



VA | U.S. Department
of Veterans Affairs

VA Palo Alto Health Care System: Chiropractic Residency Program



VAPAHCS Chiropractic Residency Program: Overview

The Integrated Clinical Practice Chiropractic Residency was established at VAPAHCS in 2020. There is one 12-month position (July 1 to June 30, annually) under the direction of Robert Walsh, DC, Residency Program Director. The chiropractic section is within the department of integrated primary care and the chiropractic resident rotations include primary care, physiatry, pain medicine, spinal cord injury, neurosurgery, behavioral medicine, emergency department, geriatrics, radiology, and other clinics. The resident will learn from or participate in the chiropractic faculty's ongoing research projects and engage in scholarly activities at the facility as well as Palmer College of Chiropractic-West campus. VAPAHCS maintains one of the top three research programs in the VA and currently maintains 168 academic affiliations to provide a rich academic environment including training for providers in virtually all specialties and subspecialties. Additionally, VAPAHCS is a Whole Health flagship.

Mission statement

The mission of the VAPAHCS Integrated Clinical Practice Chiropractic Residency is to prepare chiropractic residents for clinical practice in hospitals or other medical settings, and/or academia, through hospital-based clinical training, interprofessional education, and scholarly activities.

Resident goals/objectives

- Residents will acquire postgraduate clinical experience in hospital-based chiropractic care
 - Residents will provide supervised patient care at satisfactory levels of competence, to a broad population of musculoskeletal cases, most commonly spinal, in the context of collaborative team-based care
 - Residents will gain experience in managing a range of complex/multimorbidity cases
- Residents will engage in interprofessional educational experiences with relevant medical, surgical and associated health specialties
 - Residents will complete clinical rotations in primary care, physical medicine and rehabilitation, other relevant medical or surgical specialties, behavioral medicine and other associated health disciplines

- Residents will participate in scholarly activities to gain experience relevant to integrated practice and/or academia
 - Residents will complete scholarly assignments, online didactic courses, and collaborate with other chiropractic residents to complete group assignments
 - Residents will attend scholarly presentations among available hospital and/or academic affiliate offerings
 - Residents will engage in research activities, and/or present scholarly material, and/or clinical workshops to staff and/or trainees at VA and/or academic affiliate venues

VAPAHCS CRP - More about the program

Clinical facilities

Training takes place throughout VAPAHCS, and although the resident will primarily be located at the main hospital (3801 Miranda Avenue, Palo Alto, CA 94304), they will also be expected to travel to our Monterey, Stockton and San Jose community based outreach clinics (CBOCs) to familiarize themselves in the unique differences and challenges between a medical center and a CBOC needs and resources.

VAPAHCS is affiliated with Stanford School of Medicine, and trains hundreds of residents and fellows annually in several health care professions. The Palo Alto chiropractic clinic is composed of three exam/treatment rooms furnished with state-of-the-art exam/treatment tables, computers, and other necessary equipment. Two additional conference rooms with computers and high-resolution imaging viewing stations are available.

The Monterey, San Jose and Stockton chiropractic clinics are composed of two exam/treatment rooms furnished with state-of-the-art exam/treatment tables, computers, and other necessary equipment. Library support through the VISN 21 online library is available as well as Palmer College of Chiropractic-West librarian services.

Mentorship and instruction of the resident is directed from an accomplished core faculty who are national leaders in integrated chiropractic practice. These clinicians share their expertise in patient care, academics and research to provide a robust educational experience

Faculty Attendings

Robert Walsh, D.C. (Residency Program Director)

Dr. Walsh received a BS from Simon Fraser University and his DC degree from Palmer West in 1995. He is CCSP and after 20 years of private practice in 2015, became the first chiropractor appointed to the medical staff at VAPAHCS, where he developed processes for integrating hospital-based clinical services and interprofessional clinical education. In 2019, Dr. Walsh was appointed to the Chiropractic Field Advisory Committee. He has been involved in chiropractic academics since 1995, teaching at Palmer College of Chiropractic, where he is currently serving as an associate professor.



Charles “Bret” Sullivan, D.C.

Dr. Sullivan received his undergraduate training at Cal-State Fresno and received his DC degree from Pasadena Chiropractic College in 1983. He is a Board Certified Chiropractic Orthopedist through the American Board of Chiropractic Orthopedists and maintains his Qualified Medical Examiner status with the division of workers' compensation in California. Dr. Sullivan is currently stationed at the Monterey CBOC and he is adjunct faculty at Palmer College of Chiropractic.



Alec Schielke, D.C.

Dr. Schielke received his BS from the University of Wisconsin and his DC degree from Palmer Davenport in 2016. He completed the VA Chiropractic Residency Program at the Canandaigua VAMC in June 2017 where he also completed acupuncture certification and is diplomate eligible. Dr. Schielke is stationed at the Palo Alto Medical Center as well as the San Jose CBOC, he is an associate professor at Palmer College of Chiropractic and serves on the editorial board of the Journal of the International Academy of Neuromusculoskeletal Medicine.



Annie Babikian, D.C.

Dr. Babikian received her BS from La Sierra University and her DC degree from Southern California University of Health Sciences in 2013. She earned her CCSP, DABCSP and is a certified Primary Spine Practitioner. Dr. Babikian serves on multiple U.S. national teams as the teams' chiropractor and is currently stationed at the VA Palo Alto. Dr. Babikian is adjunct faculty at Palmer College of Chiropractic.



Kevin Kaldy, D.C.

Dr. Kaldy received a BS from UC Davis and his DC degree from Palmer West in 2001. He is a CCSP and after 20 years of private practice in Las Vegas, joined this team at VAPAHCS. Dr. Kaldy was the first chiropractor in Nevada to become affiliated with UNLV School of Medicine in 2017. He has spent much of his career in integrated healthcare settings and is certified in manipulation under anesthesia. Dr. Kaldy is currently stationed at the San Jose and Monterey CBOC locations and he is adjunct faculty at Palmer College of Chiropractic.



Peter Hibl, D.C., M.S.

Dr. Hibl received his BA in 2009 and later his MS in 2014, both from the University of Colorado Boulder; and his DC degree from Palmer College of Chiropractic West in 2018. He completed the VA Chiropractic Residency Program at the VA Western New York in July 2020, and also served as adjunct clinical faculty at the New York College of Chiropractic. Dr. Hibl is currently stationed at the Stockton and Modesto clinics and is adjunct faculty at Palmer College of Chiropractic.



Margaret Sels, D.C.

Dr. Sels received her BS in Psychology from University of Oregon in 2009, BS in Human Biology from University of Western States in 2018, and her DC from University of Western States in 2019. She completed the VA Chiropractic Residency Program at the VA Palo Alto in 2020 and currently works within this health care system stationed between the Stockton and Modesto clinics. She is also adjunct faculty at Palmer College of Chiropractic.



Compensation

The resident stipend is established based on geographic location by the VA Office of Academic Affiliations. The compensation for the 2022-2023 academic year will be \$45,261. This stipend is not contingent upon resident productivity. Residents are paid on a two-week salary period. Residents receive paid federal holidays, and accrue vacation and sick leave. Residents are also eligible for life and health insurance. Residents are protected from personal liability while providing professional services at a VA health care facility under the Federal Employees Liability Reform and Tort Compensation Act, 28 U.S.C. 2679 (b)-(d).

Certificate of completion

Upon satisfactory completion of program requirements, the graduate will receive an official certificate of residency, and records will be maintained at VAPAHCS and the VHA Chiropractic National Program Office.

VAPAHCS Chiropractic Residency - How to apply

Eligibility requirements

Applicants must hold or be scheduled to receive a DC degree from a CCE-accredited school, with a minimum grade point average of 3.25, prior to the start of the residency program. Applicants must be eligible for, or hold a current, full, active, and unrestricted chiropractic license in a state, territory or Commonwealth of the US, or in the District of Columbia prior to or before completion of the residency. Applicants must meet all VA employment requirements including U.S. citizenship, and Selective Service registration when applicable.

Application process

The program follows the VA Chiropractic Residency match process. Applications for the upcoming academic year will open on the first business Monday in January (Jan. 3, 2022, for the 2022-2023 academic year) and will be accepted through the end of the month. Please see official application for specific dates. Applications are only accepted during the open call. Applicant assessment is through a competitive process considering factors such as academic background, relevant experience, personal statement, letters of recommendation, and telephone, video, and/or in-person interviews. Applicant rankings are made by a review committee comprised of the residency director and other DC faculty.

Additional information

For further details please see our program handbook.

For additional information, contact Dr. [Robert Walsh](#).