

Nephrology Fellowship Program Well-Being Policy

Division of Nephrology, Department of Medicine, University of Washington

Scope: All University of Washington (UW) residencies and fellowships accredited by the Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education (ACGME) and sponsored by the UW School of Medicine (UWSOM). Non-ACGME accredited programs or programs accredited by the Commission on Dental Accreditation (CODA) may choose to utilize this policy.

Background: Well-being of fellows, fellows (inclusively referred to as “fellows” hereafter), and faculty members is a key element of a positive learning and working environment. Each program, in partnership with its Sponsoring Institution (UWSOM), has the responsibility to address clinicians’ psychological, emotional, and physical well-being. All members of the health care team share responsibility for the well-being of others.

Policy: Each residency and fellowship program, in partnership with its Sponsoring Institution, must ensure healthy and safe learning and working environments that promote fellows well-being [ACGME Common Program Requirements (CPR) I.D.2.]. The program must monitor the clinical learning and working environment at all participating sites [CPR I.B.3].

The program, in partnership with the Sponsoring Institution, must offer appropriate infrastructure, services, resources (including space, technology, and supplies), and leave from training when needed. The responsibility of the program, in partnership with the Sponsoring Institution, must include efforts to enhance the meaning that each fellows finds in the experience of being a physician, including (1) protecting time with patients, minimizing non-physician obligations, providing administrative support, promoting progressive autonomy and flexibility, and enhancing professional relationships [CPR VI.C.1.a)]; and (2) attention to scheduling, work intensity, and work compression that impacts fellows well-being [CPR VI.C.1.b)].

Sponsoring Institution's Responsibilities

The Sponsoring Institution must (1) oversee its programs’ fulfillment of responsibility to address well-being of fellows and faculty members, consistent with the Common and (sub)specialty-specific Program Requirements, addressing areas of non-compliance in a timely manner [ACGME Institutional Requirements (IR) III.B.7.a)]; and (2) ensure that programs provide a professional, respectful, and civil environment that is free from unprofessional behavior [IR III.B.6.d)].

Infrastructure and Services

In partnership with its Sponsoring Institution, the Nephrology Fellowship program provides

- (1) [access to food while on duty](#) at UWMC Montlake, Harborview, and the VA Puget Sound
- (2) safe, quiet, clean, and private sleep/rest facilities available and accessible for fellows with proximity appropriate for safe patient care
- (3) clean and private [facilities for lactation](#) that have refrigeration capabilities, with proximity appropriate for safe patient care
- (4) accommodation of clinical and non-clinical schedules to allow milk expression/pumping during the work day, in accordance with [federal law](#) (space and time required for lactation are critical for the well-being of the fellows and their family). Fellows who are breastfeeding-mothers work the Program Director and Administrator to protect adequate time for regular milk expression/pumping during the workday
- (5) safe [transportation options](#) for fellows who may be too fatigued to safely return home. Fellows are taught about the Safe Ride Home Program, including ways to submit reimbursement through the form, <https://sites.uw.edu/uwgme/emergency-safe-ride-home-reimbursement/>
- (6) security and safety measures appropriate to the 3 hospital sites
- (7) [accommodations for fellows with disabilities](#) consistent with the Sponsoring Institution’s policy

Additionally, in partnership with its Sponsoring Institution, the Nephrology Fellowship Program provides access to appropriate tools for self-screening, as well as confidential and affordable mental health assessment, counseling, and treatment, including access to urgent and emergent care 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Resources are found here, <https://sites.uw.edu/uwgme/wellness/>. The link is communicated in the fellows’ handbook, posted in the fellows’ SharePoint folder, and flyers for these Wellness resources are posted in each of the fellows’ work rooms at the VA, UWMC Montlake, and Harborview. The Program Administrator ensures that all incoming fellows complete an online physician well-being module as part of their Orientation.

Safety Monitoring

The Nephrology Fellowship Program shares responsibility with the Sponsoring Institution for gathering information and utilizing systems that monitor and enhance fellows and faculty member safety. Every year, the program evaluates workplace safety data and addresses the safety of fellows and faculty members (e.g., monitoring of workplace injuries, physical or emotional violence, and emotional well-being after adverse events).

Leave

Fellows are given the opportunity to attend medical, mental health, and dental care appointments, including those scheduled

during their working hours. To ensure appropriate coverage, fellows need to put their requests in writing to the Program Director and Administrator in advance of this leave.

If fellows have circumstances in which they may be unable to perform their responsibilities or to attend work (fatigue, illness, family emergencies, parental leave, etc.) they are responsible for communicating this information and an informal plan to the Program Director in writing or by phone call. The Program Director will help formulate a plan for the fellow, and work with the Program Administrator to update call and paging schedules, communicating with affected faculty, fellows, and staff.

The Nephrology Fellowship Program adheres to relevant stipulations stated in [University of Washington Housestaff Association \(UWHA\) Contract \(Collective Bargaining Agreement\)](#) and [Residency and Fellowship Position Appointment \(RFPA\)](#); refer to other pertinent policies and procedures, including [UW GME Guidance on Reporting Paid and Unpaid Leave Time for Fellows and Fellows](#), relevant specialty board leave policies, and program-specific leave policies.

Coverage/Continuity of Patient Care

If fellows are unable to perform their patient care responsibilities, fellows are responsible for reporting this to the Program Director, who will coordinate coverage and communicate plans to the affected faculty and/or fellows. For absences beyond 24 hours, the Jeopardy fellow will be activated to provide appropriate coverage on service(s). The Program Administrator is responsible for updating all schedules and paging, and recording time off in MedHub. These policies are implemented without fear of negative consequences for the fellow who was unable to provide the clinical work. See the Nephrology Fellowship Jeopardy Policy for more details.

Schedule Release

Nephrology fellows' clinical and non-clinical yearly block schedules are released to fellows at the start of the academic year to accommodate their planning of professional and personal lives. The yearly block schedules identify months that will have call or jeopardy responsibilities, and the daily schedule includes specific day shifts, weekend and night call schedules, clinic schedules, and days off. The complete annual schedule is posted on MedHub (accessible to all fellows), and copies of the internal planning calendar, managed by the Program Administrator and Director, are shared at the start of the academic year. All types of leave – sick, vacation, paid personal holidays, conference time, etc. are recorded in MedHub by the Program Administrator. For unpaid time, the Program Administrator works with the Department of Medicine Human Resources Manager and GME Office Leaves Manager to record time in Workday.

Any last-minute changes are communicated to fellows directly with a notification to the program director and affected faculty. If fellows would like to make changes to the schedule, they are responsible for putting requests in writing to the Program Director and Administrator for approval. The Administrator will respond with a decision, and will make changes in MedHub and OnCall and Amion paging schedules.

Concern Reporting System

The Program Director provides a learning and working environment in which fellows can raise concerns and provide feedback in a confidential manner as appropriate, without fear of intimidation or retaliation. The program, in partnership with its Sponsoring Institution, encourages fellows and faculty members to alert the Program Director or designed Faculty/Fellow Liaison, when they are concerned that another fellows or faculty member may be displaying signs of burnout, depression, substance abuse, suicidal ideation, or potential for violence. Fellows and faculty are strongly encouraged to follow the mechanisms developed by the UW GME when reporting their concerns. Any bias incidents or violation of nondiscrimination and nonretaliation must be reported through the mechanisms described in [the UW Medicine Policy on Professional Conduct](#), [UW Bias Reporting Tool](#), [University Complaints Investigation and Resolution Office \(UCIRO\)](#), or [UW Executive Order 31](#).

In case of physician impairment, every individual, including program directors, faculty, and fellows, is responsible to (1) monitor signs of impairment; and (2) follow the [UW GME Physician Impairment Policy](#) for reporting. Remediation may take place based on [the UW GME Remediation Policy and Grievance Procedure](#).

Fellows are encouraged to get involved in the various committees organized by the GME Office, including the Housestaff Quality and Safety Committee, Network of Underrepresented Residents and Fellows (NURF), and more. Involvement in these committees ensures that all fellows have (1) the opportunity to directly raise a concern (2) the option, at least in part, to conduct their forum without the DIO, faculty members, or other administrators present, and (3) the option to present concerns that arise from discussions at the forum to the DIO and GMEC.

Educational Requirements

The Sponsoring Institution, in partnership with the Nephrology Fellowship program, educates fellows and faculty members concerning the professional responsibilities of physicians, including their obligation to be appropriately rested and fit to provide the care required by their patients. Fellows and faculty are taught signs of unprofessional behavior and a confidential process for reporting, investigating, and addressing such concerns, and fellows' personal and professional well-being is written into the curriculum. Fellows must demonstrate competence in ability to recognize and develop a plan for one's own personal and professional well-being as part of professionalism.

The program's policy gives attention to fellows and faculty member burnout, depression, and substance abuse, educating fellows and faculty members to (1) identify the symptoms of burnout, depression, and substance abuse, including means to assist those who experience these conditions, (2) recognize those symptoms in themselves and how to seek appropriate care.

The Nephrology Fellowship program also educates all faculty members and fellows to (1) recognize the signs of fatigue and sleep deprivation, (2) be aware of alertness management and fatigue mitigation processes, and (3) use fatigue mitigation processes to manage the potential negative effects of fatigue on patient care and learning.

Program/Faculty Assessment

The Nephrology Fellowship Program's Program Evaluation Committee (PEC) reviews aggregate fellows and faculty well-being elements in its assessment of the program at the Annual Program Evaluation meeting.

Faculty members pursue faculty development designed to enhance their skills in fostering their own and their fellows' well-being at least once a year, per the UW GME [Annual Program Evaluation policy](#).

Well-Being Resources/Tools

- [UW GME Wellness Service](#) (this includes self-screening tools as well as confidential and free counseling for fellows and their significant others)
- [The Whole U](#) (holistic wellness)
- [UW CareLink](#) (counseling, legal advice, work-life solutions, incident response services)
- [UW Childcare Resources](#)
- [Washington Physicians Health Program](#)
- [ACGME Tools and Resources](#)
- [Well-Being Index](#) (free online tool to assess medical professional's well-being)
- [Action Collaborative on Clinician Well-Being and Resilience](#) (National Academy of Medicine)
- [Now Matters Now](#) (skills and support for coping with suicidal thoughts)
- [American Foundation for Suicide Prevention](#)

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI): Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI)

The Nephrology Fellowship Programs creates and nurtures a safe work environment for all by providing a professional, equitable, respectful, and civil environment that is free from discrimination, sexual and other forms of harassment, mistreatment, abuse, or coercion of students, fellows, faculty, and staff. No staff, fellows, or faculty member should experience discrimination or harassment. Any bias incidents--offensive remarks/actions--are subject to [the UW Medicine Policy on Professional Conduct](#) and [UW Executive Order 31](#).

In partnership with the Department of Medicine DEIB leadership, the division of Nephrology [DEIB Champions](#) (a faculty and staff member) participate in DEIB initiatives and workgroups to ensure that equity and inclusion are considered in all aspects of the program.

- [UW Dept of Medicine DEIB](#)
- [UW Network of Underrepresented Residents and Fellows \(NURF\)](#)
- [UW School of Medicine Center for Health Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion](#)

Additionally, fellows are aware of GME, School of Medicine, and UW diversity programs and resources, including:

- [UW GME Commitment to Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion](#)
- [UW Diversity Blueprint](#)
- [UW Medicine Healthcare Equity Toolkit](#)
- [UW SOM Center for Health Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion](#)
- [UW SOM Committee on Minority Faculty Advancement](#) (CMFA)
- [UW Diversity](#) (UW campus-wide resources on diversity)

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