

**Resident Health and Safety Guidelines
March 2009**

1. BACKGROUND

The Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada and the College of Family Physicians of Canada have collaborated in developing national standards for evaluation of the University Postgraduate Medical Education function and the sites used for residency education. Standard A.2.5. states that :

« All participating sites **must** take reasonable measures to ensure resident safety at all times, particularly considering hazards such as environmental toxins, exposure to infectious agents transmitted through blood and fluid, radiation, and potential exposure to violence from patients or others. «

The collective agreement between the Professional Association of Internes and Residents of Ontario (PAIRO) and the Council of Academic Hospitals of Ontario (CAHO) states that residents are postgraduate medical trainees registered in university programs as well as physicians employed by the hospitals. The agreement states that the trainees/employees must have secure and private rooms and secure access between call room facilities and the service area and access to and coverage for Occupational Health services.

Accreditation Canada standards indicate that member hospitals must have an operational safety and security program for staff and patients.

The Ontario Ministry of Labour's Occupational Health and Safety Act (OHSA) outlines minimum standards for health and safety and establishes procedures for dealing with workplace hazards and protection against risks of workplace violence.

The University of Toronto Health and Safety Policy (Governing Council March 29, 2004) states that the University is committed to the promotion of the health, safety and wellbeing of all members of the University community, to the provision of a safe and healthy work and study environment, and to the prevention of occupational injuries and illnesses.

2. PURPOSE

- to minimize the risk of injury and promote a safe and healthy environment on the university campus and teaching sites

- to demonstrate the University of Toronto Faculty of Medicine's commitment to the health, safety, and protection of its residents
- to provide a procedure to report hazardous or unsafe training conditions and a mechanism to take corrective action

3. SCOPE AND RESPONSIBILITY

The University, hospitals, and affiliated teaching sites are accountable for the environmental, occupational, and personal health and safety of their employees and have the right to make implementation decisions within their respective policies and resource allocations. Residents must adhere to the relevant health and safety policies and procedures of their rotation's training site. In addition, all teaching sites must meet the requirements of the PAIRO-CAHO collective agreement.

These Resident Health and Safety guidelines provide a central faculty mechanism for residents to use when faced with a health and safety issue during the course of their training which cannot be resolved at the local training site level.

4. PROCEDURE

a) Environmental Health

Accidents, incidents and environmental illnesses occurring during a resident's training will be reported and administered according to the reporting policies and procedures of the university, hospital or clinical teaching location.

b) Occupational Health

The Faculty of Medicine and the residency programs are each responsible for providing an introductory program to residents on body substance precautions, infection control, and occupational health procedures in the hospitals and teaching sites

The faculty Postgraduate Medical Education Office collects the immunization data on the trainees on behalf of the hospitals and the hospitals may view each trainee's immunization record on Postgraduate Web Evaluation and Registration (POWER) system. The Faculty's Communicable Disease Policy meets all of the basic immunization and communicable disease requirements of the teaching hospitals.

Medical Residents not meeting the immunization requirements of the faculty are not permitted to complete their registration with the PGME Office and are not registered at the hospital. Communicable disease issues are reviewed by the Expert Panel on Infection Control and dealt with on a case-by-case basis prior to finalizing a trainee's registration.

c) Personal Health and Safety

The University of Toronto Faculty of Medicine strives for a safe and secure environment for medical residents in all training venues. All teaching sites, hospitals, and long-term care institutions are responsible for ensuring the safety and security of residents training in their facilities in compliance with their existing employee safety and security policies/procedures as well as the requirements outlined in the PAIRO-CAHO collective agreement.

During block time in community-based practices, residents may be required to attend patients in doctor's offices or patient homes. Residents will not be required to see patients alone in the clinic, on house calls, or other settings that are not appropriately supervised. Locations without a formal health and safety policy or joint committee will be guided by the standards outlined in the Occupational Health and Safety Act.

d) Reporting/Follow-Up/Dispute Resolution

Residents in hospital/institutional settings identifying a personal safety or security breach must report it to their immediate supervisor at the training site and program director to allow a resolution of the issue at a local level, and comply with the site reporting requirements, such as completion of an Incident Report Form.

Residents in community-based practices or other non-institutional settings should discuss issues or concerns with the staff physician or community-based coordinator, or bring any safety concerns to the attention of their Program Director or the PGME Office Director, Resident Wellness.

Pending investigation and resolution of the identified concerns:

- The program director and/or director of resident wellness have the authority to remove residents from clinical placements if the risk is seen to be unacceptable. If a decision is taken to remove a resident, this must be communicated promptly to the Chair, Residency Program Committee, the training site, as well as the Vice Dean, PGME.
- If the safety issue raised is not resolved at the local level, it must be reported to the Director, Resident Wellness who will investigate and may re-direct the issue to the relevant hospital or University office for resolution. The resident/faculty member bringing the incident forward will receive a response within 10 days outlining how the complaint was handled or if it will require further review.
- The Director, Resident Wellness may bring the issue to the hospital office responsible for safety and security, the University Community Safety Office, Faculty of Medicine Health and Safety Office, or the Director, Distributed Medical Education for resolution or further consultation, and will report

annually to the Postgraduate Medical Education Advisory Committee (PGMEAC) and the Hospital University Education Committee (HUEC) through the Vice-Dean, PGME.

Urgent resident safety issues will be brought to the attention of the Vice-Dean, PGME as well as to the relevant hospital VP Education as appropriate.

Health and safety systems issues may also be brought to the attention of the Director, Resident Wellness at any time by various methods, including internal reviews, resident/faculty/staff reporting, or police/security intervention.

References:

Sunnybrook Health Sciences Centre, Administrative Policy Manual, Section IV: Human Resources. Policy No IV-A-1000, "Abuse of Staff or Volunteers", July 2006

Workers Health and Safety Centre. Dupont Inquest: Coroner's Jury Recommendations Released December 11, 2007. www.whsc.on.ca

Canadian Psychiatric Association position statement on psychiatry emergency room staffing arrangements, 1990

College of Nurses of Ontario. Practice Guideline, "Refusing Assignments and Discontinuing Nursing Services", 2004

Occupational Health and Safety Act, Ontario Ministry of Labour, 2007. Guidelines and FAQs at http://www.labour.gov.on.ca/english/hs/faq/faq_2.html and legislation at http://www.e-laws.gov.on.ca/html/statutes/english/elaws_statutes_90o01_e.htm

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