

Meet our Residents 2020-2021

PGY-1 Ambulatory Care



Mackenzie Betancur

Pharmacy school: University of Colorado – Skaggs School of Pharmacy

Career interests: Diabetes and heart failure

Residency project: Evaluation of an interdisciplinary nurse practitioner and clinical pharmacy specialist heart failure access clinic

Why the Madison VA? So many reasons! I love how there is such a focus on ambulatory care with experiences in so many different types of clinics. I also really love the people here and want to learn from the best, so I can provide the best care to veterans!

Hobbies: Going on walks with my dogs, playing board games/yard games, and spending time with my husband and family!

Favorite things to do in Madison: So far, I have loved exploring some of the scenic areas and trails! I also love going to the different lakes.

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Tessa Burghardt

Pharmacy school: University of Wisconsin- Madison School of Pharmacy

Career interests: Primary care, mental health, rheumatology

Residency project: Patient care impact of COPD CARE service at a VISN level

Why the Madison VA? Ah, there are just too many reasons! The culture at the Madison VA is incredible. Everyone is so, so passionate about helping this amazing patient population. On top of that, the scope of practice and integration of pharmacists in the health system is unlike any practice site I've ever seen. Nowhere else could even come close to the experience I'm receiving here--there truly isn't a better place to learn and grow!

Hobbies: Traveling, scuba diving, reading, getting way too into Netflix/Hulu series, really anything that involves being on the water and staying active

Favorite things to do in Madison: Exploring the endless restaurants, trails, and, of course, the Farmer's Market!

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Katie Flesch

Pharmacy school: University of Wisconsin- Madison School of Pharmacy

Career interests: Mental health, primary care

Residency project: Implementation and evaluation of a pharmacist-driven aspirin deprescribing protocol in an ambulatory care setting: a pilot study

Why the Madison VA? I had some fantastic experiences working with Veterans through the Madison VA during pharmacy school and knew I wanted to continue serving the Veteran population in my career. I have been blown away by the supportive environment of the pharmacy team, the incredible preceptors, and the level of care that is provided to Veterans here. The role of ambulatory care pharmacists at the Madison VA extends from primary care into countless specialty clinics and really allows pharmacists to utilize their scope of practice.

Hobbies: Baking cakes, biking, running, camping, reading, and anything craft

Favorite things to do in Madison: I love all the running and biking trails in and around Madison, and spending Saturday mornings at the Farmer's Market!

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Hannah Hecht

Pharmacy school: University of Wisconsin- Madison School of Pharmacy

Career interests: Primary care

Residency project: Clinical impact of COVID-19 on Anticoagulation Management at the Madison VA

Why the Madison VA? After doing the VALOR internship here, I realized why staff really want to stay! The work culture at the VA is absolutely incredible. Everyone is extremely supportive of one another and genuinely tries to lift their colleagues up and help them succeed. Not to mention, serving Veterans is an honor, and it's a great feeling to know that the patients we serve appreciate and value the services we offer. Also, the scope of practice and the expansive role pharmacists are able to take on in the interprofessional health care team reassured me that every day at the Madison VA we have the opportunity to make a positive impact on our patients' lives. And that seemed like a pretty great place to work!

Hobbies: Hiking, cooking, crocheting, sending snail mail to my friends, and watching Packer games (big fan!)

Favorite things to do in Madison: Kayaking, hanging out at the Terrace, enjoying all the restaurants, and, of course, all things Badger Sports! I absolutely love watching the football and basketball games with friends and family!

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Jordan Hilsenhoff

Pharmacy school: University of Wisconsin- Madison School of Pharmacy

Career interests: Primary care, rural health

Residency project: Clinical impact of changing from once-daily injectable liraglutide to once-weekly injectable semaglutide in a Veteran population

Why the Madison VA? As a student, I had the incredible opportunity to complete a population health project at the Madison VA that allowed me to make important interventions for rural Veterans. This was my first glimpse into the incredible scope of practice pharmacists have here, and the impact they can make in Veterans' lives. After then completing an APPE rotation in ambulatory care at the Madison VA, it was clear that the culture and practice model for pharmacists here is unmatched. I grew more and more passionate about ambulatory care with every day on rotation, and I quickly learned that this was the place I was meant to be for residency!

Hobbies: Crafting (painting, zentangle, crocheting, arm knitting, etc.), figure skating, spending time with friends, family, and my dog 😊

Favorite things to do in Madison: Exploring new restaurants and cute shops around State St., and hiking at nearby state parks.

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Elyse Keating

Pharmacy school: University of Wisconsin- Madison School of Pharmacy

Career interests: Primary care

Residency project: Utility of proactive VA national quitline counseling as a supplement to tobacco treatment clinic care

Why the Madison VA? When I completed my two APPE rotations here at the Madison VA, I absolutely fell in love with the culture and the role of pharmacists in this health system. Being able to serve Veterans is also a true honor. Forming relationships with Veterans and helping them achieve their specific health goals motivates me. I am blessed to be a part of this program and am looking forward to the year ahead!

Hobbies: Cooking, kayaking, board games, and spending time with family/friends.

Favorite things to do in Madison: I love exploring new restaurants and getting out on the lakes!

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Jodi Meyer

Pharmacy school: University of Wisconsin- Madison School of Pharmacy

Career interests: Diabetes, COPD, primary care

Residency project: Assessing the feasibility and operationalization of the VIONE Deprescribing Tool utilization within Primary Care at the Madison VA

Why the Madison VA? I was able to complete an internship at the Madison VA during pharmacy school, and I loved the work culture within the pharmacy department and the hospital as a whole. Everybody goes above and beyond to serve the Veterans and provide high quality and coordinated care. Of course, an added bonus is the pharmacists' extensive scope of practice and the strong trust that others have in the pharmacy team. I am looking forward to training in a well-established primary care pharmacist model and within many different specialty ambulatory care clinics.

Hobbies: Photography, baking, board games/puzzles, visiting National Parks, frisbee

Favorite things to do in Madison: Visit all the amazing restaurants, walks at Picnic Point, kayaking on the lakes, and going to the Farmer's Market.

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Maralena Taube

Pharmacy school: University of Wisconsin- Madison School of Pharmacy

Career interests: Mental health, epilepsy, metabolic syndrome

Residency project: Impact of mind-body interventions on chronic pain management in a Veteran population

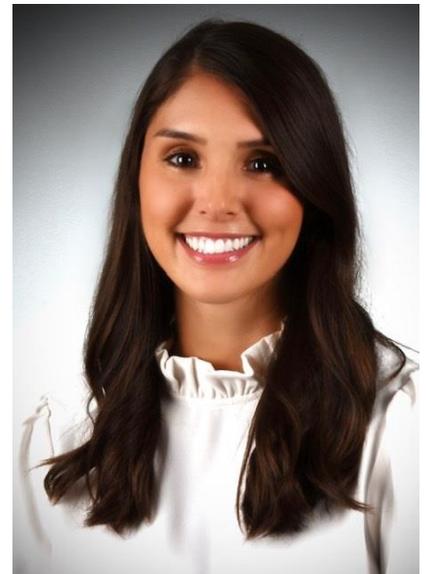
Why the Madison VA? It started with my admiration and gratefulness towards our Veterans. Coming from a family of Vets, I wanted to show my appreciation and serve them as they have so selflessly served us! Next, I wanted to complete a residency at a facility that valued pharmacy, and it's safe to say that the Madison VA is THE place to be for this. The scope of practice pharmacists have and the role they play in direct patient care is an experience unlike anything I have had thus far, and it really ensures that Veterans get timely (and amazing!) care. You can truly feel the support not only from your co-residents, but every preceptor as well. We are truly a team here!

Hobbies: Exercising, baking/decorating sugar cookies, painting, visiting family

Favorite things to do in Madison: Jogging the countless trails, shopping State St., sitting at the Terrace, and watching Badger games

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PGY-1 General Practice



Rikki Hanifin

Pharmacy school: University of Colorado – Skaggs School of Pharmacy

Career interests: Critical care, mental health, transplant, ambulatory care

Residency project: Analysis of patients with upper gastrointestinal bleeding in a VA anticoagulation service

Why the Madison VA? I was the type of pharmacy student who had a ton of career interests, both in the inpatient and outpatient setting, so I looked for residency programs that offered a wide variety of learning experiences. When I interviewed, I was blown away by the friendliness, excitement, and authenticity of all the residents and preceptors, and their dedication to providing progressive care to Veterans. The General Practice track allows me to explore all of my career interests and challenges me to practice at the top of my scope as a new pharmacist. I'm so thankful for the opportunity to join the team here at the Madison VA!

Hobbies: Hiking, sand volleyball, running, pottery, yoga, camping/travel

Favorite things to do in Madison: I love playing frisbee golf at Capital Springs, trying new restaurants and breweries, exploring all of the bike trails around town, and paddle boarding or kayaking on Lake Mendota.

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PGY-2 Ambulatory Care

Kaya Borg

Pharmacy school: South Dakota State University

Career interests: Ambulatory care

Residency project: Expanding the utilization of SGLT2 inhibitors of at-risk Veterans with type 2 diabetes and heart failure

Why the Madison VA? From the first time I spoke with residents from the Madison VA, I knew it was a great fit for me. Not only is this program known for excellence in ambulatory care, it also has an incredibly welcoming atmosphere. It was apparent that people who worked here loved their jobs and were passionate about serving the Veteran population.

Hobbies: Crafting (crocheting, painting, etc.), kickboxing, spending time with my co-residents

Favorite things to do in Madison: Exploring the trails at the arboretum, eating/shopping at the capital square, playing spike ball at the many parks, kayaking/paddle boarding on the lakes.

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Macy McConnell

Pharmacy school: University of Wisconsin- Madison School of Pharmacy

Career interests: Primary care, cardiology

Residency project: Evaluation of a pharmacist driven intervention to optimize heart failure therapy in patients eligible for ARNi

Why the Madison VA? The Madison VA had everything that I was looking for in a residency including progressive ambulatory care specialty and primary care clinics, teaching and precepting opportunities, and research opportunities that support change in patient care outcomes. While these were all motivating factors to come here, it was the positive pharmacy culture and the enthusiastic and supportive pharmacy staff that ultimately set the Madison VA apart from the rest!

Hobbies: Hiking, camping, horseback riding, playing Spikeball, board/card games

Favorite things to do in Madison: Farmer's Market, all of the parks and trails, new restaurants, and hanging out at the Memorial Union Terrace.

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PGY-2 Pain and Palliative Care

Kristen Schmidt

Pharmacy school: Creighton University

Career interests: Inpatient/ambulatory care, pain management

Residency project: Primary care comprehensive health planning for pain management: a pilot program

Why the Madison VA? To serve those who have served us! The Madison VA is known for its collaborative and progressive work environment, and I am so lucky to be part of it! 😊

Hobbies: Running, hiking, lifting, yoga

Favorite things to do in Madison: Explore the beautiful scenery, try new restaurants.

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PGY-1/PGY-2 Health-Systems Pharmacy Administration



Julia Gilbertson

PGY-1 Health-Systems Pharmacy Administration Resident

Pharmacy school: University of Wisconsin- Madison School of Pharmacy

Career interests: Ambulatory care administration, academia, primary care

Residency project: The implementation of diversity, equity, and inclusion initiatives within the Madison VA pharmacy department

Why the Madison VA? A huge part of why I chose the Madison VA is the culture. I believe that the pharmacy department here fosters an environment of continuous growth as both a healthcare professional and as an individual, and I am so excited to be a part of this wonderful community!

Hobbies: I love running, hiking, playing tennis, and pretty much anything active! I also love traveling, especially trying fun and unique restaurants in a new city.

Favorite things to do in Madison: Attending the Dane County Farmer's Market, Picnic Point, Memorial Union Terrace, and eating cheese curds.

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Ryan Simonet

PGY-2 Health-Systems Pharmacy Administration Resident

Pharmacy school: University of Wisconsin- Madison School of Pharmacy

Career interests: Health system pharmacy administration focusing on inpatient, ambulatory care, formulary operations, supply chain, pharmacoeconomics, or community-based outpatient clinic management

Residency project: Implementation and cost analysis of a centralized specialty medication management clinic at a VA hospital

Why the Madison VA? The Madison VA provides a plethora of opportunities in health system pharmacy management with rotation opportunities that met all of my interests and more. The PGY-1 year, focusing on clinical pharmacy, allows me to develop my skills and knowledge as a clinical pharmacy specialist and understand the workflow and processes pharmacists use every day before transitioning into the pharmacy administration-focused PGY-2 year. One thing you will notice is the unbelievably positive and supportive pharmacy work environment present at the Madison VA that makes it unique and an amazing place to work, learn, and grow.

Hobbies: I really enjoy weightlifting, running, almost any sport, and watching my favorite Wisconsin sports teams. I also like to explore Madison, try new restaurants, and play board games and video games with friends.

Favorite things to do in Madison: I really enjoy running on the many trails throughout the Madison area. I like attending Badger football, basketball, volleyball, and hockey games. I also like to attend Packer, Brewers, and Bucks games which aren't too far of a drive! Madison has many restaurants to try. I have a good time playing tennis as well as golfing the Madison public golf courses with friends.

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PGY-2 Mental Health



Jessica Chmielinski

Pharmacy school: University of Pittsburgh

Career interests: Outpatient and inpatient mental health, tobacco treatment, primary care

Residency project: Clinical Utility of pharmacogenetic testing in a Veteran mental health population

Why the Madison VA?: When I interviewed here, I fell in love with the people and the culture. Pharmacists truly work at the top of their license. The Madison VA is a leader in ambulatory care and mental health practice, which are my interests.

Hobbies: Running, swimming, rollerblading, cross country and downhill skiing, county concerts.

Favorite things to do in Madison: Willey Street, skate all the marvelous trails around the city.

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Leigh Heffner

Pharmacy school: Daniel K. Inouye College of Pharmacy (Hilo, Hawaii)

Career interests: Mental health and pain management

Residency project: Utilizing a clinical pharmacy specialist for Alcohol Use Disorder pharmacotherapy management in Primary Care

Why the Madison VA? I'm very interested in a PGY-2 in our AMAZING Mental Health Department plus the work environment here won me over. Everyone works so hard for those around them, and you can tell coworkers really get along.

Hobbies: Soccer, hiking, snowboarding, rock climbing.

Favorite things to do in Madison: Play Spikeball by the lake with my co-residents

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Anna Marceau

Pharmacy school: Drake University

Career interests: Mental health, substance use, LGBTQ+ health disparities

Residency project: Assessing the characteristics of Veterans over the age of 65 who are prescribed benzodiazepines: comparing Veterans in mental health and primary care

Why the Madison VA? The people here are all so enthusiastic about what they do — it's absolutely infectious and there's no vaccine in sight! This program was exactly what I was looking for and even had some experiences that I didn't know I wanted until I heard about them.

Hobbies: cycling, cross stitch, advocacy work, spoiling my cats

Favorite things to do in Madison: I came to Madison mid-quarantine so I haven't had the chance to enjoy the Full Madison Experience™ but so far I'm enjoying the bike trails and getting to know my coresidents!

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