

**TEXAS TECH UNIVERSITY HEALTH SCIENCES CENTER AT EL PASO**  
**Paul L. Foster School of Medicine**  
**GRADUATE MEDICAL EDUCATION**  
**Policy**

**TITLE:** Well-Being Policy

**PURPOSE:** To establish a policy as required by ACGME regarding Resident/Fellow well-being. The Sponsoring Institution must oversee its ACGME-accredited program's(s') fulfillment of responsibility to address well-being of residents/fellows and faculty members, consistent with the Common and specialty-/subspecialty-specific Program Requirements, and for addressing areas of non-compliance in a timely manner.

**REVIEW:** This policy will be reviewed every two years by the Graduate Medical Education Committee (GMEC).

**POLICY STATEMENT:** The Sponsoring Institution (SI), through the Graduate Medical Education Committee (GMEC), in partnership with its ACGME accredited program(s), must educate faculty members and residents/fellows in identification of the symptoms of burnout, depression, suicidal ideation and substance use disorders, including means to assist those who experience these conditions. This responsibility includes educating residents/fellows and faculty members in how to recognize those symptoms in themselves, and how to seek appropriate care.

**Institutional**

The Sponsoring Institution, in partnership with its ACGME accredited program(s), must encourage residents/fellows and faculty members to alert their program director, DIO, or other designated personnel or programs when they are concerned that another resident/fellow or faculty member may be displaying signs of burnout, depression, and 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 Sponsoring Institution must ensure a healthy and safe clinical and educational environment that provides for

1. access to food during clinical and educational assignments;
2. sleep/rest facilities that are safe, clean, and private, and that must be available and accessible for residents/fellows with proximity appropriate for safe patient care
3. safe transportation options for residents/fellows who may be too fatigued to safely return home on their own

4. clean and private facilities for lactation with proximity appropriate for safe patient care, and clean and safe refrigeration resources for the storage of breast milk
5. safety and security measures appropriate to the clinical learning environment site; and
6. accommodations for residents/fellows with disabilities consistent with the SI policy.

The SI, in partnership, with each of its programs, must engage in practices that focus on ongoing, mission-driven, systematic recruitment and retention of a diverse and inclusive workforce of residents/fellows, faculty members, senior administrative staff members, and other relevant members of its GME community.

### **Program**

#### **Well-Being**

Psychological, emotional, and physical well-being are critical in the development of the competent, caring, and resilient physician and require proactive attention to life inside and outside of medicine. Well-being requires that physicians retain the joy in medicine while managing their own real-life stresses. Self-care and responsibility to support other members of the health care team are important components of professionalism; they are also skills that must be modeled, learned, and nurtured in the context of other aspects of residency training.

Residents and faculty members are at risk for burnout and depression. Programs, in partnership with their Sponsoring Institutions, have the same responsibility to address well-being as other aspects of resident competence. Physicians and all members of the health care team share responsibility for the well-being of each other. For example, a culture which encourages covering for colleagues after an illness without the expectation of reciprocity reflects the ideal of professionalism. A positive culture in a clinical learning environment models constructive behaviors, and prepares residents with the skills and attitudes needed to thrive throughout their careers.

The responsibility of the program, in partnership with the Sponsoring Institution, must include:

1. attention to scheduling, work intensity, and work compression that impacts resident well-being;
2. evaluating workplace safety data and addressing the safety of residents and faculty members;
3. policies and programs that encourage optimal resident and faculty member well-being;
4. Residents must be given the opportunity to attend medical, mental health, and dental care appointments, including those scheduled during working hours.

Education of residents and faculty members in:

1. Identification of symptoms of burnout, depression, and substance use disorders, suicidal ideation, or potential for violence, including means to assist those who experience these conditions
2. Recognition of these symptoms in themselves and how to seek appropriate care; and,
3. Access to appropriate tools for self-screening
4. Providing 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.

There are circumstances in which residents may be unable to attend work, including but not limited to fatigue, illness, family emergencies, and medical, parental, or 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 and ensure continuity of patient care
2. These policies must be implemented without fear of negative consequences for the resident who is or was unable to provide the clinical work.

### *Fatigue Mitigation*

Programs must:

Educate all residents and faculty members in recognition of signs of fatigue and sleep deprivation, alertness management and fatigue mitigation processes

The program, in partnership with its Sponsoring Institution, must ensure adequate sleep facilities and safe transportation options for residents who may be too fatigued to safely return home.