

Policy: Leaves of Absence for Residents	Effective Date: 3/2020
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Authorized by: Graduate Medical Education Committee	Page 1 of 5

PURPOSE

To define the policy for vacation and other leaves of absence, consistent with applicable laws. To ensure that Accreditation Council of Graduate Medical Education (ACGME)-accredited programs provide residents/fellows with accurate information regarding the impact of an extended leave of absence upon board eligibility.

SCOPE

1. Department of Medical Education
2. Baptist Health Medical Center - North Little Rock
3. Baptist Health Medical Center - Little Rock
4. Baptist Health Medical Center - Conway

POLICY

1. It is the responsibility of the resident to:
 - a. Notify the Program Director as soon as possible about the need to take leave for any reason;
 - b. Supply the necessary written information about the reason for any type of leave;
 - c. Gain a thorough understanding of the effect the leave will have on meeting the requirements of the residency program and board certification.

2. It is the responsibility of the Program Director to:
 - a. Keep accurate records of all types leaves of absence and training status not only for billing purposes but also to have adequate information for Board certification;
 - b. Discuss with the resident the impact of leaves of absences especially the possibility of spending additional time in the program to compensate for an extended leave period and its potential effects on eligibility requirements to sit for the Specialty Boards.
 - c. Notify the DIO to discuss the accounting of the leave, financial compensation, and record keeping requirements.

3. If specialty-specific program leave requirements as defined by an individual Review Committee (RC) for that specialty are more restrictive than the requirements defined in this policy, then the leave requirements of that RC will be included in the policy of that specialty program and will supersede the institutional requirements. Vacation scheduling and durations must be authorized by the Program Director. The annual vacation allowance is 21 days (only 15

- weekdays i.e. M-F may be taken). Vacation does not accrue and may not be borrowed from future credits. Residents do not receive payment for unused vacation leave at the completion of the program.
- a. Each program will inform its residents of the specialty Board regulation on leave used vs. Board eligibility. PTO must be approved by the appropriate department/program representative. An individual Program Director may alter the amount of leave but only in order to comply with the American Board of Medical Specialties requirements.
 - b. In addition to the annual vacation days that are given on a yearly basis, each resident will also be allotted five (5) additional vacation days for use by the resident at their discretion during the entirety of the individual's residency period. These five vacation days are given whether the length of the program is a one-year program or a multi-year program.
4. Sick Leave for medical reasons will be granted with pay for a maximum of 12 days during each year of the residency program.
- a. Sick leave does not accrue. Sick leave may not be borrowed from future credits. Residents do not receive payment for unused sick leave at the completion of the program.
 - b. Any day that the resident is on the schedule to work will be charged as sick leave if the resident is unable to work due to illness.
 - c. To access sick leave a resident must notify the Program Director or his/her designee. The specific procedure for notifying the Program Director of brief absences due to illness is developed within the individual program. Each program will inform its residents of the specialty Board regulation on time away from the program vs. Board eligibility.
5. Residents should follow the following policy and procedure for Baptist Health employees for leaves that qualify for the Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA) law:
- a. Baptist Health Policy IV-21 Employee Leave of Absence
6. Extended Leave of Absence (non FMLA qualified) is granted at the sole authority of the Program Director.
- a. The resident must discuss the reasons and estimated length of time for a leave of absence with the Program Director.
 - b. The discussion must include whether the resident will be paid. Considerations must be made according to whether or not the resident will be required to spend additional time in the residency program to compensate for the leave period and be eligible for certification for a full training year. The decision regarding additional time in the program must consider the requirements of the individual specialty Boards, and be reported to the GMEC.
 - c. Thorough discussion with the resident regarding reasons for the leave, a review of necessary documentation regarding the medical or other

- condition, and the residency requirements for board eligibility. The Program Director makes the final decision regarding granting a leave of absence.
- d. The Program Director provides a decision in writing to the resident and DIO which must include the starting and ending dates of the absence, financial support (stipends and benefits) if applicable, and the amount of additional time in the residency program that is required to compensate for the leave and fulfill board eligibility requirements.
 - e. Once the resident is placed on leave of absence, the Program Director must notify the DIO if there is any change in the dates of the leave of absence and confirm the date the resident will return to the residency program.
 - f. The Program Director may grant sick leave for serious illness in an amount which is reasonable for the circumstances.
7. Bereavement Leave may be granted to employees due to the death of a member of the employee's immediate family.
- a. Immediate family is defined as the father, mother, sister, brother, spouse, child, grandparent, grandchild, in-laws or any other person acting as a parent or guardian of/ for an employee.
 - b. The Program Director may grant sick leave for death in an amount which is reasonable for the circumstances.
8. The Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act does not apply to residents enrolled in the GME program. Residents who are members of the National Guard or any of the Uniformed Services of the United States may be called to duty in such uniformed service.
- a. The resident shall notify the Program Director in writing upon learning that he/she has been called to duty in a uniformed service.
 - b. Prior to leaving the program for active duty, the resident and Program Director shall discuss the tentative plans for the resident's return to the program including the level of re-entry. Within the abilities of the program to accommodate the resident's re-entry in the program, the duration of absence from the program and the resident's activities during the absence, the program will make every effort to ensure that the resident re-enters the program at the level commensurate with his/her abilities.
9. Professional or Educational Leave will be defined and allocated by the programs up to a maximum of 5 days per year. Professional and educational leave may not be carried over from one year to the next.
- a. Job or further educational training interview days may not be counted as professional or educational leave.

- b. Professional or educational leave may be used to take primary or subspecialty boards. USMLE exams may be taken using professional or educational leave.
 - c. Exceptions should be requested in advance of the registration deadline/leave date and must be approved by the DIO.
10. If necessary, the DIO will serve as the final arbiter in questions arising from this policy. Residents must view the policy in light of the responsibility they have to their training, to their peers, and to the integrity of the Board certification process. With such a spirit of cooperation and responsibility, problems are unlikely to develop in this area.

DEFINITIONS

- 1. Sick Leave- Paid absence from schedule work for reason of illness or injury.
- 2. Vacation- Paid absence from the residency program typically used for recreation or personal business.
- 3. Holiday- paid time off only if resident's schedule assignment is closed.
- 4.
- 5. Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA)- A federal law intended to promote a healthy balance between work and family responsibilities. Employees must provide 30 days advance notice of the need to take FMLA leave when the need is foreseeable. Leave of Absence- Unpaid absence from the educational activities of the residency program when no sick or vacation leave exists to cover the absence and it is leave other than FMLA-qualified leave.
- 6. Professional or Educational Leave- Paid time away from the training site that is paying that day's resident stipend, for educational or professional meetings.
- 7. Military Leave- Absence from the residency program to fulfill obligations of the National Guard or any of the Uniformed Services of the United States as defined in 38 U.S.C. 4303.

RELATED POLICIES

- 1. Baptist Health Policy- Administrative Leave
- 2. Baptist Health Policy- Bereavement Leave
- 3. Baptist Health Policy- Family & Medical Leave
- 4. Baptist Health Policy- Military Leave
- 5. Baptist Health Policy- Personal Time Off (PTO)
- 6. Baptist Health Policy- Worker's Compensation

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Attachment A

American Board of Medical Specialties
Policies on Time Away from the Training Program
Published on:

Program	Board Requirement
Family Medicine	Absence from the program must not exceed 1 month (4 weeks) per academic year for vacation, illness, personal business, leave, etc., must not exceed a combined total of one (1) month per academic year. Time away from the residency program for educational purposes, such as workshops or continuing medical education activities, are not counted in the general limitation on absences but should not exceed 5 days annually.
Internal Medicine	Must not exceed 1 month (4 weeks) per academic year Up to one month per academic year is permitted for time away from training, which includes vacation, illness, parental or family leave, or pregnancy-related disabilities. Vacation leave is essential and should not be forfeited or postponed in any year of training and cannot be used to reduce the total required training period.
Ob/Gyn	Must not exceed 8 weeks in any of the first three years, or 6 weeks during the fourth year, or a total of 20 weeks over the four years of residency
Psychiatry/Subspecialties	Must follow overall institutional policy
Surgery	Must complete 48 weeks of full time clinical activity in each of the five years of residency. See board for other options.