leave, accrued at a rate of 4 hours per pay period
- **Liability:** Liability coverage is provided for care of Veterans and non-Veteran employees while working at the facility. This liability coverage is not extended to care provided through "moonlighting" opportunities.
- **Informational Resources:** There are a host of online library resources available to the resident through VANIHCS and Illinois College of Optometry. There are some physical resources available in the clinic.

## Criteria for Completion

- Successful completion of the program's clinical, education, and professional goals
- A written paper (or equivalent) of publishable quality or an American Academy of Optometry case report for Fellowship, completed by the end of the residency period

## Completion of Acknowledgment

A certificate is presented upon successful completion of the program.

### For more information

**Program Coordinator:** Christopher Bugajski, OD, FAAO ([christopher.bugajski@va.gov](mailto:christopher.bugajski@va.gov))

**Phone:** 574-272-9000 x 49385

**Website:** <https://www.va.gov/northern-indiana-health-care/locations/jackie-walorski-va-clinic/>