

Tilman J. Fertitta Family College of Medicine

Graduate Medical Education Policies

RESIDENT AND FELLOW POLICY ON WELL-BEING

ACGME Policies

III.B.7. – III.B.7.a) Well-Being. The Sponsoring Institution must oversee is ACGME-accredited program's(s') fulfillment of responsibility to address well-being of residents/fellows and faculty members, consistent with the Common and specialty-/subspecialty-specific Program Requirements, addressing areas of non-compliance in a timely manner.

Background

Physicians have long not acknowledged the importance of self-care, and the great risk of burnout and stress they are subjected to while caring for others. The Tilman J. Fertitta College of Medicine (COM) promotes the importance of every physician's physical, emotional, and psychological well-being. A measure of professionalism, making the effort to care for oneself is a mark of true professionalism, ensuring that care is delivered to patient's when the individual is performing at their peak. It is the duty of all members of the COM educational system to model such efforts and teach our students and trainees methods to promote personal well-being.

Policy Scope

This policy applies to all Residents, Fellows, Faculty, and Staff working with the COM's GME programs.

Institutional Responsibilities

- Educate program directors, faculty, and staff on the importance of healthy lifestyles.
- Provide a central mechanism for residents/fellows, faculty, and staff to report any concerns for inappropriate training environments; investigate and address concerns in a timely manner.
- Provide resources for program directors, residents/fellows, faculty and staff on physician well-being and its importance.
- Assist program directors in developing clinical trainee schedules which protect resident/fellow time with patients, minimize non-physician obligations, promote progressive autonomy, enhance professional relationships, and encourage physicians to find joy in their work.
- Provide access to confidential, affordable, mental healthcare, including urgent and emergent care, 24/7.

- Ensure programs have a workforce sufficient to initiate back-up plans to provide patient care if a faculty member, resident, or fellow is too fatigued to perform their patient care responsibilities.

Program Responsibilities

- Ensuring the availability of healthy nutrition and time for appropriate breaks for trainees on clinical services.
- Educating residents/fellows, faculty, and staff on the signs of fatigue, burnout, depression, and other forms of impairment, as well as how to seek assistance.
- Empowering all residents/fellows, faculty, and staff to seek assistance from leadership at any time they observe a physician functioning at a dangerous level of performance.
- Promoting a professional training and clinical environment, promoting respect in all interactions. Ensuring residents/fellows, faculty, and staff know how to seek assistance if there are any difficulties.
- Providing appropriate time off during normal working hours for residents/fellows to attend medical, dental, and mental healthcare appointments; encourage individuals to engage in timely preventive care.
- Monitor educational and clinical schedules and evaluations for any signs of inappropriate shift length or other concerns.

Individual Responsibilities

Practicing self-care is as important to the physician as it is to the patient they are treating. Residents/fellows have a professional responsibility to ensure they are fit for duty by practicing such behaviors as:

- Living a healthy lifestyle, with appropriate nutrition, exercise, and rest.
- Successfully managing their time on and off clinical duties.
- Honestly and accurately reporting duty hours and any issues in their clinical rotations which do not support patient safety and well-being.
- Identifying fatigue, substance abuse, and other forms of impairment in themselves and others. In addition, knowing the protocol for reporting and seeking assistance before such situations pose a threat to patient safety and high-quality care.
- Taking the time for necessary preventive healthcare for self and family members.

EFFECTIVE DATE: September 1, 2021

APPROVAL DATE: August 31, 2021

NEXT REVIEW DATE: January 31, 2024