

SECTION SEVEN – INSTITUTIONAL POLICIES RELATIVE TO GME PROGRAMS

POLICY NO: 8.3

Policy Name: Well-Being

Origin Date: July 1, 2019

Approved by: Graduate Medical Education Committee

Approved Date: October 2, 2019

Revision Date: October 8, 2025

Sponsor: Office of Graduate Medical Education

SCOPE: Graduate Medical Education: Residents, Fellows, Faculty, Program Directors, Associate/Assistant Program Directors, Program Coordinators, and Graduate Medical Education Office Staff at Saint Peter's University Hospital

PURPOSE of POLICY: To provide oversight, guidance and support regarding the well-being of residents, fellows and faculty members. To create an efficient learning and working environment that supports joy, purpose, and meaning in work. To gain a more engaged, satisfied physician-in-training workforce for providing better, safer, more compassionate care to patients.

POLICY:

Saint Peter's University Hospital (SPUH) as the Sponsoring Institution of residency and fellowship programs is committed to ensure that its ACGME-accredited programs follow the ACGME Requirements on physician well-being. SPUH is committed to supporting a healthy learning environment that leads to improved health care for all, physicians and patients; physicians who care for themselves do a better job of caring for others. They are less likely to make errors, to experience burnout, depression or leave the profession. Habits of practice to promote well-being and resilience need to be cultivated throughout SPUH's clinical learning and working environment.

The Graduate Medical Education Office encourages residents/fellows and faculty members to alert a program director, the GME Office, and/or other personnel if there is ever a concern that another resident, fellow, or faculty member may be displaying signs of burnout, depression, substance abuse, suicidal ideation, or medical illness or injury.

DEFINITIONS:

Well-being: Refers to the state of being healthy, happy and successful. Well-being may be positively increased by interacting with patients and colleagues at work, being intellectually stimulated and by feeling that one is making a difference/helping. Self-care activities, including exercise, getting plenty of rest and connecting with others, are beneficial.

Resident: Any physician in an ACGME-accredited graduate medical education program including residents and fellows.

Faculty: Any attending physician serving as a teaching and supervising physician in an ACGME-accredited graduate medical education program.

Burnout: Long-term exhaustion and diminished interest in work. Dimensions of burnout include emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and feelings of lack of competence or success in one's work. Burnout can lead to depression, anxiety and substance abuse disorders.

Depression – is a mood disorder that causes a persistent feeling of sadness and loss of interest. It affects how one feels, thinks and behaves and can lead to a variety of emotional and physical problems.

Fatigue – extreme tiredness resulting from mental or physical exertion or illness.

Resilience – The ability to withstand and recover quickly from difficult conditions or situations. During training, residents may face difficult patient care, educational or personal events which could negatively affect their well-being. Decompressing after such situations, through conversation with peers, mentors or family, and self-care activities, can increase resilience.

Suicide Ideation – also known as suicide thinking is the contemplation of ending one's own life. Thoughts can range from a detailed plan to a fleeting consideration. It does not include the final act of suicide.

POLICY STATEMENT:

Residents/fellows and faculty members physical, psychological and emotional well-being is of paramount importance to SPUH and our ACGME-accredited training programs. Psychological, emotional, and physical well-being are critical in the development of the competent, caring, and resilient physician and require proactive attention to life inside and outside of medicine. Well-being requires that physicians retain the joy in medicine while managing their own real-life stresses. Residents/fellows and faculty members are encouraged to lead healthy lives and make healthy choices that support them in their personal and professional growth. To that end, we provide the following strategies to support trainee health, well-being and resilience.

Institutional Support:

- Fun and exciting automated online wellness program through the SPUH Go4Wellness Program provides SPUH residents with resources and services that motivate, encourage, and promote healthy lifestyles and foster resilience. Services include:
 - Health risk and wellness assessment
 - Health and lifestyle coaching
 - Diet and nutrition resources
 - Mindfulness training
- SPUH provides all residents/fellows and faculty members and their eligible dependents with health insurance and disability insurance benefits on the first day of insurance eligibility
- Employee Assistance Program (EAP): Confidential and free counseling services which include 6 in-person visits/year and 24/7 telephonic counseling.

- Access to confidential, affordable mental health assessment, counseling, and treatment, including access to urgent and emergency care 24 hours a day, seven days a week. This may be satisfied by in-person, telemedicine, telephonic or other electronic means.
- Semi-annual Well-being survey: Mini Z for residents and fellows
- Residents/fellows and faculty members have access to healthy food and beverage options at the SPUH cafeteria and Yolanda's Restaurant during their clinical and educational assignments.
- Residents receive food allowance through FreedomPay.
- Available lactation room.
- All incoming residents and fellows receive presentations on well-being, fatigue, and suicide prevention.
- The GME office has enrolled the residents and fellows in the AMA-GCEP online course to facilitate their education on well-being. The residents must complete the following modules: *Physician Health: Physicians Caring for Ourselves; Using Tools to Form an Action Plan for Wellness; Thriving Through Residency: The Resilient Resident; Sleep Deprivation: Your Life and Your Work*
- Participation in annual Staff Appreciation BBQ.
- Participation in annual Doctors' Day celebration.
- Participation in annual Thanks A Resident/Fellow Day celebration and quarterly socials
- Training programs' annual research day and SPUH's annual research day.
- Peer-selected membership in the Graduate Medical Education Committee.
- Peer-selected membership in the Wellness and Diversity Subcommittee.
- Peer-selected membership in the Resident and Fellows Council
- Verge Incident Reporting System: Patient and employee safety reporting events and near misses.
- Ability to voice any concern confidentially and anonymously by calling the corporate compliance hotline, (888) 491-3010. Access is available 24 hours a day - 7 days a week.

Residents/Fellows and Faculty Members Responsibility:

- Residents/fellows and faculty members are responsible for reporting to SPUH fit for duty and able to perform their clinical duties in a safe, appropriate and effective manner free from the adverse effects of physical, mental, emotional and personal problems including impairment due to fatigue. Residents/fellows and faculty members have a professional responsibility to appear for duty appropriately rested and must manage their time before, during and after clinical assignments to prevent excessive fatigue.
- Residents/fellows and faculty members are responsible for assessing and recognizing impairment, including illness and fatigue, in themselves and in their peers.
- If a resident/fellow is experiencing problems, he/she is encouraged to voluntarily seek assistance before clinical, educational and professional performance; interpersonal relationships or behavior are adversely affected. Residents/fellows who voluntarily seek assistance for physical, mental, emotional and/or personal problems, including drug and alcohol dependency, before their performance is adversely affected, will not jeopardize their status as a resident/fellow.
- Residents/fellows and faculty members must maintain their health through routine medical and dental care and if needed mental health care. Non-urgent appointments may be scheduled in advance with appropriate permission using their allocated sick time.
- At no time will residents/fellows and faculty members be denied visits for acute care for illnesses (physical or mental) or dental emergencies during work hours.

- Residents/fellows are encouraged to alert the program director, a faculty mentor, chief resident or designated institutional official (DIO) when they have concern for themselves, a resident/fellow colleague or a faculty member displaying signs of burnout, depression, substance abuse, suicidal ideation or potential for violence.
- Faculty members are encouraged to alert the program director, department chair, chief medical officer or DIO when they have concern for themselves, a resident/fellow colleague or a faculty member displaying signs of burnout, depression, substance abuse, suicidal ideation or potential for violence.

Residency Training Program Responsibility

- It is the responsibility of each program director and all faculty members to be aware of resident/fellow behavior and conduct.
- If a program director or faculty member observes physical, mental, or emotional problems affecting the performance of a resident/fellow, including impairment due to excessive fatigue, the member must take steps to verify the impairment and take appropriate actions.
- 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 designee.
- It is the responsibility of the training programs to provide reasonable accommodations (i.e. clinical learning and working assignments, on-call schedules), to enable the resident/fellow to participate in mandated counseling.
- It is the responsibility of the training programs to provide opportunities for excessively fatigued residents/fellows to take therapeutic naps and to provide accommodation for residents/fellows to sleep if too tired to return to their homes following clinical duties.
- Training programs must educate faculty members and residents/fellows in identification of the symptoms of burnout, depression, and substance abuse, including means to assist those who experience these conditions. Residents/fellows and faculty members must also be educated to recognize those symptoms in themselves and how to seek appropriate care.
- Each program must allow an appropriate length of absence for residents/fellows unable to perform their patient care responsibilities under circumstances in which residents/fellows may be unable to attend work, including but not limited to fatigue, illness, family emergencies, and parental leave.
- Each program must have policies and procedures in place to ensure coverage of patient care. Policies must be implemented without fear of negative consequences for the resident/fellow who is or was unable to provide the clinical work.
- Each program must annually educate all faculty members and residents/fellows to recognize the signs of fatigue and sleep deprivation, provide training in alertness management and fatigue mitigation processes.
- Programs must encourage residents/fellows to use fatigue mitigation processes to manage the potential negative effects of fatigue on patient care and learning.
- Programs must ensure continuity of care, consistent with the program's policies and procedures, in the event that a resident, fellows or faculty member may be unable to perform their patient care responsibilities due to excessive fatigue.