

**Graduate Medical Education Sponsoring Institution  
Leave of Absence and Impact on Education Policy**

**ACGME Institutional Requirement 4.8.b., 4.8.c., 4.8.d., 4.8.e., 4.8.f., 4.8.g.**

*The Sponsoring Institution (SI) will outline the trainee's leave of absence benefits. The Leave of Absence and Impact on Education policy will establish the trainee's and program's responsibilities for the submission and review procedure for a leave of absence request and consideration of its impact (if any) to the trainee's length of training and board certification examination eligibility. The Leave of Absence and Impact on Education GME policy complies with the ACGME Institutional Requirements section IV.H Vacation and Leave of Absence of the Sponsoring Institution Requirements*

***\*\*For all PTO leave benefits, reference the Paid Time Off Policy\*\****

**Purpose:**

The policy outlines the impact of a leave of absence on the completion of residency or fellowship training programs, including board eligibility and administrative responsibilities.

**Scope:**

Applies to all residents and fellows in graduate medical education.

*\*Pharmacy Residents abide by ASHP (American Society of Health-System Pharmacist), Geisinger and program policies for Leave of Absence and Impact on Education.*

**Definitions:**

|                                                      |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
|------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Leave of Absence (LOA):</b>                       | Time away from training beyond standard leave days, including personal, parental, caregiver, medical, and military leave.                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
| <b>Personal Leave:</b>                               | Unpaid leave for non-educational or non-military purposes.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| <b>Parental, Caregiver, or Medical Leave (PCML):</b> | Approved time off away from training for parental, caregiver or medical leave that is in compliance with the Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA), specialty boards, Geisinger policy and Pennsylvania State Board of Medicine and Pennsylvania State Board of Osteopathic Medicine Requirements. PCML is a type of Leave of Absence. |
| <b>Military Leave:</b>                               | Service-related leave.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
| <b>Leave Benefits:</b>                               | Residents can take up to 12 weeks of Family and Medical Leave per year, with paid leave running concurrently with FMLA.                                                                                                                                                                                                          |

**Personal Leave:** Personal leave of absence may be requested on an individualized basis and are unpaid. A personal leave may disrupt the training sequencing to include promotion, graduation, milestones attainment, procedure volumes and board eligibility requirements. Personal leave may not extend beyond the end of the current resident agreement.

### **Parental, Caregiver, or Medical Leave Overview:**

#### **Eligibility:**

Residents can take up to 12 weeks of Family and Medical Leave (FMLA) per year, which includes both paid and unpaid leave.

Parental, Caregiver or Medical Leave (PCML) may be granted upon request and approval to all residents (including birth and non-birth parents) for the birth of a child or placement of a child with the resident for adoption or foster care ("parental leave"); care of an immediate family member with a serious health condition ("caregiver leave"); or the resident's own serious health condition ("medical leave").

#### **Types of Leave:**

- **Parental Leave:** For birth or adoption of a child.
- **Caregiver Leave:** To care for a family member with a serious health condition.
- **Medical Leave:** For the resident's own serious health condition.

**Paid Leave:** Residents are entitled to at least six weeks of paid leave for PCML at least once during their training, plus an additional week of paid time off.

**Salary and Benefits:** Residents receive 100% of their salary for the first six weeks of approved leave and continuation of health and disability insurance benefits during the leave.

### **Parental, Caregiver, or Medical Leave Process and Details:**

#### **Types of Leave:**

- **Continuous Leave:** Uninterrupted time away from the training program.
- **Intermittent Leave:** Sporadic time away or reduced work hours (not available for childcare following birth, adoption, or foster care). \*See FAQ

**Notification & Planning:** Residents should provide 30 days' advance notice for planned leave or as soon as possible for unplanned leave. The resident and Program Director/Program Administrator should develop a plan regarding timing and duration of PCML.

**Approval:** Leave requests over 12 weeks require approval from the Designated Institutional Official (DIO).

**Impact on Training:** Program Directors will inform residents about the impact of extended leave on training completion and board eligibility. An extension of training may be required if leave

exceeds specialty board-defined periods.

**Return to Work:**

Residents will be reinstated without loss of training status if they return on the approved date. Any required make-up time will be paid, and health benefits will continue during the extension.

**Promotion:** Promotion to the next postgraduate year is delayed until the leave of absence is completed.

**Travel During Leave Requests:**

**Travel Risks:** Residents who leave the country and are then unable to return to the United States may be at risk of not having their position held beyond the approved leave period.

**Initial PCML Request:**

**Paid Leave:** At least six weeks of paid leave at 100% salary is provided once per training program.

**Unpaid Leave:** Up to 12 weeks can be taken under FMLA, with weeks 7-12 being unpaid unless other paid leave or short-term disability applies.

**Advancement:** Time off does not guarantee on-schedule promotion or graduation. Programs must follow board eligibility guidelines and assess competency for promotion/graduation.

**Subsequent (after 1<sup>st</sup> Leave) PCMLs:**

**Paid Leave:** Uses all available paid time off first, then transitions to unpaid leave or short/long-term disability.

**Benefits:** Health insurance and other benefits continue during PCML.

**Moonlighting :**

**Moonlighting Restriction:** Residents on personal, parental, caregiver, or medical leave are not allowed to moonlight.

## Leave Overview Matrix/New York Life & Administrative Notification

Below is an overview of who needs to be notified, when they should be notified and how to be notified for each type leave request.

| <u>Leave Type</u>              | <u>Where to Submit</u>     | <u>Who to Notify:</u><br><u>Start of the Requested Leave</u>                                                                 |                                | <u>Who to Notify:</u><br><u>Return of the Requested Leave</u>                                                               |                                |
|--------------------------------|----------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Personal                       | SharePoint + New York Life | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Program Director</li> <li>• GME Via SharePoint</li> <li>• New York Life</li> </ul>  | 30 Days or as soon as possible | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Program Director</li> <li>• GME via SharePoint</li> <li>• New York Life</li> </ul> | Minimum 7 days prior to return |
| Parental - Birthing Parent     | SharePoint + New York Life | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Program Director</li> <li>• GME Via SharePoint</li> <li>• New York Life</li> </ul>  | 30 Days or as soon as possible | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Program Director</li> <li>• GME via SharePoint</li> <li>• New York Life</li> </ul> | Minimum 7 days prior to return |
| Parental - Non-Birthing Parent | SharePoint + New York Life | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Program Director</li> <li>• GME Via SharePoint</li> <li>• New York Life</li> </ul>  | 30 Days or as soon as possible | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Program Director</li> <li>• GME via SharePoint</li> <li>• New York Life</li> </ul> | Minimum 7 days prior to return |
| Parental - Adoption            | SharePoint + New York Life | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Program Director</li> <li>• GME Via SharePoint</li> <li>• New York Life</li> </ul>  | 30 Days or as soon as possible | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Program Director</li> <li>• GME via SharePoint</li> <li>• New York Life</li> </ul> | Minimum 7 days prior to return |
| Caregiver                      | SharePoint + New York Life | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Program Director</li> <li>• GME Via SharePoint</li> <li>• New York Life</li> </ul>  | 30 Days or as soon as possible | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Program Director</li> <li>• GME via SharePoint</li> <li>• New York Life</li> </ul> | Minimum 7 days prior to return |
| Medical                        | SharePoint + New York Life | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Program Director</li> <li>• GME Via SharePoint</li> <li>• New York Life</li> </ul>  | 30 Days or as soon as possible | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Program Director</li> <li>• GME via SharePoint</li> <li>• New York Life</li> </ul> | Minimum 7 days prior to return |
| Military                       | SharePoint                 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Program Director</li> <li>• GME Via SharePoint</li> <li>• /New York Life</li> </ul> | 30 Days or as soon as possible | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Program Director</li> <li>• GME via SharePoint</li> <li>• New York Life</li> </ul> | Minimum 7 days prior to return |

**Leave Type Overview:**

| <u>Leave Type</u>              | <u>1st Event<br/>Initial 6 weeks</u> | <u>1st Event<br/>6+ weeks</u>                                    | <u>2nd + Event<br/>Initial 6 weeks</u> | <u>2nd Event<br/>6+ Weeks</u>                                    |
|--------------------------------|--------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Personal                       | PTO/Unpaid                           | PTO/Unpaid                                                       | PTO/Unpaid                             | PTO/Unpaid                                                       |
| Parental - Birthing Parent     | 100% Paid                            | 8 weeks for c-section, PTO & Short-Term Disability After 8 weeks | 100% Paid                              | 8 weeks for c-section, PTO & Short-Term Disability After 8 weeks |
| Parental - Non-Birthing Parent | 100% Paid                            | PTO Only + 80 hours Parental Leave                               | PTO Only + 80 hours Parental Leave     | PTO Only + 80 hours Parental Leave                               |
| Parental - Adoption            | 100% Paid                            | PTO Only + 80 hours Parental Leave                               | PTO Only + 80 hours Parental Leave     | PTO Only + 80 hours Parental Leave                               |
| Caregiver                      | 100% Paid                            | PTO Only, Unpaid                                                 | PTO Only, Unpaid                       | PTO Only, Unpaid                                                 |
| Medical                        | 100% Paid                            | PTO, Short Term Disability                                       | PTO, Short Term Disability             | PTO, Short Term Disability                                       |
| *Military                      |                                      |                                                                  |                                        |                                                                  |

\* Military Leave – see institutional policy

**Impact of Leave Review:**

**Extended Training:** Time away may lead to extended training or non-promotion due to competency, accreditation, board, or state regulations.

**Review Process:** The Program Director, in partnership with the resident, will review the impact of a leave of absence on:

- Accreditation length of training criteria.
- Competency progression.
- Eligibility for exam certification and licensure.

**Competency Requirement:** The Program Director, with input from the Clinical Competency Committee (CCC), must extend training if the resident has not achieved the required competencies.

**Program & Resident Responsibilities:**

- 1) Notification:
  - a. Resident
    - i. Meet with program director/program administrator to review/notify type of leave and dates of leave requested.
- 2) Submission:
  - a. Resident
    - i. FMLA Benefit administrator - New York Life (completed by resident)
      1. [2025 Benefits Hub - Home](#)
      2. External Resources Drop Down
  - a. Program
    - ii. Program Administrator to submit leave request to GME via SharePoint: [GME Leave of Absence](#)
- 3) Return:
  - a. Resident
    - i. Notify New York Life of intended return to work date
      1. [2025 Benefits Hub - Home](#)
      2. External Resources Drop Down
  - b. Program
    - i. Program administrator notifies GME of return date no sooner than 7 calendar days prior to resident return date.

**Geisinger Graduate Medical Education  
Time Away and Impact of Educational Leave  
Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)**

The following FAQ document pertains to all Graduate Medical Education programs and trainees that fall

within the oversight of Graduate Medical Education Committee (GMEC).

### **FAQ's**

**Q: Is the *American Board of Medical Specialties Policy on Parental, Caregiver and Medical Leave During Training* and the Accreditation Council of Graduate Medical Education (ACGME) *Institutional Guidelines for Vacation and Leaves of Absence (IV.H)* the same policy?**

A: No. The *American Board of Medical Specialties Policy on Parental, Caregiver and Medical Leave During Training* is distinct from the ACGME *Institutional Vacation and Leave of Absence (IV.H)* requirements.

**Q: If I take Parental, Caregiver and/or Medical Leave during my training program, will I graduate on time?**

A: Multiple factors will determine if a resident graduates on time to include but not limited to: attaining appropriate competency during each training period, board eligibility training requirements, accrediting body training requirements and the Pennsylvania State Board of Medicine training requirements.

**Q: Who approves what is considered a qualifying reason for Medical, Parental and Caregiver Leave?**

A: All requests for Medical, Parental and Caregiver leave should be processed through New York Life under the Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA). The process for submission is outlined above.

**Q: What is New York Life?**

A: New York Life is the Geisinger administrator of all Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA), Non-FMLA Geisinger Leave, and Extended Medical Leave of Absence programs.

**Q: What if I am denied an FMLA request through New York Life?**

A: All non-FMLA qualifying event will be reviewed by the GME office for additional review.

**Q: Can I take the 6-weeks of Parental, Medical and Caregiver Leave without applying for FMLA?**

A: No. All trainees interested in applying for Parental, Medical and Caregiver Leave must process their initial request through Graduate Medical Education (GME) and New York Life.

**Q: FMLA is for up to 12 weeks. If I take 12 weeks, will I be paid?**

A: FMLA leave itself is unpaid, Geisinger will cover up to 6-weeks of leave at 100% pay for the initial PCML of each training program. Any time thereafter is unpaid unless paid time off (PTO, Parental or relocation) is utilized and/or short-term disability is applied.

**Q: Is the first 6-weeks of each Parental, Medical and Caregiver Leave, leave paid for at 100%?**

A: No. This is for initial PCML requests. Only the first approved 6-week leave in a training program is covered at 100%.

**Q: If I transition programs (i.e., transitional year to residency or residency to fellowship) will I renew my eligibility of the Parental, Medical and Caregiver leave benefit?**

A: Yes. The 100% paid 6-week time period may be utilized once within each unique training program. One-year programs are eligible one time. Five-year programs are eligible one time.

**Q: If I take 6-weeks off during a one-year program, will I need to extend my training experience even though my start date with my new program is set?**

A: Potentially yes. It is the responsibility of the training program you are currently in to make sure you complete all required activities to include time eligibility guidelines and attainment of competency. The accepting program will have to modify your start date accordingly.

**Q: When does the Parental, Medical and Caregiver Leave benefit take effect?**

A: Eligibility begins on the first date of hire.

**Q: I am required to have one week of protected leave outside of the Parental, Caregiver and Medical Leave. Must this occur after the leave period?**

A: No. The one week of protected leave may occur prior to the Parental, Family, Medical Leave.

**Q: Can I take intermittent Parental, Medical and Caregiver Leave?**

A: Programs must balance the educational requirements, trainee competency within the learning environment and ability to provide adequate training against providing the flexibility of intermittent leave requests.

Intermittent or reduced leave schedules are not available for the care of a child following birth, adoption, or foster care. This time must be taken in one continuous block.

**Q: When is FMLA leave applicable?**

A: Any indication that time away is needed for a personal medical condition or to care for a family member with a medical condition should be evaluated as potential FMLA leave but will need to conform to policies defining FMLA leave eligibility. Consult with the GME office for further information.

**Q: May residents complete clinical responsibilities or research work while on FMLA leave?**

A: No. While on Parental, Medical and Caregiver Leave, trainees may not complete any clinical or research related work, including moonlighting.

**Q: If I am on a visa, am I eligible for this benefit?**

A: Yes, please contact the GME office for further guidance.

**Q: With vacation, relocation days and Parental, Caregiver and Medical leave, I have taken 10 weeks off this year. Is this okay?**

A: Trainees are encouraged to take appropriate time to provide for Parental, Family and Medical well-being. Effects of time away may affect training history and competency progression.

**Q: I took the same amount of time as my co-resident for the birth of a child. They were promoted on time and I was not. Why?**

A: It is the responsibility of the Clinical Competency Committee (CCC) to evaluate competency and progress for each individual resident in training. It is possible that one resident could miss the same amount of time as another and one be promoted for attaining competency in a defined period of time while another resident is extended until competency is reached.

**Q: What if I already have utilized my PMCL and I am having another child during the duration of my training program? Can I have an additional 6 weeks off paid without utilizing my personal paid time off?**

A: No. Subsequent Medical and Caregiver leave of absences for parental leave are entitled to receive the paid parental leave benefit (80 hrs) which is paid. All additional time off will be paid with available paid time off or relocation days. Any additional time thereafter will be unpaid unless supplemented by short term disability.