

**CENTRAL IOWA HEALTH SYSTEM
GRADUATE MEDICAL EDUCATION COMMITTEE**

POLICY ON RESIDENT LEAVE OF ABSENCE

I. Purpose

Recognizing the need of residents to occasionally be away from training for compelling reasons, it is the policy of Graduate Medical Education at Central Iowa Health Systems to make leave of absence (LOA) available and further to comply with all UnityPoint Health policies and applicable state and federal laws. Specific information on the appropriate process and benefit continuation is available in the Leaves Guide found on the UnityPoint Health HUB. This policy establishes the responsibilities and procedures for resident requests for leave of absence from a residency program.

II. Definitions

A. **Leave of Absence.** Leave of absence is an absence from the assigned rotation schedule for more than one week (excluding vacation) and less than one year. **Residents should refer to the Leaves Guide stored on the Hub or consult the Leaves Coordinator through AskHR for current leaves policies and the required process.**

1. **Medical.** Medical leave is time away from residency responsibilities due to an extended illness of a resident or of a member of a resident's immediate family. Immediate family includes spouse, sibling, children, resident's parents and grandparents, and spouse's parents and grandparents.

(a) **Short-Term Disability.** Short-term disability replaces 60% of the resident's salary starting on the sixth day away from work due to a non-job-related illness/injury. PTO will be used to cover scheduled days during the elimination period.

(b) **Family and Medical Leave Act.** Nothing in this policy should be construed to violate the Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA). FMLA provides "eligible" employees, up to 12 weeks of leave (or 26 weeks of leave if the leave is taken to care for a related injured armed service member), during a continuous twelve month period. Employees taking leave on an intermittent or reduced hours schedule will have the amount of leave actually taken counted towards the 12 or 26 weeks of leave to which the employee is entitled.

Some examples of FMLA leave situations are:

- To care for the birth or adoption of a child, including foster care.
- To care for the "serious health condition" of the resident's family member as defined by the FMLA policy.
- To care for the resident's own serious health condition.

- To care for an injured armed service member who is the employee's spouse, child, parent, or next of kin, and who was injured in the line of duty such that the member is medically unfit to perform the duties of his or her office, grade, rank or rating.
2. **Personal.** Personal leave (including parental leave) is time away from residency responsibilities for non-medical reasons.
 3. **Military.** Military leave is time away from residency responsibilities due to service in the U.S. Armed Forces.
 4. **Jury Duty.** Jury duty is time away from residency responsibilities for reasons of civic responsibility.

III. Responsibilities

Resident. The resident is responsible for contacting the Leaves Coordinator to make arrangements for a leave of absence and to pay health insurance premiums while on leave. If health insurance payments are not continued, the resident's health insurance coverage will be terminated. UnityPoint Health – Des Moines will not contribute to these premiums during the resident's leave.

The resident will be expected to communicate with the Program Director regarding the timing of return to work to ensure continuity of education for the resident as well as optimal utilization of residency positions in the program.

Failure to comply with leave policies, including obtaining written prior approval, may result in leave without pay. Programs may have additional leave restrictions based upon individual specialty board requirements and will distribute their program policies and procedures to residents and faculty.

IV. Procedures

- A. A resident must submit in advance a written request for a leave of absence to the Program Director. This request must include the dates affected by the leave of absence, the type of leave of absence (refer to Leaves Guide for listing), justification for the request, and the resident's signature.
- B. The Program Director will discuss the leave of absence policy with the resident.
- C. **For residents not covered by Short-term disability or the Family and Medical Leave Act:** When leave of absence begins: (1) the resident's status changes to leave status; (2) salary and paycheck deductions will be affected according to the type of leave; and (3) benefits offered by UnityPoint Health – Des Moines will continue.
- D. If the leave of absence is for a resident's medical reason, a physician's written statement indicating the necessity of the leave of absence for the resident must be

submitted to the Disability Coordinator in Human Resources.

- E. Before a resident is reinstated from a medical leave of absence a physician's release statement indicating the resident's ability to return to work must be submitted to the Program Director and the Leaves Coordinator via Lawson.
- F. If a resident does not return from a leave of absence on the agreed upon date or establish a new agreement with the Program Director for a leave of absence extension by the agreed upon date, the resident declares his or her voluntary resignation from the residency program.
- G. If a resident misrepresents the reasons for the approved leave of absence, the Program Director and/or other appropriate residency program governing authority will take corrective action.
- H. A leave of absence of greater duration than the amount of vacation time remaining may require adjustment of the anniversary date of the resident's appointment contract. The resident may be required to make-up the time missed in order to complete residency training based on rules dictated by specialty specific ACGME review committees and licensing boards.
- I. The leave of absence may impact resident eligibility to sit for specialty board certification examinations. During regular resident performance evaluations, Program Director and residents should review specialty board certification examination requirements and resident progress toward eligibility to sit for board examinations. It is the responsibility of the resident and the Program Director to ensure that Board eligibility and RC requirements are met within the original residency training period or that alternative arrangements are made through an extension of training.

V. Program Extension

Residents who are required to extend their training are expected to participate fully in the program during this time period through participation in clinical assignments, providing coverage, attending conferences, and teaching colleagues, junior residents and medical students. The Program Director will provide the resident with a written addendum detailing the length of time his or her training will be extended. The resident is required to sign the addendum to his/her resident contract covering the extended time.