Geisinger Health System
Geisinger Northeast Internal Medicine Residency Program
Wellness Program and Policy

Wellness Program

The Geisinger Northeast Internal Medicine Residency Program is dedicated to the wellness of our residents and faculty. We have developed a Wellness Initiative that is resident/faculty-centered, and activities are driven by the needs and areas of interest identified by all of us. We strongly believe that creating an environment of empowerment, respect, and trust is essential for the collective well-being of our team, which leads to reduced risk of burnout and improves the quality and efficiency of our patient care.

The Wellness Initiative provides education, resources, and awareness for IM residents and faculty on diverse topics through social events, conferences, reflection sessions, interactive group activities, online resources, and incentive programs. In addition, the program oversees a Wellness Committee that includes a group of residents dedicated to promoting well-being throughout our program. The committee will be chaired by a core faculty and include representation from each Pot-Graduate Year and the faculty. The faculty lead will also represent the program as a Well-Being Champion and a member of the GME Well-Being Collaborative, working closely with its leadership.

Our Wellness initiative is based on Hettler's Hexagon©, which breaks down wellness into 6 dimensions. Each of these six dimensions will be incorporated into our didactic curriculum. Each of these dimensions nurtures an important aspect of our well-being, leading to a healthy body and mind.

Activities and sessions throughout the year will be linked to these dimensions. Our goal is to introduce activities, oversight, and training to build a nurturing environment, which helps in achieving balance in these dimensions:

Social: A person who is Socially active and alive is able to establish and maintains meaningful relationships with others:

- Quarterly Wellness Retreats during weekly didactics for residents, and faculty
- Social gatherings to celebrate the diversity of individuals, backgrounds, and cultures throughout the year (International Smorgasbord (representing our diversity).
- Meaningful community activities to help us be one with the community we serve.
- Activities that promote team building and trust
- Joint retreats/planned social activities, organized with residents from other programs in the Northeast as well as Central Campus

Physical: The Physical dimension of wellness is much more than getting the right amount of exercise. It also means eating balanced, nutritious meals; maintaining proper body weight, and giving the body enough rest and sleep to heal. Physically healthy physicians not only make the right choices for themselves but also become role models that their patients can aspire to:

- Health promotion through awards for the highest levels of physical activity achieved. (pedometer tracking) for both inpatient and outpatient rotations (In development)
- Access to affordable gym facilities available on campus at GWV and GSW

- Fatigue mitigation training focusing on adequate sleep, sleep hygiene, and prioritizing healthy habits and schedules.
- 8-10 Protected wellness half days assigned throughout the year to be utilized as personal wellness time, appointments, preventive, and health maintenance visits.
- Nutrition – Plan to have nutritious, healthy, and culturally sensitive dietary snacks and options available to residents during on-call hours.

Intellectual: Intellectually healthy people tend to engage in creative, stimulating mental activities. They are active problem solvers and learn from mistakes. Curiosity, the interest in learning, and the development of new skills throughout life are also signs of intellectually well people:

- Humanism and population care rotations followed by reflective commentaries and lessons learned by rotating residents.
- Developing a continuously evolving and improving didactic framework with direct resident feedback and involvement
- Minimizing traveling between sites and interrupted patient care by introducing a laid-back and interactive Academic Half-Day (AHD)

Career: Personal and Professional Development is another hallmark of a well-rounded person. Having a goal or direction in life is as important as taking the steps to achieve these goals. A positive attitude towards one's work and maintaining balance are extremely important and require mindful efforts to achieve it:

- An active Mentoring Program to address professional development, career choices, and early warnings. Mentors will be assigned with resident preference at the beginning of PGY 1. Regular meetings and feedback will be required to keep open doors of communication.
- Program leadership and faculty will encourage unrestricted access to residents for advice in current as well as future concerns regarding career planning.
- Mentoring sessions with subspecialists for PGY 2 residents as they begin to focus on a subspecialty fellowship of choice and its application process.
- Faculty mentoring program based on a buddy system approach.
- Senior faculty mentor assignment to new faculty members

Emotional: Emotional well-being is related to one's awareness and acceptance of feelings and the ability to express feelings in a positive, productive manner. They also accept others' expressions of feelings and can cope with stress more effectively leading to added resilience:

- Wellness curriculum and interactive sessions during didactics
- Group activities to promote Awareness and Mindfulness
- Healthcare and Mental Health resources with protected time to address concerns.
- Plans to introduce, on-demand appointments with a psychologist/wellness consultant available to all residents with protected time. Residents may choose to or not to avail them.
- Oversight of work hours, learning environment, and strong stress on education rather than service

- EAP (Employee Assistance Program)
- Longitudinal Well-being evaluation (using WHO-5 Well-being Scale) after each rotation (done anonymously with composite results tabulated each quarter) to identify highs and lows of specific rotations. This evaluates, residents as well as faculty.
- Wellness Workshops, available to residents on a voluntary basis. Scheduled throughout the year depending on demand in the format of seven, hour-long, weekly sessions for groups of up to 7.

Spiritual: Spiritually well people are involved in the on-going development of a purpose and philosophy of life. They are involved in the internal development of a personal set of values, beliefs, and ethics and strive to live by them.

- Reflection sessions to share experiences; celebrate successes, and console heartaches that are an integral part of patient care.
- Regularly scheduled wellness retreats to celebrate our accomplishments.
- Humanism rotation for PGY 1 residents to recognize a physician's role in patient care beyond physical healing as a caring individual, and share their experiences and lessons learned with their colleagues.
- 8-10 Protected wellness half days assigned throughout the year to be utilized as personal wellness time, appointments, preventive, and health maintenance visits.

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WELL-BEING POLICY

The Internal Medicine Residency Program, in conjunction with the Graduate Medical Education Committee of Geisinger Health System, strives to provide services and systems designed to promote and sustain a learning and working environment that enhances well-being.

1. Resident well-being is a priority for the program and will be integrated into the clinical and didactic curriculum as recommended by the GMEC Wellness Subcommittee.
    a. Annual Resident & Faculty Retreats
    b. Annual didactic lectures on fatigue/sleep deprivation, burnout, depression, and substance abuse
    c. All core faculty receive annual education on the symptoms of burnout, depression, and substance abuse along with a process to seek care.
    d. Residents and faculty will be educated on recognizing symptoms of burnout, depression, substance use disorders, suicidal ideation, or potential for violence, including means to assist those who experience these conditions.
    e. Recognition of these symptoms in themselves and how to seek appropriate care including access to appropriate tools for self-screening.

2. Program commits to providing access to confidential, affordable mental health assessment, counseling, and treatment, including access to urgent and emergent care 24/7.

3. In circumstances where residents may be unable to attend work, including but not limited to fatigue, illness, family emergencies, and medical, parental, or caregiver leave, the program will follow the appropriate length of absence for residents unable to perform their patient care responsibilities following GME, ACGME and ABIM mandates.

4. Residents will have built-in “wellness half days” to allow for private medical, dental, or mental health appointments.
    a. Residents will have no clinical responsibilities during these times.
    b. The number of “wellness half days” will be at the discretion of the program leadership and will be assigned throughout the year during ambulatory blocks.
    c. Wellness days will only be moved in limited circumstances at the discretion of the program.
    d. Wellness days can be used for personal appointment, tasks, or just to recharge.
    e. Residents are encouraged to be mindful of the available days while scheduling routine health maintenance or non-urgent appointments.
    f. Any urgent or unexpected medical, dental, or mental health appointments will be accommodated irrespective of the rotation. The program must be informed of such appointments as early as possible to ensure continuity of care and patient coverage during the times of absence.

5. Resident wellness initiatives will be reported regularly on the Annual Program Evaluation (APE).

6. Program Leadership will monitor scheduling, work intensity, and work compression monthly through MedHub. Concerning trends or violations will be reported to PEC and Graduate Medical Education.

7. Residents on duty in the hospital will be provided adequate and appropriate food and sleeping quarters.
    a. Call rooms are available in the lower-level resident call room and lounge at GWV and on the 3rd floor at GCMC.
    b. On-call food allowance is provided to all residents according to GME policies
    c. Safe transportation options are available to residents too fatigued to return home on their own. Residents must communicate with the program leadership regarding its use.

8. Resident facilities for lactation
    a. Lactation rooms/pods available throughout GWV and GCMC; a list will made available to residents.

9. Work Environment:
    a. Patient support services, such as patient transport, phlebotomy, IV team, and laboratory services are available.
    b. Residents have continuous access to their patient's laboratory results, medical records, and radiological information via the Electronic Health Record (EHR).
    c. Appropriate security and personal safety measures are provided to all residents.
    d. Appropriate workspace is available for all internal medicine residents at the GCMC and GWV campuses.

10. Accommodations for residents with disabilities, consistent with the sponsoring institution's policy are provided (See GME Accommodations of Disability policy).

11. Support services will be available for substance misuse

12. Process for suicidal resident:
    a. Immediately make the program leadership aware.
    b. Program leadership must coordinate the provision of safe monitoring and immediate medical evaluation.

13. Process for resident in distress:
    a. Immediately make the program leadership aware.
    b. Resident can call EAP at 1-888-327-4623 for mental health support and direction.

Please see the GME Well-Being Toolkit for the complete list of well-being services available system wide.