

Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology The Sloane Hospital for Women at Columbia University

Well-Being, Physician Impairment, and Leave

A. Well Being and Physician Impairment

- a. Residency Training can be exceptionally stressful in the life of a new physician, creating emotional, physical and mental demands on trainees' personal and professional lives. In the Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology at the Sloane Hospital for Women, we are committed to helping residents meet these demands and make a smooth adjustment to the rigors of our training program.
- b. As defined by the RRC Program Requirements (7/1/2003):
The Program Director is responsible for monitoring resident stress, including mental or emotional conditions inhibiting performance or learning, and drug- or alcohol-related dysfunction. Both the Program Director and faculty should be sensitive to the need for timely provision of confidential counseling and psychological support services to residents...Faculty and residents must be educated to recognize the signs of fatigue and adopt and apply policies to prevent and counteract the political negative effects.
- c. Raising Awareness:
 - i. At the beginning of each academic year, all Housestaff will receive a new Policies and Procedures Manual which includes the updated departmental and hospital policies on physician impairment and stress.
 - ii. During the appointment and re-appointment process, residents must take the online NYPH Organizational Readiness course, which includes a program on physician impairment.
- d. Opportunities to Identify Residents who Require Additional Support:
 - i. Once each month during protected time, the program conducts resident well being sessions. On alternate months, residents meet with the Program Directors or Dr. Linda Mullen, a psychiatrist with special training in stress management and women's mental health. These sessions provide opportunities for all residents to express concerns regarding stress, fatigue, and general mental health.
 - ii. At the beginning of the Intern year, each resident is assigned a faculty mentor, with whom they are encouraged to meet on a regular basis. Residents have an opportunity to select a new mentor at any point in their training. The role of the faculty advisor/mentor

- is to monitor the general well-being of their mentees and to provide general career guidance.
- iii. During the semi-annual evaluations, both Program Directors meet individually with each resident and discuss any issues that may have arisen in the interim time.
 - iv. When any resident, faculty, or staff member is concerned about a resident's well being, they are encouraged to contact one or both Program Directors or the department Chair, confidentially, as soon as the issue(s) is (are) raised. It is a disservice to the resident in question, as well as to the patients and the department, not to raise these concerns promptly and candidly.
- e. When Concerns are Raised:
When concerns are raised about a member of the Housestaff by another resident, or by a staff or faculty member, the Program Directors meet with the resident in question in order to gather additional information and to better assess the situation. If it is determined, after meeting with the resident, that intervention is necessary, this may include:
- Ongoing monitoring and assessment of the resident by the Program Directors and the resident's mentor
 - Encouragement of the resident to confidentially consult a psychologist for additional support
 - Consultation of the Education Committee and the design of an individualized remediation program
 - A psychological assessment by Occupational Health
 - A medical assessment by Occupational Health
 - A Period of Intensive Academic Focus (see NYPH Policy)
- f. Resources:
- i. Occupational Health:
 1. Main Number: (212) 305-7590
 2. Psychiatry – Laurel Mayer: (212) 543-5741

B. Leave

- a. A member of the Housestaff may request a leave of absence (LOA) for one of three reasons:
 - i. Personal illness
 - ii. To care for a family member who is ill
 - iii. Other valid personal reasons

A leave of absence is defined as an excused absence from work for an approved reason. An LOA can be used for a maximum of no more than 26 weeks of an academic year (July 1 – June 30). The LOA must be requested as soon as the need for leave is known, even if the exact date(s) of leave are not yet defined. The LOA will not be unreasonably denied as

long as they are consistent with applicable laws and the operating needs of the program.

- b. LOA for a Personal Medical Disability
 - i. Employees may request an LOA for a serious health condition which will render the resident unable to perform her/his essential functions.
 - ii. Employees requesting leave for an illness or disability may request up to 26 weeks of leave.

For further details regarding LOAs and benefits paid, you may refer to the NYPH Graduate Medical Education Policy and Procedure Manual, Policy #006.

- c. Maternity Leave
 - i. A pregnant resident is eligible for up to six weeks of paid maternity leave following a vaginal delivery, and up to eight weeks of paid leave after a Cesarean section.
 - ii. Unpaid leave time may continue to the total 12 week maximum as specified by state and federal law. Health insurance contributions continue for 12 weeks.
 - iii. Once a resident realizes she is pregnant, she must notify the Program Directors as soon as possible, but no later than the 16th week of gestation, in order to modify the rotation schedule if necessary.
 - iv. If a pregnant resident encounters complications or illness requiring time off from work, then the guidelines of NYPH's GME Policy #006 apply.
 - v. Paid paternity, or partner, leave can be taken for a maximum of two weeks as unused vacation or educational leave time. The resident should notify the Program Directors as soon as possible but no later than the 16th week of gestation in order to modify the rotation schedule if necessary.

C. ABOG Eligibility

- a. In order to complete a residency program in obstetrics and gynecology on time, residents may take off no more than 20 weeks total during their four years of training, with additional limits:
 - i. No more than 8 weeks during PGY 1-3, including vacations,
 - ii. No more than 6 weeks during the Chief year, also including vacation. A chief resident who takes four weeks of vacation may not miss more than two additional weeks for other reasons, including job interviews, family, and medical leave.

. Depending on the resident's academic performance, satisfactorily meeting the ACGME competencies, and circumstances regarding the residents' LOA, the resident may be

deemed competent to practice independently and thus may receive a certificate of completion at the time of graduation in June of her/his Chief year. However, the resident may not be eligible to sit for the ABOG Written Exam in June of her/his Chief year unless LOAs in excess of the limits specified are made up.

Adapted from the UCSF Policy on Pregnancy Leave, Sick Leave, and Family Leave for Residents; and the NYPH Graduate Medical Education Policy #006 – Housestaff Leave of Absence