



Graduate Medical Education

Well-Being (Program-Level Policy)	
Reviewed/Revised by: P. Ratcliff, Director Graduate Medical Education; GMEC Committee	Review/Revision date: 5/1/24; 10/24/23; 7/26/23; 4/25/23
Approved by: Graduate Medical Education Committee; <i>Joseph Mazzola, DO, CPE, MBA</i> <i>Designated Institutional Official (DIO)</i> <i>Chair, GMEC Committee</i>	Approval date: 5/28/24; 10/24/23; 7/26/23; 4/25/23
ACGME Common and Internal Medicine Program Requirements: VI.C – VI.D.2	Effective date: 7/1/24; 4/1/24; 10/1/23
Summary of Revisions: 5/13/24 Reviewed content and revised format to be compliant with IHS policy design guidelines; 4/25/23 New policy	

PURPOSE: To establish the manner and mechanisms that are in place to assure all Iredell Health System residents/fellows and faculty are supported in safely and effectively managing stress and fatigue in an effort to improve well-being and to ensure the learning and working environment is conducive to a culture of respect and accountability for physician well-being.

SCOPE: This policy applies to all Iredell Health System sponsored ACGME-accredited residency and fellowship programs in all clinical learning environments.

POLICY:

I. Background

At Iredell Health System, we recognize that resident/fellow well-being is directly related to physical and emotional health, as well as active engagement in the training experience. We believe that well-being at work is best achieved when the institution partners with individuals and encourages all to be actively mindful in self-care, including nurturing the body and the mind, fostering relationships, building self-awareness, and creating opportunities for personal growth. For our patients, our community, our families, and ourselves, we have the responsibility to teach, model, and create an environment that fosters well-being.

As an organization, Iredell Health System’s mission is to “Inspire Wellbeing – Together” and as such, we strive to serve our patients and their families in every way possible. We must also care for each other – the service of delivering healthcare is hard work. We strive to create an environment that supports all teammates as we care for our patients.

Iredell Health System's mission focuses on 4 key elements:

- Enhancing patient experience
- Improving population health
- Providing cost effective care
- Caring for the caregiver

The words “inspire” and “well-being” represent what Iredell Health System is dedicated in achieving for all, including patients, families, and our healthcare providers. By definition, inspire is to “fill someone with the urge or ability to do or feel something” and well-being is the “state of being comfortable, healthy, or happy.” The literal meaning of those two words clearly describes what we strive to do each day – to inspire patients, their families, our coworkers, and caregivers to be their best. At the heart of all we do is each person's well-being, including patients and caregivers.

II. Education

The didactic calendar includes at a minimum, quarterly, dedicated time for a resident/fellow-only meeting (Housestaff Council) led by a peer selected resident/fellow. Trainees are expected to use this time for peer support and to either solve or generate a list of well-being related issues, among other topics, to present to the Program Director directly or via the Graduate Medical Education Committee. Additionally, the health system and residency/fellowship programs provide wellness days and hosts social gatherings and events to build teamwork, relationships, and camaraderie to promote balance, well-being, and support among trainees.

Many educational resources including pre-recorded lectures and literature including self-assessment tools are available via the sponsoring institution's education affiliate, Campbell University, on its Blackboard curriculum site which is accessible by trainees and faculty members.

- A. Trainees receive training on burnout and fatigue management during the Iredell Health System GME orientation, which includes information on:
 - i. Teaching trainees to balance their professional responsibility for self-care with professional responsibilities to patients.
 - ii. Self-identification of the symptoms of burnout, depression, and substance use disorders along with resources for care and access to appropriate tools for self-screening.
 - iii. Education in identification of the symptoms of fatigue, burnout, depression, and substance use disorders in their colleagues, including means to assist those who experience these conditions.
 - iv. Instruction in and encouragement for trainees to alert the Program Director or other designated personnel or intervention programs when they are concerned that another resident, fellow, or faculty member may be displaying signs of fatigue, burnout, depression, substance use disorder, suicidal ideation, or potential for violence.

III. Fatigue Management

- A. During Iredell Health System GME orientation and included in the didactic schedule, trainees are taught to recognize the signs of fatigue and sleep deprivation, alertness management, and fatigue mitigation processes.
- B. Trainees who perceive that they are manifesting excess fatigue simply notify their attending and the Program Director without fear of reprisal.

- C. Colleagues recognizing trainee fatigue have the professional responsibility to report their observations and concerns to the Program Director, supervising attending, or GME Office.
- D. When trainees experience fatigue at work, the following protocol is in place:
 - i. Trainee immediately informs clinical supervisor that a transfer of clinical care is necessary. Iredell Health System has a contracted hospitalist program with a mix of board-certified internal medicine physicians and highly qualified advanced-level providers who will accept immediate patient care responsibilities as requested.
 - ii. Trainee contacts the Program Director/Associate Program Director and GME Office to inform of the situation and problem solve options:
 - a. The trainee may elect targeted rest and choose to sleep in the GME hospital call room.
 - b. Transportation home may be arranged by contacting a peer, family member, or friend to arrange pick-up at the hospital or clinical site.
 - c. Transportation home may be arranged via Uber, taxi, or other public transportation for which the GME office will reimburse the expense.

IV. Burnout

- A. During Iredell Health System GME orientation and included in the didactic schedule, trainees are taught to recognize the signs of burnout and processes in place to address/resolve burnout.
- B. Trainees who perceive that they are manifesting signs and symptoms of burnout are encouraged to seek help immediately without fear of reprisal.
- C. Trainees and Attending's are encouraged to reach out confidentially to the Program Director/Associate Program Director or GME office when they suspect that a trainee might be struggling with burnout.
- D. Program Directors screen for burnout on an individual trainee level.
- E. Program Directors monitor program-level burnout through the guidance of anonymized annual surveys (e.g. ACGME survey) and through the evaluative process of the Annual Program Evaluation.
- F. When a trainee is identified as struggling with burnout by the Program Director/Associate Program Director or the GME office the following occurs:
 - i. Trainee meets one-on-one with Program Director/Associate Program Director and GME leadership to determine next steps that are tailored to the individual's specific needs. (Of note, in the rare occurrence that a trainee prefers not to discuss their burnout with GME leadership, there are confidential supports and services in place as outlined in this policy.)
 - ii. When indicated, time is protected and structured to assure that the trainee receives the interventions and supports in a timely manner.
 - iii. Program Director/Associate Program Director along with GME, will provide regular follow-up to assure the interventions/accommodations are sufficient until the symptoms of burnout are resolved.

V. Monitoring

- A. Trainees must be aware of signs and symptoms of burnout and/or excess fatigue, which may include inattention, forgetfulness, emotional lability, mood changes, irritability and conflicts with others, decreased empathy, decline in memory consolidation, reaction time increase, cognitive speed reduced, difficulty multitasking, impaired decision-making.
- B. The following is provided as a general guideline for individuals responsible for recognizing excessive trainee fatigue in patient care settings and/or in non-patient care settings such as lectures and conferences:

- i. When duty-hour violations occur in New Innovations, GME and Program Directors are alerted for review.
- ii. Faculty are instructed to contact the Program Director/Associate Program Director or the GME Office if there are concerns related to fatigue or potential burnout of a trainee on their service.
- iii. Trainee acknowledges the need to self-report fatigue and burnout to their supervisors to assure adequate support and comprehensive transfer of care when necessary.
- iv. Clinical sites which are flagged for breach of duty-hours will be evaluated by the Program Director to assure the site/setting has appropriate guidelines related to scheduling, work intensity, and work compression.

VI. Resources

- A. If you have an extreme medical or mental health emergency present itself, please call 911 or report directly to the nearest Emergency Department.
- B. Wellness and Mental Health support that meets the ACGME requirement of 24-hour access is required and is provided by Iredell Health System.
- C. **Iredell Health System Employee Assistance Program (EAP)** – In an effort to assist all IHS Team Members through challenging circumstances, Iredell Health System partnered with ESI EAP to offer the best possible solutions for issues you or a household member may face. This free benefit provides a wide variety of tools and services to help with problems that might affect your daily life at work or at home.
 - i. The EAP also offers personal and professional development opportunities, from webinars and online training to one-on-one telephonic coaching for your personal growth and development.
 - ii. **Who is Covered?** All IHS Team Members, household members and dependent children living away from home, up to age 26.
 - iii. **How to access the EAP?** It's easy to access Self-Help Resources.
 - a. Go to www.HealthCareEAP.com and click the **Member Login** button.
 - b. If this is your first visit, click **REGISTER** and fill out the form to create your Username and Password.
 - c. If you have already created a **Username** and **Password**, simply log in.
 - d. The EAP may be reached 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year by calling **1-800-252-4555**.
 - e. All calls are confidential and answered by a Master's or Ph.D. level counselor. The counselor will work with you on a plan beginning with the first call.
 - iv. The most current IHS Employee Handbook, which includes EAP information, may be found on i-Connect in the Human Resources section.
- D. Iredell Health System supports the use of the North Carolina Physicians Health Program (NC PHP). The NC PHP offers support to physicians struggling with substance use disorders, depression, anxiety, burnout, or any other mental health concerns that may impact the delivery of care to their patients. The NCPHP may be reached via email at info@ncphp.org or by phone (919) 870-4480.

The content of this policy and procedure serves as guidance to the delivery of quality patient care. Care providers are expected to exercise critical thinking and situational awareness skills, and in specific situations, to take such action as is necessary for the delivery of quality patient care.