

- 1. SUBJECT:** **Time Away Policy – PTO and Leaves of Absence**

- 2. PURPOSE:** To ensure residents/fellows are aware of the policies regarding time away from residency which may impact their length of training.

EFFECTIVE: July 16, 2020
REVISED: April 30, 2022
GMEC APPROVAL: March 25, 2025

- 3. POLICY STATEMENT:** The GMEC will ensure that residency programs' are adhering to specialty boards' training policies.

- 4. DESCRIPTION:**
 - 4.1 Time away available for residents includes the following:
 - 4.1.1. Paid Personal Days - Residents receive 20 days of paid time away per program training year for personal use, including vacation, illness, job interviews, and professional development conferences. Paid personal time away is prorated for new residents who enter the program during the academic year with partial credit. When scheduling paid personal days away, residents should remain aware of the specialty specific medical board time away requirements for board eligibility, which may limit total time off each program year. Time away is subject to the approval of the Program Director or his/her designee.
 - 4.1.2. Holiday Time Away - Patient care coverage during holidays is an expectation of residency training. Accordingly, compensatory time is not provided for residents who work on holidays.
 - 4.1.2.1. Resident time off for holidays is subject to patient care needs. Accordingly, as scheduling permits so as to provide for patient care coverage, paid holidays are observed according to Hospital guidelines.
 - 4.1.3. Time Away for Approved International Travel Rotations - International rotations may be approved by the Program Director for residents interested in international educational experiences--up to four weeks may be paid as regular residency work time as determined by the Program Director. Specific requirements regarding time away and care of continuity patients is outlined in the Resident Advancement and Promotion Policy.
 - 4.1.4. Bereavement – The GME Department and programs will follow the Corewell Health Lakeland Bereavement Leave Policy, which states that in the event of the death of

a close relative up to 24 hours of scheduled time off with pay is allowed. Additional time off may be granted at the discretion of the Program Director, additional time off will be paid as PTO. Bereavement Leave is included as part of the Specialty Specific Board time away requirements and therefore may mandate an extension of training. Residents who need bereavement leave must contact their Program Director or a core faculty member immediately.

4.1.5. Special Circumstances - There may be program specific rotations where time away is not allowed. However, it is expected that extenuating circumstances may arise that require time away. These special requests will need prior approval from the Program Director.

4.1.5.1. Graduation – Graduation attendance is mandatory for all graduating senior residents. PTO in your final block of residency is limited to one (1) week and will not encompass Graduation Day. Nonadherence to this policy will result in automatic professional concern status.

4.1.6. When a resident misses multiple days due to illness, bereavement or extenuating circumstances, they may be required to take unpaid leave of absence, PTO or complete the missed educational experiences over the course of the academic year.

4.2. ABMS response to COVID-19 or pandemic disruption of training - In most cases, specialty boards' existing leave policies will cover training disruptions caused by quarantine, and boards are supportive of creative strategies to recognize learning opportunities that can take place during such times. In situations in which quarantine impedes completion of on-time training, boards are receptive to case-by-case discussions and do not wish to penalize trainees for situations beyond their control. Check with the relevant Board regarding eligibility requirements and with specific questions about time away from required rotations/the program related to COVID-19.

4.3. There are circumstances in which residents may be unable to attend work, including but not limited to fatigue, illness, family emergencies and leave of absence including medical, parental, and caregiver leave. Each program must allow an appropriate length of absence for residents unable to perform their patient care responsibilities.

4.3.1. The program must have policies and procedures in place to ensure coverage of patient care.

4.3.2. These policies must be implemented without fear of negative consequences for the resident who is unable to provide the clinical work.

4.3.3. Programs must provide residents with a minimum of six weeks of approved medical, parental, and caregiver leave(s) of absence for qualifying reasons at least once and at any time during their training starting on the first day of training.

4.3.4. Programs must provide residents with at least the equivalent of 100% of their

salary for the first six weeks of the first approved medical, parental or caregiver leave of absence taken.

4.3.5. The program must describe the process for submitting and approving requests for leave of absence which must be available for residents to review at all times.

4.3.6. Programs must provide residents with accurate information regarding the impact of an extended leave of absence on may have on completing their training and/or eligibility for specialty boards.

4.4. Resident Leaves of Absence - There are times when residents may occasionally need to be away for longer periods of time for reasons such as parental leave, medical conditions, and other personal/family matters, extended jury or military duty. Leaves of absence involve several important Human Resource issues and additionally may have important implications for Board eligibility. Leaves must be arranged in collaboration with the local Program Director or his/her designee and the Corewell Health Lakeland (CHL) Human Resources Department.

4.4.1. A leave of absence may extend the length of residency training. It can involve curriculum modifications, approval by the specialty board, and pay adjustments, and may also affect benefits. Residents should be aware that some extensions may be viewed adversely by external agencies. Extensions to residency training will need to be explained when applying for licensure, hospital privileges, Board examinations and employment positions in the future--verifications of extensions of training will be requested from the residency program.

4.4.2. Types of Leave of Absences

4.4.2.1. Full Leave - This is an interruption of training, and means the resident is away from the program on a full-time basis for a designated period of time.

4.4.2.2. Partial (part-time) leave - This means the resident is training part-time on a reduced schedule for a designated period of time. For example, the residents Full-time Equivalent (FTE) is reduced from 1.0 full-time to 0.50 part-time for 3 months. On occasion, the program director or designee may grant permission for a resident to training part-time for a limited period of time if there are extenuating medical or personal circumstances.

4.4.2.2.1. Extension of a leave of absence. In extenuating circumstances, a Program Director may approve the extension of a resident currently on a full or partial leave of absence. Because of their negative effects on Board eligibility and licensure, extended leaves of absence are usually not granted except for serious medical illnesses. Team members are not guaranteed to return to the same position, pay, or benefits when their leave extends

beyond twelve weeks and leaves more than 26 weeks place team member on inactive status and generally result in dismissal or non-renewal. Extended leaves that threatened Board eligibility will also result in dismissal or non-renewal.

- 4.4.3. Disability Insurance Coverage - The disability insurance plans have been designed to provide you the ability to protect your income if you become disabled because of illness or injury. Many of us will be fortunate to enjoy good health and never have occasion to collect any benefits under these plans. However, all of us will have the comfort and satisfaction of knowing that the plans are there when we need them. Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA) (Short term disability varies for physician residents, so check with HR prior to your Leave to ensure coverage benefits)
 - 4.4.3.1 The Family Medical and Leave Act (FMLA) entitles qualified employees up to 12 weeks of leave per twelve-month period for the birth or adoption of a child, to care for a spouse, or an immediate family member with a serious health condition, when unable to personally work because of a serious health condition for self, or for certain military related situations. Residents are eligible if they have worked for Corewell Health Lakeland for at least one year and worked 1,250 hours over the previous 12 months. If you would like more information, contact Dania Garcia-Bonilla at 269.985.4584 or dbonilla2@lakelandhealth.org.
 - 4.4.3.2. Short-Term Disability (STD) Coverage - Corewell Health Lakeland provides you with a Short-Term Disability (STD) plan to protect you financially in the event that you are unable to work due to an illness or injury that is not work related, including maternity leave due to the birth of a child. STD is a core benefit that is given to all eligible residents at no cost.
 - 4.4.3.3. Residents are eligible for Short-Term Disability coverage beginning on day 1 of residency. The STD benefit then pays at 100% of your weekly base rate and is considered taxable income. This benefit continues for up to 26 weeks. If you are unable to return to work after the 26 weeks, Long-Term Disability may begin. LTD is payable at 60% of your base salary.
- 4.4.4. Residents who take a leave of absence will continue to receive their full salary up to 6 weeks by claiming Short Term Disability (STD). PTO may be used to supplement the salary. Regardless of the amount of leave taken, if PTO is used to reduce impact to training or supplement resident's salary, the program must reserve one week of PTO during the program year.
- 4.4.5 Residents and eligible dependents will continue to receive medical and disability insurance coverage while on approved medical, family or caregiver leaves of absence.

- 4.4.6. Process to apply for a Leave of Absence - For leaves that can be planned in advance, residents are required to inform the Program Director, the Program Coordinator, and any other persons who are involved in scheduling and educational planning in the residency program as soon as possible.
 - 4.4.6.1. Residents must also submit a written proposal to the Program Director for approval which includes the following:
 - 4.4.6.1.1. Anticipated dates of leave
 - 4.4.6.1.2. Description of current schedule and proposed modifications
 - 4.4.6.1.3. Plans for taking/trading call during leave
 - 4.4.6.1.4. Plans for meeting all educational requirements, and
 - 4.4.6.1.5. Specific plans for assuring continuity of patient care (Obstetrics' (OB's), patients with chronic illness)
 - 4.4.6.2. Residents who need a leave of absence on an emergent basis must contact the Program Director or a faculty member immediately. The resident's health and well-being are the primary concern. After that, the details of call and coverage must be worked out.
 - 4.4.6.3. Contact Human Resources. The Human Resources Department is located on the fourth floor of the Corewell Health Lakeland Saint Joseph campus. Hours: Monday–Friday 8:00 am – 4:30 pm. For questions regarding Benefits, Leaves of Absence, Career, Payroll, disability, etc. go to your Lakeland ServiceNow app on any Lakeland computer. Select the Human Resources Support link in the HR section of the homepage. You can find most answers to your HR related questions by searching the Browse Knowledge section. You can also Submit a Request and select the category of the help you need and submitting a specific question. If you still can't find an answer to your question, you can call the People Solutions Center at 616.486.SHHR(7447) and they will assist you in finding the information you're looking for.
- 4.4.7. ACGME and Specialty Board Requirements - The ACGME, and Specialty Medical board requirements for time away apply to emergency leave as well as to leave planned in advance, and may extend the resident's training in the program or adversely affect Board eligibility. Programs must provide accurate information regarding the impact of an extended leave of absence upon the criteria for satisfactory completion of the program and upon a resident's/fellow's eligibility to participate in certifying board exams.
 - 4.4.7.1. Approval Process - The Program Director is responsible for approving or denying a request for a leave of absence. With an approved leave, the Program Director will determine whether the time away will be paid or unpaid.

- 4.4.7.2. Documentation - Documentation is required for any resident leave of absence from the program, whether it is for full time away from the program or a partial leave.
- 4.4.7.3 The program will notify the ACGME and specialty medical board of any disruptions in a resident's/fellow's training that may extend the length of training in the program or adversely affect board eligibility.