

**DIVISION OF UROLOGY
WESTERN UNIVERSITY**

RESIDENT WELLNESS POLICY

The Urology Residency Program recognizes that there are many elements to resident wellness and understands that there are many pressures placed on residents during their training. Not only are there demands of call, exams, longitudinal projects, arranging electives and holidays, but there are also external forces and stressors such as family, finances, moving to an unfamiliar environment, and personal health. As residents progress through the program, they continue to work diligently, assume greater responsibility for patients and professionalism, and pressures mount with respect to licensing and preparedness for a career or fellowship after residency.

Unfortunately, on occasion, there persists a culture of competitiveness and intra-professional disrespect which can result in intimidation and harassment, excessive demands, insecurity, and anxiety for residents. This culture, when encountered, may result in residents denying feelings of being overwhelmed, fatigued, or stressed. Fortunately, the professional colleges, resident associations, and the Postgraduate Medical Education office all recognize the need to act against such attitudes and beliefs.

Resident Responsibility

1. Residents are responsible for reporting fit for duty and able to perform their clinical duties in a safe, appropriate and effective manner free from the adverse effects of physical, mental, emotional and personal problems including impairment due to fatigue. 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.
2. Residents are responsible for assessing and recognizing impairment, including illness and fatigue, in themselves and in their peers.
3. If a resident is experiencing problems, he/she is encouraged to voluntarily seek assistance before clinical, educational and professional performance is affected; as well as interpersonal relationships or behavior are adversely affected. Residents, who voluntarily seek assistance for physical, mental, emotional and/or personal problems, including drug and alcohol dependency, before their performance is adversely affected, will not jeopardize their status as a resident by seeking assistance.

Residency Training Program Responsibility

1. It is the responsibility of the Program Director and all faculty members to be aware of resident behavior and conduct.
2. If a Program Director or faculty member observes physical, mental, or emotional problems affecting the performance of a resident, including impairment due to excessive fatigue, the member must take steps to verify the impairment and take appropriate action.

3. Chief residents should also be aware of the behavior and conduct of junior residents. If a Chief resident observes physical, mental, or emotional issues affecting the performance of a resident, including impairment due to excessive fatigue, the chief resident should immediately notify the Program Director or Division Chief.
4. It is the responsibility of the program to provide reasonable accommodations (i.e. duty assignments, on-call schedules) to enable the resident to participate in counseling (volunteer or mandated).
5. It is the responsibility of the program to provide opportunities for excessively fatigued residents to take therapeutic naps (resident and/or call rooms at each hospital site) and to provide safe transportation following duties (ie. cab fare).
6. If at any time a resident feels that impairment (including fatigue) will have a negative impact on patient outcomes it is their professional responsibility to notify their senior resident or faculty and request leave.
7. Residents who feel that they are impaired by fatigue should be allowed to take appropriate action, including leave if needed, without fear of reprisal.

Resources Available to all Residents

1. Residents who are feeling harassed, intimidated and or discriminated against should access one of more of the following support resources:
 - PARO – www.paro.ca
 - Office of Equity and Professionalism, Western University www.uwo.ca/equity
 - Program Director and/or Division Chief
2. Residents suffering from undue stress during their residency are encouraged to contact:
 - Their family physician
 - OMA helpline for Physicians
 - PARO helpline for residents www.paro.ca
 - Office of Equity and Professionalism, Western University www.uwo.ca/equity
 - Employee and Family Assistance Program www.lhsc.on.ca
3. Residents who are struggling with academics are encouraged to contact their Program Director, Faculty Advisor, mentor, or the Division Chief.
4. Residents and staff are encouraged to contact the appropriate resources if they know of a colleague who is suffering from undue stress, intimidation or harassment.

The resident wellness policy should be reviewed, edited and accepted with input from the resident body through the Resident Training Committee.