

WELLBEING

PURPOSE

1. The Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education (ACGME) requires that University of Tennessee Health Sciences Center (UTHSC), as the Sponsoring Institution of record, have a written policy that addresses wellness. The wellbeing policy is designed to ensure appropriate institutional oversight as mandated by the ACGME Institutional Requirements. This policy applies to all ACGME and non-ACGME UTHSC GME programs.
2. UTHSC is committed to promoting the health and welfare of residents and fellows by creating a supportive educational culture so that residents and fellows can develop lifelong skills to support and maintain well-being.

SCOPE

The wellbeing policy applies to all UTHSC residents, fellows, and their respective training programs.

PROCEDURE

GME Responsibilities

1. Provide programs with resources to educate faculty and housestaff physicians in identification of the symptoms of burnout, depression, and substance abuse, including means to assist those who experience these conditions; and how to recognize those symptoms in themselves, and how to seek appropriate care.
2. Identify resources for housestaff physician burnout, fatigue, depression, and substance abuse.
3. Provide access to appropriate self-screening tools.
4. Encourage housestaff physicians and faculty members to alert designated personnel when they are concerned about a fellow trainee or faculty member who is displaying signs of burnout, depression, fatigue, substance use, suicidal ideation, or potential for violence.
5. Provide access to confidential, affordable, mental health counseling and treatment, including access to urgent and emergent care 24 hours a day, seven days a week.
 - a. Residents have access to the University Health Services and Employee Assistance Program
 - b. Residents may utilize the services of the Student Academic Support Services and Inclusion (SASSI). The staff of the SASSI provides assistance in the areas of time management, test taking, reading efficiency, note information retention, organization for learning and board preparation. There may be charges for certain services provided at the SASSI. Residents interested in the SASSI should contact the GME Office at 448-5364.
 - c. Residents have access to appropriate tools for self-screening.
6. Ensure programs have policies and procedures in place to ensure coverage of patient care; attention to scheduling, work intensity, and work compression that impacts housestaff well-being; and the evaluation of workplace safety data and addressing the safety of residents and faculty members.
7. Provide a way for housestaff physicians to report unprofessional behavior and a respectful process for reporting without fear of negative consequences for the resident who is or was unable to provide the clinical work.
8. Ensure adequate sleep facilities and safe transportation options for residents who may be too fatigued to safely return home.

Housestaff Physician Responsibilities

1. Report to UTHSC fit for duty and able to perform clinical duties in a safe, appropriate, and effective manner free from the adverse effects of physical mental, and emotional impairment, including impairment due to fatigue.
2. Alert their program director, DIO, and other designated personnel when there is a concern that another resident/fellow or faculty member may be displaying signs of burnout, depression, substance abuse, suicidal ideation, or potential for violence.
3. Voluntarily seek assistance before clinical, education, and professional performance is adversely affected, if experiencing problems. Housestaff physicians who voluntarily seek assistance for physical, emotional and/ or personal problems including drugs or alcohol dependency will not jeopardize their status as a housestaff physician by seeking assistance.
4. Maintain their health through routine and necessary medical, dental, and mental health care. Non-urgent appointments may be scheduled in advance with appropriate permission in accordance with the relevant sick leave policies.
5. Utilize appropriate self-screening tools as provided the UTHSC Graduate Medical Education office.

Residency/Fellowship Training Program Responsibilities

1. Educate faculty and housestaff physicians in identification of the symptoms of burnout, depression, and substance abuse, including means to assist those who experience these conditions; and how to recognize those symptoms in themselves and how to seek appropriate care.
2. Educate faculty members and housestaff physicians to recognize the signs of fatigue and sleep deprivation, alertness management and fatigue mitigation processes.
3. Encourage residents to use fatigue mitigation processes to manage the potential negative effects of fatigue on patient care and learning.
4. The program director or faculty member must take steps to verify the impairment and take appropriate actions upon observance of physical, mental, or emotional problems affecting the performance of a housestaff physician, including impairment due to excessive fatigue.
5. Encourage housestaff physicians and faculty members to alert program director or designated personnel when they are concerned about a fellow trainee or faculty member who is displaying signs of burnout, depression, fatigue, substance use, suicidal ideation, or potential for violence.
6. 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 designated personnel.
7. Provide residents time off from service for health care appointments for acute care illnesses (physical or mental) or dental emergencies during work hours.
8. Provide reasonable accommodations (e.g., duty assignments, on-call schedules) to enable the housestaff physician to participate in mandated counseling.
9. Provide opportunities for excessively fatigued housestaff physicians to take therapeutic naps and facilities to sleep if they are too tired to return to their homes following clinical duties. Free transportation to the housestaff physician's place of residence if the trainee is unable to safely travel home due to extreme fatigue, illness, or impairment should be available.
10. 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.
11. The program must have policies and procedures in place to ensure coverage of patient care.
12. These policies must be implemented without fear of negative consequences for the resident who is or was unable to provide the clinical work.

In compliance with ACGME requirements and to ensure residents are adequately prepared and advised concerning this policy and health issues the risk of which may be amplified by the highly stressful lifestyle of residency, UTHSC will provide ongoing support of resident well-being. GMEC Well-Being Committee has representatives of faculty, GME administrative leaders, Student Academic Support Services, the DIO, and the Assistant Dean of GME.

The committee will meet at least quarterly and review wellbeing activities and initiatives both at the system and program level. (Funding for specific program level activities must be within the program's budget).

Initial support for any suspected impaired physician issues will be referred to Aid for Impaired Residents Program (AIRS), a confidential program which functions in coordination with the nationally recognized Aid for Impaired Medical Student Program (AIMS) developed at the University of Tennessee. Referrals may be made confidentially by a health care provider, a co-worker, family member, friend or the physician him/herself. To make a referral or obtain more information, contact the Associate Dean of GME, Natascha Thompson, MD, at (901) 448-5364. Residents may also contact the Tennessee Medical Foundation Physician's Health Program online at: <http://www.e-tmf.org> or at the following address:

5141 Virginia Way Suite 110
Brentwood, TN 37027
Phone: (615) 467-6411
Fax: (615) 467-6419

Resources/ References

UTHSC GME Physician Wellness

- <https://www.uthsc.edu/graduate-medical-education/wellness/index.php>

Self-Assessment Tools

- [Alcohol Intake](#)
- [Anxiety](#)
- [Burnout](#)
- [Depression](#)
- [Coping with Depression](#)
- [Self-Compassion](#)
- [Stress](#)
- [Work Life Balance](#)

Next Steps

- [Employee Assistance Program \(EAP\)](#)
- [Aid for Impaired Residents \(AIRS\)](#)
- [Psychotherapist Resources](#)
- UTHSCS Counselor, [Clay Woemmel](#)
- [University of Memphis Therapy Services](#)

Suicide Hotline 800.273.8255 or Crisis Text by texting TALK to 741741