

Emergency Medicine Physician Assistant Residency Program

Resident Impairment

Policy:

Patient health and safety are the paramount concern; therefore, all suspected cases of provider impairment must be reported to the program director, to a designated hospital official, or the appropriate hospital or medical staff committee. Residents will be strongly encouraged to seek help or assistance for any problems with alcohol, drugs or mental illness that affect their ability to function as a resident. The program's intent is to assist the resident physician to successfully complete the residency training program and safely practice.

Definition:

The AMA defines physician impairment as any physical, mental or behavioral disorder that interferes with ability to engage safely in professional activities. This definition is extended to Advanced Practice Provider Residents.

Procedures:

All processes for intervention and management of the impaired provider are confidential to the degree possible.

1. Impairment in a provider may be subtle or overt, but is most often first noticed as a significant and persistent change in behavior. Such changes may be noticed in any or all of the physical, emotional, family, social, educational or clinical areas of life. These behavioral changes are often referred to as "red flags." In the event that a faculty member, non-physician hospital staff member, resident, student or Program Coordinator notices these "red flags," s/he will notify the Program Director immediately.
2. The Program Director will immediately contact and meet with the resident.
3. If the provider acknowledges a problem with alcohol, substance abuse or emotional problems, s/he will be removed from the clinical area and be tested for impairment. The resident will be placed on an administrative leave of absence pending a further evaluation of their condition. The resident may be reinstated by the Department Chair in consultation with the Program Director and Vice Chair for Education based on the results of the evaluation.
4. If a resident requires intervention in the form of inpatient treatment, s/he will be placed on a leave of absence. The resident may be reinstated by the Department Chair in consultation with the Program Director and the Vice Chair for Education, based on results of the treatment.
5. If a resident refuses to acknowledge a problem with alcohol, substance abuse or emotional problems, s/he will be removed from the clinical area. The resident will be asked to submit to a drug/alcohol urine test in order to rule out these factors. If the resident refuses to submit to this test, s/he will be immediately suspended from the residency program. The terms for reinstatement from the suspension will be determined by the Department Chair and the Program Director, in consultation with the Vice Chair for Education.
6. If the resident fails to accept the terms of reinstatement from a leave of absence or from a suspension, or if the resident fails to satisfy the terms of his/her reinstatement or treatment, s/he will be dismissed from the residency program.