



RESIDENT PHYSICIAN (TRAINEE) IMPAIRMENT

An impaired trainee is defined as a resident physician who is unable to perform his/her duties satisfactorily or care for patients, coworkers, or themselves with reasonable skill or safety because of a physical or mental illness, cognitive deterioration, loss of motor skills, or excessive use or abuse of drugs or other substances, including alcohol. It is imperative that Nationwide Children's Hospital (NCH) and GME faculty, staff, and other trainees recognize the effects of severe fatigue and stress separate from the above causes of impairment and act to resolve such issues outside of this process.

Concerns regarding trainee impairment may be identified by anyone including, but not limited to, faculty, hospital staff, residents/fellows, patients, and families. Concerns should be directed immediately to the Program Director, who is responsible for investigation and development of a plan of action. The Program Director may recommend that trainee privileges be terminated, be suspended, or be limited for up to 30 calendar days, so that appropriate evaluation, testing and/or treatment of the resident can be instituted. The trainee may be dismissed immediately if the trainee's actions are of such a serious nature that he/she should not be continued in the program. Termination, suspension, or limitation of resident privileges or assignments shall be considered an Adverse Action and notification of NCH officials will follow the specifications of the NCH GME Adverse Action policy.

The Program Director may require for-cause drug testing, counseling, or other treatment for the resident to continue in the program. Trainees will be apprised by the Program Director of appropriate counseling and treatment services available (including NCH employee assistance program). The trainee retains the right to select a counselor or treating professional acceptable to him/her; the chosen counselor or treatment provider must be approved by the Program Director. The Program Director will document through periodic reports and verification from the treatment provider that the trainee is following treatment recommendations.

A trainee who requires evaluation or treatment extending beyond the 30 days of suspension or limitation of privileges will meet with the Program Director and/or designee regularly (at least bi-weekly) to determine his/her ability to return to regular status within the GME program. The Program Director will update the DIO and the Chief Medical Officer monthly regarding the status of the trainee suspension and shall make recommendations for reinstatement when appropriate. Reinstatement of responsibility following suspension or limitation of privileges requires approval of the DIO and the Chief Medical Officer.

The Program Director will discuss with the trainee the implications of suspension for extension of his/her GME program, in accordance with the guidelines established by the Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education (ACGME), the appropriate Residency Review Committee (RRC), and/or the applicable certifying board. The Program Director, in consultation with the GME Office, will determine the amount, if any, of time extension and document this decision in writing in the trainee's personnel file.

During an initial 30-day suspension, the trainee will be eligible for full salary and benefits. If suspension beyond 30 days is required, the trainee will be eligible for pay and benefits according to the policy for Family Medical Leave (even if the trainee is not eligible for FMLA leave) and the paid time off allocation as specified in the trainee's contract. Unless the trainee has withdrawn from the NCH GME program, all institutional and program regulations pertaining to work and moonlighting activities continue to apply during suspension.

Trainees who are not approved for reinstatement within 90 days of suspension and trainees who are reported for impairment again or are suspended again after an initial suspension and reinstatement will be reviewed for dismissal. The decision regarding dismissal will be made by the Program Director in consultation with the DIO and will be communicated in writing to the resident and to the NCHDIO, Chief Medical Officer, President of the Medical Staff and Legal Services. If the resident is dismissed, Human Resources will also be notified.

Trainees who are disabled, as that term is defined by the Americans with Disabilities Act and by Ohio law, are entitled to the protection of such laws, including the right to reasonable accommodation of their conditions. The foregoing policy will be administered in a way that recognizes and provides all applicable legal protections to persons with disabilities.

Approved by GME Committee: 6/11/97; 3/8/00; 12/16/04; 12/17/07; 12/15/2010