



Professional Profile: Dr. Pham, O.D.

Introduction

Doctors today can practice their craft in an expanding variety of care settings. Skilled nursing facilities (SNF) represent an interesting option. Aria Care Partners (ACP) offers dental, vision, hearing and podiatry professionals an attractive way to pursue this opportunity.

This case study profiles an optometrist on the Aria medical team. She describes what doctors can expect in SNF practice as well as the advantages of working for the company and the support it provides.

Dr. Pham's Journey to Aria Care Partners

Dr. Pham has been practicing optometry for 14 years. Seeking some additional work several years ago, she explored the Aria career path. The idea of practicing in skilled nursing was intriguing and different. She was especially attracted to providing care for a geriatric population that is often underserved. Since joining the company six years ago, Dr. Pham's commitment has expanded steadily to full-time status.

Onsite Care in the SNF Environment: What to Expect

Knowing that some doctors are unfamiliar with the specifics of SNF/nursing home care or have trepidation about practice in this setting, Dr. Pham identifies several essential features:

- **Mobile care approach.** Dr. Pham is responsible for between 25 and 30 facilities across a metropolitan area. Her commute times are generally 30 to 60 minutes. She sees about 25 patients at each SNF.
- **Typical workday.** Aria assistants prepare the day's schedule in advance of the doctor's arrival. Most residents are seen in the morning, with the afternoon usually reserved for those whose mobility restrictions require bedside visits.
- **Primary SNF staff relationships.** The Nurses and Social Services Directors play key roles in helping coordinate the care and supporting residents' needs.
- **Frequent resident complications.** ACP eye doctors encounter an interesting span of medical issues, including residents who cannot speak due to stroke or aphasia, who require bedside care, who are unaware of their eye disease, are hard of hearing, or have dementia.

SNF practice appeals to Optometrists who enjoy the daily challenge of addressing diverse situations in multiple locations as they fulfill what Dr. Pham calls "our mission of getting people back on track to ocular health."

Benefits of Working for Aria Care Partners

Dr. Pham cites a number of high-value benefits of the ACP program:

- **Flexibility.** Staff can select the number of days per week and the specific days they wish to work. "Aria's flexibility really promotes work-life balance," notes Dr. Pham.
- **Ability to make a consistent difference.** Dr. Pham describes the joy and appreciation expressed by residents when they can watch television, engage in group activities, and improve their quality of life as a result of new prescription glasses, resumption of glaucoma medications, reduced eye pain, and other interventions.
- **Maintain Autonomy.** As Dr. Pham emphasizes, "you are your own manager," which means you have the freedom to practice to the fullest extent of your licensure and provide patient care based on your clinical judgement.
- **Creativity.** The spectrum of eye care needs in SNFs is stimulating and calls for resourcefulness and creative skills to interact both verbally and non-verbally. For example, Dr. Pham has closely tracked a non-speaking resident's eye movements to gauge vision and brings a white board on her rounds to communicate with those who are hearing impaired.

Support Provided by Aria

ACP's support for its medical professionals is crucial to their success and positive engagement. The company supplies all equipment needed to perform mobile onsite care. Dr. Pham has a rolling cart for her instruments and a rolling stool to facilitate "eye level" bedside work. ACP also maintains an EMR and provides full IT support.

Dr. Pham underscores two additional administrative aspects of Aria's program that boost productivity and allow concentration on caregiving:

- Optometry Assistants are assigned to their doctors to organize the daily schedule, obtain patient information, perform pre-testing, and assist with charting.
- Aria handles all scheduling and billing.

Take the Next Step

To learn more about joining the Aria Care Partners team, please visit ariacarepartners.com/careers/optometry-jobs or contact us at (877) 674-1211.