

Policy on Sleep, Fatigue, and Fitness

Effective 08/06/2018

Reaffirmed by GMEC 03/10/2023

It is the professional responsibility of physicians to be appropriately rested and fit to provide safe patient care. In order to do so:

1. McGaw requires that each hospital has adequate sleep facilities, including space for napping. McGaw monitors this centrally and welcomes feedback to ensure continuous compliance. Because of the importance of this matter, any issues or concerns regarding sleep facilities should be brought to the attention of the appropriate Program Director and McGaw for immediate action.
2. McGaw requires all trainees to complete the mandatory annual Sleep and Impaired Physician Education (SAFER) training. Additional education regarding healthy sleep is available.
3. Each program must ensure safe transportation options are available for trainees who may be too fatigued to return home safely. Given the downtown location of many of our programs, there are usually safe public transportation options for trainees who are too tired to drive home. Call rooms are available to trainees if they are excessively fatigued. Trainees may also contact McGaw for further information at gme@northwestern.edu.
4. McGaw trainees should recognize the symptoms of burnout, depression, and substance abuse and how to assist themselves or others who experience these conditions. McGaw offers an online educational resource outlining signs and symptoms. Further, we encourage trainees and faculty members to alert their Program Director, the Designated Institutional Official (DIO), or McGaw's Wellness Program if they are concerned that they or another trainee or faculty member may be displaying signs of burnout, depression, substance use, or any other urgent condition. In addition to the confidential and affordable wellness options for trainees provided by McGaw, the Feinberg School of Medicine provides similar services for faculty members, which McGaw can help guide access accordingly. Acute concerns should be immediately reported to McGaw's DIO. Anonymous concerns may be submitted online. As always, McGaw has a strictly enforced Non-Retaliation or Intimidation policy that covers any trainee who reports any concern regarding the training environment.
5. McGaw trainee Paid Time Off (PTO). As an issue of wellness, every trainee is expected to use all their PTO each appointment year. These days are in addition to the trainees' 10-day allowance of sick time per appointment year and their ability to be released from clinical duties to attend doctor appointments with appropriate frequency.