

**INSTITUTIONAL WELL-BEING POLICY**

**PURPOSE**

1. The Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education (ACGME) requires that University of Tennessee Health Science Center College of Medicine - Chattanooga, as the Sponsoring Institution for UT GME Programs in Chattanooga, have a written policy that addresses wellness. This Well-Being Policy is designed to ensure appropriate institutional oversight as mandated by the ACGME Institutional Requirements. This policy applies to all ACGME and non-ACGME UTHSC GME programs.
2. UTHSC is committed to promoting the health and welfare of Residents and Fellows by creating a supportive educational culture so that Residents and Fellows can develop lifelong skills to support and maintain well-being.

**POLICY SCOPE**

The wellbeing policy applies to all UTHSC College of Medicine – Chattanooga Residents, Fellows, and those respective training programs.

**PROCEDURE**

**GME Responsibilities**

1. Provide programs with resources to educate Faculty and house staff physicians in identification of the symptoms of burnout, depression, and substance abuse, including means to assist those who experience these conditions; and how to recognize those symptoms in themselves, and how to seek appropriate care.
2. Identify resources for house staff physician burnout, fatigue, depression, and substance abuse.
3. Provide access to appropriate self-screening tools.
4. Encourage house staff physicians and Faculty members to alert designated personnel when they are concerned about a Fellow trainee or Faculty member who is displaying signs of burnout, depression, fatigue, substance use, suicidal ideation, or potential for violence.
5. Provide access to confidential, affordable, mental health counseling and treatment, including access to urgent and emergent care 24 hours a day, seven days a week.
  - a. Residents and Fellows have access to our onsite, full-time Counselor, Lucy White, MEd, LPC-MHSP, and an Employee Assistance Program through the United Health Care OPTUM services.
  - b. Residents may utilize the services of the Student Academic Support Services and Inclusion (SASSI). The staff of the SASSI provides assistance in the areas of time management, test taking, reading efficiency, note information retention, organization for learning and board preparation. There may be charges for certain services provided at the SASSI. Residents and Fellows interested in SASSI should contact the GME Office at 423.778.3899 to coordinate with SASSI at the main campus in Memphis.
  - c. Residents and Fellows have access to appropriate tools for self-screening.
6. Ensure programs have policies and procedures in place to ensure coverage of patient care; attention to scheduling, work intensity, and work compression that impacts house staff well-being; and the evaluation of workplace safety data and addressing the safety of Residents and Faculty members.

7. Provide a way for house staff physicians to report unprofessional behavior and a respectful process for reporting without fear of negative consequences for the Resident who is or was unable to provide the clinical work.
8. Ensure adequate sleep facilities and safe transportation options for Residents who may be too fatigued to safely return home.

### **Resident and Fellow Responsibilities**

1. Report to UTHSC College of Medicine – Chattanooga fit for duty and able to perform clinical duties in a safe, appropriate, and effective manner free from the adverse effects of physical, mental, and emotional impairment, including impairment due to fatigue.
2. Alert the Program Director, DIO, and other designated personnel when there is a concern that another Resident, Fellow, or Faculty member may be displaying signs of burnout, depression, substance abuse, suicidal ideation, or potential for violence.
3. Voluntarily seek assistance before clinical, education, and professional performance is adversely affected, if experiencing problems. House staff physicians who voluntarily seek assistance for physical, emotional, and/or personal problems including drugs or alcohol dependency will not jeopardize their status as a house staff physician by seeking assistance.
4. Maintain their health through routine and necessary medical, dental, and mental health care. Non-urgent appointments may be scheduled in advance with appropriate permission in accordance with the relevant sick leave policies.
5. Utilize appropriate self-screening tools as provided the UTHSC College of Medicine – Chattanooga Graduate Medical Education office

### **Program Responsibilities**

1. Educate Faculty and house staff physicians in identification of the symptoms of burnout, depression, and substance abuse, including means to assist those who experience these conditions; and how to recognize those symptoms in themselves and how to seek appropriate care.
2. Educate Faculty members and house staff physicians to recognize the signs of fatigue and sleep deprivation, alertness management and fatigue mitigation processes.
3. Encourage Residents to use fatigue mitigation processes to manage the potential negative effects of fatigue on patient care and learning.
4. The program director or Faculty member must take steps to verify the impairment and take appropriate actions upon observance of physical, mental, or emotional problems affecting the performance of a house staff physician, including impairment due to excessive fatigue.
5. Encourage house staff physicians and Faculty members to alert program director or designated personnel when they are concerned about a Fellow trainee or Faculty member who is displaying signs of burnout, depression, fatigue, substance use, suicidal ideation, or potential for violence.
6. Chief Residents should also be aware of the behavior and conduct of junior Residents. If a chief Resident observes physical, mental, or emotional problems affecting the performance of a Resident, including impairment due to excessive fatigue, the chief Resident should immediately notify the program director or designated personnel.
7. Provide Residents time off from service for health care appointments for acute care illnesses (physical or mental) or dental emergencies during work hours.
8. Provide reasonable accommodations (e.g., duty assignments, on-call schedules) to enable the house staff physician to participate in mandated counseling.
9. Provide opportunities for excessively fatigued house staff physicians to take therapeutic naps and facilities to sleep if they are too tired to return to their homes following clinical duties. Free transportation to the house staff physician's place of residence if the trainee is unable to safely travel home due to extreme fatigue, illness, or impairment should be available.

10. There are circumstances in which Residents may be unable to attend work, including but not limited to fatigue, illness, family emergencies, and parental leave. Each program must allow an appropriate length of absence for Residents unable to perform their patient care responsibilities.
11. The program must have policies and procedures in place to ensure coverage of patient care.
12. These policies must be implemented without fear of negative consequences for the Resident who is or was unable to provide the clinical work.

In compliance with ACGME requirements and to ensure Residents are adequately prepared and advised concerning this policy and health issues the risk of which may be amplified by the highly stressful lifestyle of residency, the UTHSC - Chattanooga will provide ongoing support of Resident well-being.

Initial support for any suspected impaired physician issues will be referred to the Tennessee Medical Foundation Physician Health Program. Referrals may be made confidentially by a health care provider, a co-worker, family member, friend or the physician him/herself. To make a referral or obtain more information, contact the Associate Dean/Designated Institutional Official (DIO), Paul Schwartzberg, DO, MBA, FAAP, at 423.778.6956, [paul.schwartzberg@erlangers.org](mailto:paul.schwartzberg@erlangers.org). Residents and Fellows may also contact the Tennessee Medical Foundation Physician's Health Program at

**Tennessee Medical Foundation Physician Health Program**

**ATT: Michael Baron, MD, MPH, Medical Director**

5141 Virginia Way, Suite 110

Brentwood, TN 37027

Phone: 615.467-6411

Email using the form at <https://e-tmf.org/contact/>

**GMEC and Program Responsibility to Residents and Fellows**

1. Pay attention to Resident/Fellows schedules to look at work intensity and compression factors.
2. Allow Residents/Fellows to attend medical, dental and mental health care appointments, including those scheduled during work hours.
3. Educate Residents, Fellows, support staff, and Faculty about burnout, depression and substance use, and their avoidance.
4. Teach and nurture self-care practices, an important component of professionalism and high-quality patient care.
5. Provide a respectful, professional and civil environment that is free from mistreatment, abuse or coercion. There should be education in place about professional behavior and a confidential process for reporting concerns.

**Resources/ References**

ACGME website: [ACGME Resources](#)

American Medical Association [AMA Resources](#)

UT GME Resident Support Services [Policy # 225 Resident Support Services](#)

Approved by the GMEC 01/21/2020. Administrative edits 07/10/2021 and 04/30/2024.