

Resident Wellness Policy

Approval Authority: Postgraduate Medical Education Committee

Established On: 2020 10 21

Amendments: 2020 05 14; 2020 10 23; 2022 05 06

Category: B

1.0 POLICY STATEMENT/PURPOSE

This policy reflects the NOSM University (NOSM U) Postgraduate Medical Education Office's commitment to fostering a psychologically safe, positive, and healthy learning environment for all NOSM U postgraduate medical trainees by promoting and sustaining a culture of wellness and resilience within academic, community, and clinical-based learning environments. This policy describes the services of the PGME Wellness Program, its relationship to other Offices at NOSM U, its governance structure and outlines various roles and responsibilities for resident wellness.

2.0 SCOPE

This policy applies to all residents and fellows in Postgraduate Medical Education at the NOSM U as well as all residency programs and faculty involved in resident's training.

3.0 The Role of the Resident Wellness Program

The Resident Wellness Program has a commitment to fostering a medical culture that is diverse, inclusive, and equitable. Working collaboratively with the Resident Wellness Program, the PGME Office supports wellness-related programs that assist residents in optimizing their physical, mental, and emotional wellbeing. The Wellness Program can direct residents to internal and external supports that can assist them in obtaining confidential, high-quality support for their wellness. The Resident Wellness Program is not a crisis center, nor a 24 hour on-call service.

The Resident Wellness Program regularly monitors the learning and working environment through confidential reporting, and annual surveys of residents as well as through liaison with other learner supports at NOSM U such as the IMG Coordinator and Indigenous and Francophone Affairs Portfolios. The Resident Wellness Program and the PGME Office

collaborate to develop positive learning environments supporting improved learning, satisfaction, and morale. The Resident Wellness Program recognizes that there is no wrong door and understands that learners may choose to seek support from a variety of people and places. The Resident Wellness Program is thus seen as complimentary to the myriad of available resources available both publicly and privately to medical learners

3.1 The Resident Wellness Program provides residents with a safe and confidential venue to seek out resources that protect and enhance resident health and well-being. All resident communication with Wellness Program personnel, including personal health information, will be handled confidentially within the limitations of the law. Resident's program director, faculty supervisors and colleagues will not be informed of the content of these communications without resident consent. Please refer to Resident Wellness Confidentiality Policy and Procedure [Resident Wellness Confidentiality Policy and Procedure](#) that describes policies and procedures related to the collection, sharing and storage of confidential information by the Resident Wellness Program.

The framework of the Resident Wellness Program includes elements of education/support for learners in the areas of, but not limited to, occupational/academic health, physical health, emotional health and wellbeing and social health. Residents have access to support for clinical and academic accommodations, as well as individual counselling, opportunities for supportive group sessions, referrals, return to work planning, and outreach support for achieving the knowledge and skills to develop healthy and productive professional identities during their transitions into, through residency and out of residency.

The Resident Wellness Program provides the following:

3.1.1 Direct services to Residents: A confidential environment within the limitations of the law, is provided where residents can discuss concerns freely, receive direct advice, coaching, and support; along with receiving counselling referrals to other health professionals or community resources where needed.

3.1.2 Education for residents and faculty: opportunities for facilitating workshops, core

curriculum in Physician Health and Wellness, and group support within and across Programs.

3.1.3 Organizational Governance: The Resident Wellness Program has governance and administrative responsibilities along with the function to act as the liaising governance body to other NOSM U offices/portfolios that learner wellness supports, such as, but not limited to the Wellness Advisory Group (WAG); the Resident Peer Support Network (RSN), the NOSM Learner Affairs Unit, the NOSM U Continuing Education & Professional Development (CEPD) Unit, NOSM U's International Medical Graduates (IMG) services, NOSM U's Indigenous Affairs and Francophone Affairs Portfolios.

3.1.4 Up-to-date online resources and NOSM U Well App features that support resident Wellness.

3.2 The Resident Wellness Program tracks utilization and timeliness of access as well as tracks data to provide an ongoing needs assessment. Reports are generated with deidentified aggregate data to the Resident Wellness Advisory Group, the PGME Leadership Team, and the Postgraduate Medical Education Committee (PGMEC).

3.3 The Resident Wellness Program works with residency programs and residents to support peer-led wellness initiatives as an effort to further strengthen resident wellbeing, builds skills and resources for peer support, and enhances the environment of their respective programs.

4.0 The Postgraduate Medical Education Resident Wellness Advisory Group (PGME WAG)

4.1 The PGME Wellness Advisory Group (WAG) is a standing subcommittee of PGMEC that draws upon the perspectives and expertise of NOSM U administrators, faculty and residents to help carry out a vision that NOSM U residents will achieve the knowledge and skills to sustain wellbeing during their transitions into, through, and beyond residency.

4.2 The WAG Subcommittee provides strategic wellness direction to the PGME Wellness Senior Learner Affairs Officer (LAO), the Assistant Dean, Resident Affairs (ADRA) and associated administrative support staff. The WAG is chaired by the Wellness LAO and has representation from the PGME Office, Undergraduate Learner Affairs, International Medical Graduates' NOSM U Lead, Residency Program Directors and Coordinators, Faculty, and maintains at least three resident seats one from College of Family Physicians training program, one from Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada Program and one International Medical Graduate.

4.3 The WAG subcommittee meets formally to assist in identifying aims, goals, and implementation strategies to encourage healthy behaviors in the clinical, community and academic learning and working environments, to advocate for policy change, and to support the creation of health-friendly learning environments.

5.0 RESIDENT RESPONSIBILITIES FOR WELLNESS

5.1 Residents are responsible for familiarizing themselves with the policies, processes, and programs available to them by the Resident Wellness Program. Resident policies, processes, and program details can be found on both the NOSM U [PGME Office webpage](#), the [Resident Wellness](#) Webpage and the [NOSM U Well](#) APP Resident specific site. In addition, orientation sessions at the beginning of residency will introduce the Resident Wellness Program, the Wellness APP, where to find PGME policies and may highlight particular policies.

5.2 Residents have a professional responsibility to appear for duty appropriately rested and must manage their time before, during and after clinical assignments to prevent excessive fatigue. Residents are responsible for assessing and recognizing the signs of impairment, including that which is due to illness and/or fatigue in themselves. Residents experiencing such impairment are to notify their Program Director or designate.

5.3 Residents are responsible for reporting fit for duty and able to perform their clinical Duties. See [Fatigue Risk Management Policy](#).

5.4 If a resident is experiencing any difficulties that they feel could impact their ability to perform their clinical, educational, or professional duties, they are encouraged to seek assistance as soon as possible. Residents should seek assistance through the Resident Wellness Program, their Program Director, their Resident Program Coordinator, as appropriate, without fear of reprisal.

5.5 Residents should maintain their health through routine medical and dental care and, if needed, mental health care. Residents will be supported in their efforts to maintain their physical and mental health. Non-urgent appointments may be scheduled in advance in accordance with the NOSM U PGME [Leaves of Absence Policy](#).

5.6 Residents will be supported in their efforts to maintain their physical and mental health. At no time will residents be denied visits for acute care for illness (physical or mental) or dental emergencies during work hours.

6.0 RESIDENCY PROGRAM RESPONSIBILITIES

6.1 It is the responsibility of the Residency Programs to be aware of the factors that can influence the health and wellness of residents, to have processes in place to ensure a positive work environment for residents and to foster a medical culture that is diverse, inclusive and equitable.

6.2 If a Program Director or Faculty member recognizes physical, mental, or emotional strains affecting the performance of a resident, including excessive fatigue, the member must take steps to ensure the safety of residents and patients. See [Postgraduate Resident Safety Policy](#).

6.3 Program directors or designates are encouraged to recognize the signs of burnout and/or distress and provide appropriate resources/referrals.

6.4 Residency Programs are responsible to ensure residents are freely encouraged to access the supports of the Resident Wellness Program.

6.5 It is the responsibility of the Program to support and provide reasonable accommodations (i.e. duty assignments, on-call schedules) that may be recommended by the Wellness LAO/ADRA or the learners' treating physician to enable the resident to participate in required medical appointments, including counseling which are consistent with the PARO-OTH Collective Agreement. PGME, teaching sites (hospitals, clinics, etc.) and programs have a legal duty, as outlined by the Ontario Human Rights Code, to respond to individual requirements for accommodation and provide the most appropriate accommodation, unless this causes undue hardship to the employer or service provider.

6.6 It is the responsibility of Residency Programs to be aware of the services & educational opportunities offered by the Resident Wellness Program and to further adopt program level wellness commitment. Examples may include but not limited to debriefing opportunities, resident retreat activities, supporting resident representation on various committees related to health & wellness, providing additional wellness curriculum related to the discipline, creating opportunities for resident rounds supported by the clinical psychologist associated with the Wellness Program.

7.0 PGME OFFICE RESPONSIBILITIES

7.1 The Resident Wellness Program operates at arms-length from the Postgraduate Medical Education Office. Residents' personal health information is treated confidentially by the Wellness LAO/ADRA and is not disclosed without explicit consent, unless it is determined that the disability presents a credible threat to the safety of the resident or others. Personal health information is stored on a secure confidential server that can be accessed only by authorized NOSM U PGME Program wellness faculty, staff and management who are bound by confidentiality agreements as per terms of their employment and professional organizations.

See [Academic Accommodations including in the Clinical Environment](#)

7.2 The PGME Office recognizes and supports learning environments should be safe and supportive of residents. Interactions and communication between residents, faculty and other team members must occur in an open and collegial atmosphere, such that the tenets of acceptable professional behaviour and the assurance of dignity in the learning

environment is maintained at all times. Learning and working environments must be free from intimidation, harassment, and discrimination. NOSM U PGME makes available and supports residents and faculty on the principles and procedures outlined in the [Human Rights, Anti-Discrimination and Harassment Policy and Procedure](#) and the [Responding to Resident Concerns of Mistreatment Procedure](#).

8.0 RESOURCES

[NOSM U Resident Wellness Program](#)

[Employee & Family Assistance Program](#)

[OMA Physician Health Program](#)

[The Professional Association of Residents of Ontario \(PARO\)](#)

9.0 RELATED DOCUMENTS

In support of this policy, the following related documents are included:

- [Academic Accommodations including in the Clinical Environment](#)
- [Postgraduate medical Education Resident Safety Policy.](#)
- [Postgraduate Medical Education Resident Leaves Policy](#)
- [Resident Wellness Confidentiality Policy and Procedure](#)
- [Responding to Resident Concerns of Mistreatment Procedure.](#)
- [Human Rights, Anti-Discrimination and Harassment Policy and Procedure](#)

10. GETTING HELP

PGME Team:

Associate Dean PGME & HS - adpge@nosm.ca

Resident Wellness Program:

Wellness LAO - pgewellness@nosm.ca

Wellness ADRA - residentwellness@nosm.ca

Review and Revision History

Review Period: Every 3 years and/or as required

Date for Next Review: 2023 10 21

Date	Action
2020 09 08	Reviewed by PARO Reviewed and recommended for final review and approval by the Postgraduate Medical Education Wellness Advisory Group (PGME WAG)
2020 10 21	Approved by the Postgraduate Medical Education Committee (PGMEC)
2022 05 06	Wellness Program (j. Kiiskila, D. Whitney) edit with NOSM U title changes, removal of Learning advocates role, and new Wellness structure with LAO and ADRA