



Graduate Medical Education Office

**POLICY: 200-050385-042**

**Resident Physician Impairment**

A resident physician is considered to be impaired if he or she is unable to fully participate in the educational program or is unable to carry out the patient care aspects of the program with reasonable skill and safety to patients because of a physical or mental illness or excessive use or abuse of drugs including alcohol. [In compliance with ACGME Institutional Requirements IV.1.2.)]

**Definitions**

**Resident:** Includes a resident or fellow physician in training

**GME-related activity:** Any activity planned as a formal or informal gathering where participation is mandatory by a GME program (i.e. Department or training program).

Examples include (but are not limited to):

- Off-site journal clubs
- Department or training program retreats
- Graduation dinners/parties
- Team lunches

**Policy**

The **Los Angeles County Board of Supervisor policy 9.050 “Drug Free Workplace Program”** states that the abuse of drugs, including alcohol, by employees or contract personnel is unacceptable because it adversely affects health, safety, security and productivity as well as public confidence and trust.

Using, possessing, selling or being under the influence of illegal drugs is unlawful, dangerous and is absolutely prohibited at the workplace. Further, the use of alcohol or prescribed drugs to any extent while on duty which impairs safety and effective job performance is also prohibited.

Violation of any element of this policy shall result in disciplinary action up to and including termination.

The policy regarding alcohol use and/or consumption will be strictly enforced:

- a) Whenever possible alcohol use by trainees should be discouraged.
- b) No alcohol will be purchased for consumption by department/training programs, trainees or faculty at a GME-related activity.
- c) If faculty or trainees choose to consume alcohol, they must purchase their own beverage. If an individual purchases alcohol, both faculty and trainees should be encouraged to consume alcohol in a responsible manner.

Per the Los Angeles County-Committee of Resident and Intern (CIR) MOU 2022-2025, if the resident is suspected of a dependency or is seeking treatment for a dependency, the resident physician will be advised and given a copy of any policies on resident impairment. No resident physician shall be disciplined or terminated for seeking such treatment.

**Procedure:**

Concerns of physician impairment related to suspect substance use while at the workplace should be made to the resident physician's supervisor (program director). The supervisor will follow the Department of Health Services Reasonable Suspicion Procedures.

Concerns of physician impairment related to sleep deprivation while at the workplace should be made to the resident physician's supervisor (program director or designee). It is the responsibility of the program to enact the program specific procedure to relieve the resident physician of clinical responsibilities without fear of negative consequences for the resident

Concerns of physician impairment related to mental health issues or substance use issues (not actively occurring at the workplace) should be reported to the resident physician's supervisor (program director). The program director is responsible for connecting the resident to the appropriate resources by contacting with the Graduate Medical Education psychologist. In the event that concerns cannot be reported to the supervisor, any concerned resident or faculty physician can also escalate issues to the GME psychologist for resources.

**Resources:**

1. County of Los Angeles Policy 9.050 Drug Free Workplace
2. County of Los Angeles [Reasonable Suspicion Procedures](#)
3. HUMC GME Psychologist HUCLAGMEConnect@dhs.lacounty.gov
4. **CIR MOU 2023** [LAC-MOU 2022 2025](#)