

UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA

*Twin Cities Campus
Department of Ophthalmology and Visual Neurosciences*

*Mailing Address:
MMC 493
420 Delaware Street S.E.
Minneapolis, MN 55455-0501
www.ophthalmology.umn.edu*

April 9, 2026

RE: Richard Norman Sather, III, MD

Dear Selection Committee:

It is a pleasure to offer my strong recommendation for Dr. Richard Sather in support of his application for the 20th Annual Heed Ophthalmic Foundation Residents Retreat. As Program Director of the University of Minnesota Ophthalmology Residency Program, I was delighted to recruit Dr. Sather and have since witnessed firsthand his outstanding performance as an ophthalmology resident. Dr. Sather began his ophthalmology residency training on July 1, 2024, with an anticipated completion date of June 30, 2028. Throughout his residency, he has remained in good standing and has consistently demonstrated the curiosity, diligence, and collegiality essential for success in academic ophthalmology, even amid the rigor of clinical training.

Dr. Sather's interest in academic ophthalmology began during his medical student training here at the University of Minnesota. He worked with Dr. Sandra Montezuma at the University of Minnesota and Drs. Polly Quiram and Peter Belin at Retina Consultants of Minnesota to establish an inherited retinal disease registry and better characterize a variety of inherited retinal diseases. He published five first-author peer-reviewed papers during his senior year of medical school, with three of these papers originating from the inherited retinal disease registry. Additionally, he was recognized for compassionate medical care and academic success in medical school through his induction into the Gold Humanism Honor Society and the Alpha Omega Alpha Honor Medical Society.

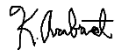
As an ophthalmology resident, Dr. Sather has continued to build an impressive retinal research portfolio. Since starting residency in July 2024, he has published six additional peer-reviewed papers, and he is the first author of five of these. He also currently serves as an investigator on several NEI-sponsored clinical trials for inherited retinal diseases. Notably, he was awarded the 2026 AAO Young Ophthalmologist Green Grant for a collaborative project with Dr. Geoff Emerson, President of the

American Society of Retina Specialists, to evaluate whether a more sustainable air tamponade would be a viable alternative to fluorinated gases in pars plana vitrectomy.

Beyond his academic and research accomplishments, Dr. Sather is deeply committed to his community. He was elected chief resident earlier this year and has embraced the responsibilities of this position, including advising program leadership, managing the resident call schedule, and organizing our intensive two-week introductory course for incoming PGY-2 ophthalmology residents.

In summary, Dr. Richard Sather clearly demonstrates the drive and ability of an emerging clinician-scientist. I am confident that the resources and mentorship provided by the Heed Ophthalmic Foundation Residents Retreat will further support his already promising trajectory. His scientific curiosity, work ethic, and vision will undoubtedly reflect the highest standards of your program.

Sincerely,



Karen R Armbrust, MD, PhD
Associate Professor, Department of Ophthalmology and Visual Neurosciences, Uveitis Service
Co-Director, Pediatric Uveitis Program at MN Lions Children's Eye Clinic
Program Director, Ophthalmology Residency Program
Email: smithk@umn.edu
Phone (cell): 507-250-4853