

1. SUBJECT: Time Away Policy – Vacation, Sick, Bereavement, 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: March 21, 2025

GMEC APPROVAL: April 23, 2026

3. POLICY STATEMENT: The GMEC will ensure that residency programs adhere to the Specialty Boards' training policies.

4. DESCRIPTION:

A. Attendance requirements:

- 1) Academic years begin July 1st and end June 30th. Residents are to attend all scheduled educational activities, including rotation assignments, didactics, grand rounds, journal club, in-training examinations, committee meetings, and all other duties as assigned per academic year.
- 2) Residents are entitled to leave with pay for vacation, sick, and continuing medical education presentations during each program training year.
- 3) The maximum time a resident can be away from a program in each training year is determined by the requirements of the specialty board involved. Excessive time away from training may require an extension of that training year.

B. Time away available for residents includes the following:

- 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 leave is given to new residents on a prorated basis if they join the program partway through the academic year, resulting in partial credit. Residents should keep in mind that medical boards for their specialty may have specific limits on time away, which can affect eligibility for board certification and restrict time off each year. All requests for time away must be approved by the Program Director or their designated representative.
- 2) Michigan Earned Sick Time Act (MESTA) allows team members to use up to 72 hours of protected sick time in one calendar year. Protected sick time is frontloaded and will not carry over from one calendar year to the next. This will mean very little change for residents/fellows with PTO benefits to cover vacation and sick time off.
 - a. MESTA Qualifying Events: Residents/fellows may use protected sick time for the following reasons: 1. Physical or mental illness, injury, or health condition of the team member or their family member. 2. Medical diagnosis, care, or

treatment of the team member or team member's family member. 3. Preventive care of the team member or their family member. 4. Closure of the team member's workplace by order of a public official due to a public health emergency. 5. To care for a team member's child whose school or place of care has been closed by order of a public official due to a public health emergency. 6. The team member's or their family member's exposure to a communicable disease that would jeopardize the health of others, as determined by health authorities or a health care provider. 7. Meetings at a child's school or place of care related to the child's health or disability, or effects from domestic violence or sexual assault. 8. If a team member or a team member's family member is a victim of sexual assault or domestic violence.

- b. Team members can use protected sick time in one-hour increments, not more than 72 hours per year.
 - i. Additional documentation validating the time off is for a reason allowed by MESTA will be required for absences lasting more than three (3) consecutive days.
 - c. OME will track time off from the protected sick time when a resident/fellow is absent due to a qualifying purpose under MESTA. The payment for the absence will be deducted from the resident's/fellow's PTO bank.
 - d. If a resident/fellow uses all their PTO for vacation and then needs to use MESTA-protected time, they will not be eligible to take the protected sick time and will be subject to the program's attendance policy.
- 3) 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.
- Resident time off for holidays is subject to patient care needs. Accordingly, as scheduling permits to provide patient care coverage, paid holidays are observed according to Hospital guidelines.
- 4) 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 are outlined in the Resident Advancement and Promotion Policy.
- 5) Bereavement – The OME Department and programs will follow the Corewell Health Lakeland Bereavement Leave Policy, which states:
- Benefit-eligible team members are eligible for this benefit on the date of hire.
 - Bereavement pay, the equivalent of one work week based on FTE, excluding overtime, will be provided for the loss of:
 - spouse/domestic partner

- child (includes step, adoptive, foster, miscarriages or pregnancy loss)
- legal dependent
- A person for whom the team member is in loco parentis (in place of a parent, legally) as defined by the Department of Labor regulations interpreting the Family Medical Leave Act
- parent (includes in-laws, step, adoptive, foster, and legal guardian)
- sibling (includes adopted, half, step, or in-law)
- Bereavement pay, the equivalent of two workdays based on the team member's regularly scheduled shift, excluding overtime, and not to exceed 24 hours, will be provided for the loss of:
 - grandparents (including great)
 - grandchild (including great)
 - individuals living in the same household
 - All of the above, including adoptive, foster, step, and in-law, where applicable.
 - If travel out of state or out of the country is required to attend a funeral/memorial service, one additional workday based on a regularly scheduled shift, excluding overtime, and not to exceed 12 hours, will be allowed as bereavement.
- Additional time off may be granted as PTO or, in the absence of available PTO, as a personal leave at the discretion of the Program Director.
- Team members must be in active status for payment at the time of the requested bereavement day(s). 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 the Program Manager immediately.

- 6) Special Circumstances - There may be program-specific rotations where time away is not allowed. However, it is understood that extenuating circumstances may arise that require time away. These special requests will need prior approval from the Program Director.
- 7) During residency training, Residents are permitted a maximum of five days for interviews related to either post residency fellowship or practice opportunities. Upon acceptance of a fellowship or offer, any unused interview days are forfeited. The allotted interview days contribute toward the specialty board's requirements for time away.
- 8) 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.

C. 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 support creative strategies to recognize learning opportunities that can

take place during such times. When quarantine impedes the 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 specific questions about time away from required rotations/the program related to COVID-19.

- D. 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.

- 1) The program must have policies and procedures in place to ensure coverage of patient care.
- 2) These policies must be implemented without fear of negative consequences for the resident who is unable to provide the clinical work.
- 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) 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.
- 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.
- 6) Programs must provide residents with accurate information regarding the impact of an extended leave of absence on completing their training and/or eligibility for specialty boards.

- E. 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 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.

- 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.
- 2) Types of Leave of Absences
 - a) Full Leave - This is an interruption of training and means the resident is away from the program full-time for a designated period.
 - b) 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 resident's Full-time Equivalent (FTE) is reduced from 1.0 full-time to 0.50 part-time for 3 months. Occasionally, the program director or designee may grant permission for a resident to train part-time for a limited period if there are extenuating medical or personal circumstances.

- i. 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 of more than 26 weeks place team members on inactive status and generally result in dismissal or non-renewal. Extended leaves that threaten Board eligibility will also result in dismissal or non-renewal.

3) Disability Insurance Coverage - Disability insurance plans are designed to protect your income if you become disabled due to illness or injury. While many of us may enjoy good health and never need to use these benefits, having coverage provides peace of mind in case the unexpected occurs. If you have questions about short-term disability benefits, especially as they relate to physician residents, be sure to consult with HR before your leave to confirm your coverage options under the Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA) and related policies.

- a) The Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) entitles eligible employees to take up to 12 weeks of leave in a twelve-month period for specific reasons, such as the birth or adoption of a child, caring for a spouse or immediate family member with a serious health condition, or when you are unable to work due to your own serious health condition. Certain military-related situations may also qualify. Residents are eligible for FMLA if they have worked at Corewell Health Lakeland for at least one year and have accumulated 1,250 hours of service during the previous 12 months.
- b) Short-Term Disability (STD) Coverage - Corewell Health Lakeland provides a Short-Term Disability (STD) plan at no cost to all eligible residents. This benefit offers financial protection if you are unable to work because of an illness or injury unrelated to work, including maternity leave for the birth of a child.
- c) 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) Residents who take a leave of absence will continue to receive their full salary for 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 the impact on training or supplement a resident's salary, the program must reserve one week of PTO during the program year.
- 5) Residents and eligible dependents will continue to receive medical and disability insurance coverage while on approved medical, family, or caregiver leaves of absence.
- 6) Process to apply for a Leave of Absence - For leaves that can be planned in advance, residents must inform the Program Director, the Program Coordinator, and any other persons involved in scheduling and educational planning in the residency program as soon as possible.
 - a) Residents must also submit a written proposal to the Program Director for approval, which includes the following:
 - i. Anticipated dates of leave
 - ii. Description of the current schedule and proposed modifications
 - iii. Plans for taking/trading call during leave
 - iv. Plans for meeting all educational requirements and
 - v. Specific plans for assuring continuity of patient care (Obstetrics (OB) patients and patients with chronic illness)
 - b) Residents who need a leave of absence on an emergent basis must contact the Program Director or Program Manager immediately. The resident's health and well-being are the primary concern. After that, the details of the call and coverage must be worked out.
 - c) 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 the answers to your HR-related questions by searching the Browse Knowledge section. You can also submit a Request, select the category of help you need, and submit a specific question. If you still can't find an answer to your question, you can call the People Solutions Center at 877-ASK-HR11 (877-275-4711), and they will assist you in finding the information you're looking for.
- 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 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.

- a) 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.
- b) Documentation - Documentation is required for any resident leave of absence from the program, whether for full-time or partial leave away from the program.
- c) 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.