TRAINEE AND FACULTY WELL-BEING POLICY

Nationwide Children’s (NCH) promotes a learning environment which supports resident, fellow and faculty well-being. Self-care and responsibility to support other members of the health care team are important components of professionalism. They are skills that must be modeled, learned, and nurtured in the context of other aspects of graduate training.

NCH and its graduate medical education (GME) and dental programs have responsibility to address well-being, including:

- Efforts to enhance the meaning that each resident and fellow (trainee) finds in the experience of being a physician/dentist, including protecting time with patients, minimizing non-physician obligations, providing administrative support, promoting progressive autonomy and flexibility, and enhancing professional relationships;
- Attention to scheduling, work intensity, and work compression that impacts trainee well-being;
- Evaluating workplace safety data and addressing the safety of trainees and faculty members;
- Attention to trainee and faculty member mental health, including burnout, depression, and substance abuse.

Time for trainee self-care

Trainees must be given the opportunity to attend medical, mental health, and dental care appointments, including those scheduled during their working hours.

There are circumstances in which trainees 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 trainees unable to perform their patient care responsibilities.

- Each program must have policies and procedures in place to ensure coverage of patient care.
- These policies must be implemented without fear of negative consequences for the trainee who is or was unable to provide the clinical work.

Factors directly related to training as well as those external to the work responsibilities may adversely impact trainees’ health and well-being. Examples may include:

- Death of a patient for whom they have cared
- Traumatic patient or family circumstances, e.g., severe car accident or particularly difficult child abuse case
- Tragic circumstances impacting another member of the team, e.g., unexpected premature birth with multiple complications
- Medical errors or misjudgments leading to adverse patient outcomes
- Failure to pass a qualifying Board examination
- Family disruptions, e.g., separation or divorce, spouse/significant other job loss

Trainees are encouraged to self-report and seek help when they need additional resources to manage these or other issues. Program Directors (PDs) and faculty need to take particular care
in how these requests for assistance are addressed so as not to intentionally or unintentionally convey that the trainee is “weak” or a less effective physician team member by seeking help.

See also GME Policies and Procedures – Clinical and Educational Work Hours, Safe Transportation Home for Fatigued Residents and Fellows Procedure, Paid and Unpaid Time

**Burnout, depression, substance abuse, and other potential impairments**

NCH and its GME and dental education programs, in partnership with NCH, must educate faculty members and trainees in identification of the symptoms of burnout, depression, and substance abuse, including means to assist those who experience these conditions. Trainees and faculty members must be educated to recognize those symptoms in themselves and how to seek appropriate care. Information is available on the NCH Anchor site (Employee Wellness – Work/Life Balance) and the ACGME website on Physician Well Being (www.acgme.org/What-We-Do/Initiatives/Physician-Well-Being)

GME and dental programs, in partnership with NCH, must:
- Encourage trainees and faculty members to alert their PD or other designated personnel or programs when they are concerned that another trainee, faculty member or staff may be displaying signs of burnout, depression, substance abuse, suicidal ideation, or potential for violence;
- Provide access to appropriate tools for self-screening; and,
- Provide access to confidential, affordable mental health assessment, counseling, and treatment, including access to urgent and emergent care 24 hours a day, seven days a week. The NCH Anchor intranet site has information on such a resource, the Matrix Employee Assistance Program (EAP)

**Resources**

GME and dental programs, in partnership with NCH, ensure healthy and safe learning and working environments that promote trainee well-being and provide for:
- Access to food while on duty (e.g. cafeteria, food court, vending, Subway)
- Safe, quiet, clean and private sleep/rest facilities available and accessible for trainees with proximity appropriate for safe patient care
- Clean and private facilities for lactation that have refrigeration capabilities, with proximity appropriate for safe patient care. Programs should assure that lactating trainees receive adequate time for lactation.
- Security and safety measures appropriate to the site
- Accommodations for trainees with disabilities. NCH Personnel Policies are available relevant to trainees with disabilities.

Approved by GME Committee: 1/15/2020