

Policy Name:	Wellbeing Policy		
Approval Authority:	Graduate Medical Education Committee	Effective Date:	September 14, 2021
Responsible Office:	Office of Graduate Medical Education	Contact:	gmeadmin@vcuhealth.org

1. Policy Statement

Residents, fellows and faculty members are at increased risk for burnout and depression. Psychological, emotional and physical wellbeing are examples of aspects of wellbeing and are critical to the development and maintenance of competent and caring physicians.

2. Reason for Policy

This policy aims to define the ways in which trainees are supported in their efforts to become competent, caring physicians while completing GME training programs and to ensure adequate wellness resources are in place without significant barriers to access those resources. This policy provides guidelines for individual programs to aid in fostering a culture of wellness. Each program should have their own policy.

3. Scope

The policy applies to all VCU Health System sponsored graduate medical education programs.

4. Who Should Read This Policy:

Residency and Fellowship Program Directors, Faculty, Department Chairs, Program Coordinators, Residents, and Fellows

5. Trainee and Program Guidelines

a. Fitness for duty

- i. Fitness for duty is defined as being physically and mentally capable of safely performing the essential functions of one’s job. Fitness for duty includes being free of alcohol and drugs that have not been legitimately prescribed and being free from impairment by any cause that affects job functioning while on departmental or on institutional business.
- ii. The Health System expects all trainees to be fit for duty.
- iii. Any resident who is unfit for duty must recuse themselves from clinical duties and contact their supervising attending, and the Chief Resident, or the Program Director immediately. Any resident, fellow, faculty member, or other health system employee who identifies a resident, fellow, or faculty member as being unfit for duty must contact the supervising attending, Chief Resident and/or Program Director.

b. Trainee Responsibilities

- i. Housestaff are responsible for reporting to work fit for duty and able to perform their clinical responsibilities in a safe, appropriate and effective manner.

- ii. Housestaff are responsible for assessing and recognizing impairment, including illness and fatigue, in themselves and in their peers (VCU Health System Medical Staff Policy, Medical Staff Impairment, CP-006).
- iii. Housestaff are encouraged to maintain health through routine and necessary medical, dental and mental health care.
 - 1. Non-urgent appointments should be scheduled in advance with appropriate permission from the program.
 - 2. For urgent appointments addressing acute issues, the program director, program coordinator and/or chief residents should be contacted.
- iv. House staff are responsible for accurate reporting of duty hours

c. Training Program Responsibilities

- i. Programs should make every effort to enhance the well-being and experience of a physician during training by addressing the following:
 - a. Protection of time with patients
 - b. Minimization of non-physician obligations
 - c. Provision of adequate administrative support
 - d. Enhancement of professional relationships
 - e. Attention to factors contributing to trainee well-being including scheduling, work intensity, and work compression.
 - f. Evaluation of workplace safety data and addressing the safety of residents and faculty members
 - g. Policies and programs that encourage optimal resident and faculty member well-being
- ii. If a program's leadership, faculty, trainees, staff, or others observes physical, mental or emotional problems affecting performance of a trainee, appropriate actions should be taken by the program. When there is concern about impairment, the program must follow applicable VCU Health System Policy (VCU Health System Medical Staff Policy, Medical Staff Impairment, CP-006).
- iii. 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.
- iv. Time off must be provided for medical, mental health, and dental care appointments.
 - 1. Trainees should schedule appointments in accordance with program specific policies or guidelines.
 - 2. For urgent appointments addressing acute issues, trainees are not responsible for finding coverage to attend medical or dental appointments. The program is responsible for providing coverage in accordance with program specific policies.
- v. Fatigue Mitigation
 - 1. Sleep accommodations (GME and departmental rest and call rooms) and safe transportation options for trainees that are too fatigued to safely drive home should be readily available (e.g. GME taxi voucher available in New Innovations).
 - 2. The institution and programs must provide education for fatigue mitigation and management.

3. Programs must create schedules that minimize the risk for sleep deprivation and fatigue and that are compliant with duty hour limits set forth by their applicable accrediting body. Programs that do not have an accrediting body must follow the rules set forth by the ACGME.
4. Programs must require that trainees continuously log duty hours
5. Program Directors have ultimate responsibility for ensuring compliance with their accrediting body's clinical and educational work requirements. The program director (or designee) must regularly monitor their trainee(s)' duty hours to ensure compliance. Causes for violations must be addressed.

d. Support and Resources

- i. The Graduate Medical Education Committee shall designate a subcommittee whose responsibility is to enhance the wellbeing of the housestaff. Committee membership will include program directors, program coordinators, and residents/fellows.
- ii. The Graduate Medical Education Office maintains links to a variety of helpful resources on the VCUHS GME website (<https://medschool.vcu.edu/education/gme/>)
- iii. Mental well-being
 1. Screening questionnaires
 - a. <http://screening.mentalhealthscreening.org/hyho>
 - b. <https://screening.mentalhealthamerica.net/screening-tools>
 2. VCUHS HelpLink: 828-4EAP (<https://hr.vcu.edu/current-employees/employee-relations/counseling-referrals/>)
 3. Improving Physician Well-Being, Restoring Meaning in Medicine <https://acgme.org/What-We-Do/Initiatives/Physician-Well-Being/Resources>
- iv. Physical well-being
 1. VCU Recreational Sports (discounted memberships to two full facilities and all extra-curricular activities): <https://recsports.vcu.edu/>
- v. Additional resources
 1. RamStrong Wellness assessment (<https://ramstrong.vcu.edu/wellness-assessment/>)
 2. ACGME Aware well-being resources (<https://dl.acgme.org/pages/well-being>)
 3. VCUHS wellness (<https://intranet.vcuhealth.org/sites/wellness/?source=63990&sort=starts&dir=asc&mode=list>)

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