

NEUROLOGY RESIDENCY PROGRAM
Resident and Faculty Member Well-Being Policy
University of North Dakota School of Medicine & Health Sciences (UNDSMHS)
Academic Year: 2025-2026
Revised July 1st, 2024

A. Purpose of Policy

This policy defines the ways in which residents are supported in their efforts to become competent, caring, and resilient physicians while completing an Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education (ACGME)-accredited training program.

B. Policy Scope

This policy applies to all residents, faculty, Program Directors, Program Coordinators, and Graduate Medical Education (GME) staff who participate in the ACGME-Accredited training program within the UND Neurology Residency Program.

C. Definitions

In the current health care environment, residents and faculty members are at increased risk for burnout and depression. Psychological, emotional, and physical well-being are critical to the development and maintenance of the competent, caring, and resilient physician. Self-care is an important component of professionalism and high-quality patient care; it is also a skill that must be learned and nurtured in the context of other aspects of residency training.

Burnout: Long-term exhaustion and diminished interest in work. Dimensions of burnout include emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and feelings of lack of competence or success in one's work. Burnout can lead to depression, anxiety, and substance abuse disorders.

Resident: Any physician in an ACGME-accredited graduate medical education program including residents.

Resilience: The ability to withstand and recover quickly from difficult conditions or situations. During training, residents may face difficult patient care, educational or personal events which could negatively affect their well-being. Decompressing after such situations, through conversation with peers, mentors or family, and self-care activities, can increase resilience.

Well-being: Refers to the state of being healthy, happy, and successful. Well-being may be positively increased by interacting with patients and colleagues at work, being intellectually stimulated and by feeling that one is making a difference/helping. In addition, self-care activities, including exercise, getting plenty of rest and connecting with others, is beneficial.

D. Policy

Physicians and resident physician's physical, psychological and emotional well-being is of vital importance to UND Neurology Residency and our ACGME-accredited training program.

Physicians and resident physicians are encouraged to lead healthy lives and make healthy choices that support them in their personal and professional growth. To that end, we provide the following strategies to support trainee health, well-being, and resilience:

UNDSMHS Institutional/GME Support

1. [UND Employee Assistance Program \(EAP\)](#) and [Sanford Employee Assistance Program \(EAP\)](#): Confidential and free counseling services which include relationship issues, emotional health issues, drug and alcohol issues, workplace issues, financial issues, legal issues, wellness, educational programs, and 24/7 telephonic crisis counseling.
2. [SAFE Event Reporting](#): Patient and employee safety reporting for actual events and near misses.
3. Residents have access to healthy food and beverage options along with sleeping quarters.
4. Residents and faculty have security and personal safety measures in parking facilities, on-call quarters, hospital and institutional grounds, and related clinical facilities.
5. Residents and faculty have educational materials to support patient care in the working environment.
6. Both faculty and residents have access to multiple well-being activities and resources through the sponsoring and core institutions. UND as the sponsoring institution has a handful of [wellness resources](#) available to residents. Sanford Health has a "live well, be well" website with a variety of different [well-being resources](#) available. Residents are encouraged to access physical fitness activities both off and on site.
7. The UND GME and Sanford GME offices are a safe place where residents can ask for and receive help with various needs including academic counseling, coaching, and mentoring.
8. The Sanford GME office sponsors an annual resident and faculty appreciation team-based event where residents and faculty can participate in wellness activities and shared meals.
9. The UND GME office sponsors a yearly picnic for all residents and faculty and the Neurology department has a strong team based back up system to address sick calls and vacations.
10. Assist program directors (PDs) in their initiatives to protect trainee time with patients, minimize non-physician obligations, provide administrative support to trainees, promote progressive autonomy, and enhance professional relationships.
11. Provide PDs with resources to educate faculty and trainees about the symptoms of burnout, depression and substance use and their avoidance.
12. Identify resources (i.e., [Campus Resident Advocate](#)) for trainee burnout, depression, and substance use.
13. Encourage trainees and faculty members to alert designated personnel when they are concerned about a community member who is displaying signs of burnout, depression,

substance use, suicidal ideation, or potential for violence, or who is not proactively engaging in self-care.

14. Ensure that programs have sufficient back-up plans to provide patient care if a trainee is unable to perform their patient care responsibilities.
15. Provides a way for residents to [report](#) unprofessional behavior and a respectful process for reporting, investigating, and addressing such concerns.

Program Level Support

1. Annual wellness retreats for residents and faculty. Teaching and nurturing self-care practices, an important component of professionalism and high-quality patient care.
2. Peer Support Group meetings lead by the Clinician Wellness Council (CWC). The CWC's mission is to prioritize, advocate for, and modeling clinician wellness and resilience.
 - Each week the CWC will email a wellness message.
3. Quarterly resident wellness ½ days. Learning self-care is an important component of professionalism and patient care, and trainees have a responsibility to themselves and to their patients and programs to ensure that they are fit for work through behaviors such as: Proactive self-care, and modeling of healthy lifestyles and behaviors for patients, students, and colleagues.
4. Allowing residents to attend medical, dental, and mental health care appointments, including those scheduled during work hours.
5. Paying attention to resident's schedules to look at work intensity and compression factors.
6. Residents may take advantage of free taxi services to and from the hospital if they are too fatigued to drive home after a clinical shift.
7. Sanford Physician Recruitment department delivers meals free of charge quarterly to the resident lounges.
8. Educating residents and faculty about burnout, depression and substance use, and their avoidance.
9. Providing a respectful, professional, and civil environment that is free from mistreatment, abuse, or coercion.
10. Provides a way for residents to report unprofessional behavior via an anonymous concern card (MedHub) and a respectful process for reporting, investigating, and addressing such concerns.
11. Impairment recognition and notification, either from illness, fatigue and substance use in themselves, their peers, and other members of the health care system.
12. Lifelong learning and time management surrounding clinical assignments.
13. Performance improvement indicator monitoring.
14. Reporting duty hours, patient outcomes, and clinical experiences.

E. Additional Resources

1. [UND GME Policies](#)
 - Concerns and Complaints
 - Resident Work Environment