

NORTH CAROLINA BAPTIST HOSPITALS, INC.  
POLICY AND PROCEDURE

From: Physician Services

Approved by: \_\_\_\_\_

Director, Physician Services

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Chair, Graduate Medical Education  
Committee

Prepared by: Physician Services

**SUBJECT: DUTY HOURS FOR RESIDENTS****I. POLICY**

It is the policy of North Carolina Baptist Hospitals, Inc. to maintain a work environment conducive to the health and well being of the resident. The Graduate Medical Education Committee must regularly monitor resident duty hours for compliance with Institutional Requirements and all ACGME Program Requirements.

**II. PURPOSE**

Providing residents with a sound academic and clinical education must be carefully planned and balanced with concerns for patient safety and resident well being. Each program must ensure that the learning objectives of the program are not compromised by excessive reliance on residents to fulfill service obligations. Didactic and clinical education must have priority in the allotment of residents' time and energies. Duty hour assignments must recognize that faculty and residents collectively have responsibility for the safety and welfare of patients.

**III. Procedure**

1. Each program must have written policies and procedures consistent with the Institutional and Program Requirements for resident duty hours and the working environment.
2. Duty Hours policies must be distributed to the residents and the faculty annually.
3. Monitoring of duty hours by each program is required with frequency sufficient to ensure an appropriate balance between education and service. At a minimum, each program should develop a plan to monitor duty hours on all rotations at least annually.
4. Back-up support systems must be provided when patient care responsibilities are unusually difficult or prolonged, or if unexpected circumstances create resident fatigue sufficient to jeopardize patient care.

5. Formal duty hours policies must apply to all participating institutions used by the residents.
6. The educational goals of the program and learning objectives of residents must not be compromised by excessive reliance on residents to fulfill institutional service obligations.
7. The structuring of duty hours and on-call schedules must focus on the needs of the patient, continuity of care and the educational needs of the resident.
8. Duty-hours and call schedules must be monitored by both the Sponsoring Institution and programs and adjustments made as necessary to address excessive service demands and/or resident fatigue. Duty hours, however, must reflect the fact that responsibilities for continuing patient care are not automatically discharged at specific times.
9. At the institutional level, resident duty hours will be monitored by the GMEC through the Internal Review process, a bi-annual GME Assessment Tool (completed by the program directors) and an annual Resident's Survey.
10. The GMEC will develop and implement written procedures to review and endorse requests from programs prior to submission to an RRC for exceptions in the weekly limit on duty hours up to 10 percent or up to a maximum of 88 hours. All exceptions requested must be based on a sound educational rationale. The procedures will outline the process for endorsing an exception in compliance with the ACGME policies and procedures for duty-hour exceptions. (The details for requesting an exception are outlined in a separate policy entitled, "Exception for Duty Hours Rule).

#### 11. Supervision of Residents

- a. All patient care must be supervised by qualified faculty. The program director must ensure, direct, and document adequate supervision of residents at all times. Residents must be provided with rapid, reliable systems for communicating with supervising faculty.
- b. Faculty schedules must be structured to provide residents with continuous supervision and consultation.
- c. Faculty and residents must be educated to recognize the signs of fatigue and adopt and apply policies to prevent and counteract the potential negative effects.

#### 12. Duty Hours

- a. Duty hours are defined as all clinical and academic activities related to the residency program, i.e., patient care (both inpatient and outpatient), administrative duties related to patient care, the provision for transfer of patient care, time spent in-house during call activities, and scheduled academic activities such as conferences. Duty hours do not include reading and preparation time spent away from the duty site.
- b. Duty hours must be limited to 80 hours per week, averaged over a four-week period, inclusive of all in-house call activities.
- c. Residents must be provided with 1 day in 7 free from all educational and clinical responsibilities, averaged over a 4-week period, inclusive of call. One day is defined

as one continuous 24-hour period free from all clinical, educational, and administrative activities.

- d. Adequate time for rest and personal activities must be provided. This should consist of a 10-hour time period provided between all daily duty periods and after in-house call.

### 13. On-Call Activities

The objective of on-call activities is to provide residents with continuity of patient care experiences throughout a 24-hour period. In-house call is defined as those duty hours beyond the normal workday when residents are required to be immediately available in the assigned institution.

- a. In-house call must occur no more frequently than every third night, averaged over a four-week period.
- b. Continuous on-site duty, including in-house call, must not exceed 24 consecutive hours. Residents may remain on duty for up to six additional hours to participate in didactic activities, transfer care of patients, conduct outpatient clinics, and maintain continuity of medical and surgical care as defined in Specialty and Subspecialty Program Requirements.
- c. No new patients, as defined in Specialty and subspecialty Program Requirements, may be accepted after 24 hours of continuous duty.
- d. At-home call (pager call) is defined as call taken from outside the assigned institution.
  - i. The frequency of at-home call is not subject to the every third night limitation. However, at-home call must not be so frequent as to preclude rest and reasonable personal time for each resident. Residents taking at-home call must be provided with 1 day in 7 completely free from all educational and clinical responsibilities, averaged over a 4-week period.
  - ii. When residents are called into the hospital from home, the hours residents spend in-house are counted toward the 80-hour limit.
  - iii. The program director and the faculty must monitor the demands of at-home call in their programs and make scheduling adjustments as necessary to mitigate excessive service demands and/or fatigue.

### 14. Moonlighting

- a. Because residency education is a full-time endeavor, the program director must ensure that moonlighting does not interfere with the ability of the resident to achieve the goals and objectives of the educational program.
- b. The program director must comply with the sponsoring institution's written policies and procedures regarding moonlighting, in compliance with the Institutional Requirements III. D.1.k. (The details regarding moonlighting are attached in a separate policy.)

- c. Moonlighting that occurs within the residency program and/or the sponsoring institution or the non-hospital sponsor's primary clinical site(s), i.e., internal moonlighting, must be counted toward the 80-hour weekly limit on duty hours.

Reference: Accreditation Council on Graduate Medical Education Institutional Requirements 2003-2004.

1996; reviewed 9/99; revised 10/02; revised 05/03, revised 06/03