See Something, Say Something

Reporting safety concerns is simple, but is not always easy. Safety requires a strong culture that values transparency and utilizes data to motivate change. And it all starts with individuals willing to take that first step of reporting.

CHI Health provides two ways for students, residents, fellows, and faculty to report safety concerns. One is through online reporting—also known as the IRIS system. This is accessed via MyCHIHealth. The other option is through confidential voicemail to (402) 717-2620. Either route results in the report being sent to operational and safety leaders in the organization. While reporters may not receive individual feedback about reports, each report is viewed by at least three individuals and vetted for action at the event level or for the information to be added to the data set for tracking and trending. IRIS is the one-stop shop for reporting all safety events—patient, employee and security type events. CHI Health supports anonymous reporting and does not tolerate retaliation related to reporting.

Reporting is speaking up for a patient, or for colleagues. It’s taking a stand for safety.

- Laura Peet Erkes, title
  CHI Health Division Director, Risk Management

A Word from Dr. Porter

One of the most important surveys you will complete during your years of GME training is the Annual Resident Survey from the Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education (ACGME). The survey started years ago, but it has evolved over time into an instrument that asks pointed questions about your program that the ACGME can utilize as one of the data points it reviews in determining the quality of your educational experience. The ACGME Annual Resident Surveys are administered during the months of January through June (depending upon your specialty) each year. It is extremely important that you complete the online survey since failure to achieve an adequate response rate, which is 100% for many programs, can result in adverse action from the ACGME.

The ACGME Resident Survey takes only a few minutes to complete, and you should answer all questions honestly. Your Program Director only receives summary results from a compilation of all answers with others from your program. Eventually, your Program Director will receive data on all other programs in the U.S. in your specialty and how your program compares. The survey includes questions about these topics:

- Duty hours (including information regarding fatigue and sleep deprivation)
- Supervision
- Evaluation
- Educational content
- Resources
- Patient safety
- Teamwork and Wellness

Please pay attention to the ranking scale as the scale can flip in order in some of the questions. Take your time to review the questions carefully. If the survey asks about an experience you have not had yet because you are too early in your training, do not answer in the negative unless you know for sure that is the case. If you do not understand any of the terminology you can go to: https://www.acgme.org/Portals/0/PDFs/ab_ACGMEglossary.pdf for a reference. Any answer less than Often and Extremely Often can be taken as a negative answer by the ACGME. It is also very important that you realize the survey is only asking about this academic year (starting last July). If a problem existed prior to July, but now the program director has resolved the issue, then you should feel comfortable to give a positive response.

You should view the survey as a way to help in building a more effective and higher quality program for your future. If you become concerned about issues in your program that impact the learning environment, we recommend that you first work with your Program Director or faculty mentor to correct the problems and issues. If that is not feasible, pay a visit to your Chair or the DIO or another administrator who may be able to offer potential solutions or suggestions for improvement. Here at Creighton, like most other Graduate Medical Education Offices (GME Office), we conduct our own internal survey. The purpose of this is to find out from residents and fellows prior to the Accreditation survey what their residents perceive as strengths and weaknesses of their program. The program can then develop plans to fix those areas and/or clear up misperceptions prior to the ACGME survey. All responses on this internal survey are anonymous. We also have a link on our website, https://medschool.creighton.edu/residencies-fellowships/graduate-medical-education-office/confidential-reporting-form to give you a way to send a comment or concern about your program and educational training. The resident has the option to identify or not with the comment. When the form is submitted, it goes directly to the DIO and the GME manager and is not copied to anyone else.

Joann Porter, MD, FACP
Associate Dean of Graduate Medical Education
ACGME Designated Institutional Officer
Patient Experience – Not Much More than Common Sense

We have on the Creighton University Medical Center – Bergan Mercy campus a continued and refined focus on the experience we offer to our patients. On a day to day basis, I consistently hear stories of the incredible care and compassion our patients experience while under our care. Yet, we don’t see that consistently transfer over into the feedback our patients give us on surveys and other outlets.

What I DO hear when talking with patients with whom we have fallen short is a need to focus on two areas: communication and time management. Neither of these have quick and easy fixes in our complex environment, however, let’s let common sense prevail. In order for us to improve in these areas, we must communicate a consistent message to our patients about their care plans and prognosis. That means all provider teams must be on the same page in regards to these things, and if they cannot be, then that is a conversation to be had away from the patient so as not to put them in the middle.

Time management is also of concern here, and I don’t mean our own ability to parse out our schedule in a reasonable manner from day to day – in our unpredictable world, I know as well as you that’s nearly impossible. But, what we can control is what we communicate to those we are called to care for. A patient should never feel that they are a burden to your day. When I was in my outpatient clinic, my sacred time was from the moment I entered a patient room until that encounter was over. Everything outside that could easily be chaotic and even confusing – teamwork and efficiencies are the solutions there, but within that room and facing that patient was a time and a place when all that chaos had to go away, both for the best care of the patient and the sanity of the provider. I would ask that you hold those moments just as precious and sacred.

- Dr. Devin Fox, Assistant Dean for Quality and Patient Safety and CHI Health Chief Medical Officer

Program Director Updates

Dr. Erin Jenkins, Gastroenterology

Dr. Maria McGee, Psychiatry

Dr. Joseph Nahas, Internal Medicine

Dr. Rammohan Rao Sankaraneni, Neurology

Dr. Venkata Kolli, Psychiatry
The Winter Blues

January in Nebraska is not for the faint of heart. As the days are short and the weather gets colder, you may find yourself feeling in a slump. The winter blues are characterized by feeling tired and irritable, low motivation, craving carbohydrates, and feeling down. The winter blues are a common experience, particularly in more northern climates. A smaller group of people may experience Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD), which is depression that develops each year as the seasons change. Whether you have the winter blues or SAD, these are some tips to help lift your spirits during the winter doldrums:

1. Increase your light exposure—Open your blinds and curtains, trim back tree branches, sit closer to windows, use a light box for 30 minutes a day, or use a sunrise simulator in which light gradually increases in your room in the morning to stimulate your body to wake up naturally.
2. Stay active—Research suggests that exercise is a great way to deal with, or even prevent, depression. For an added bonus, exercising under bright lights is even better for seasonal depression.
3. Get outside—Spend time in natural daylight as much as possible, especially on brighter days and during midday. Even taking a short walk outside at lunchtime can make a significant difference.
4. Keep warm—Being cold can make you feel more depressed. Wear warm clothes and warm shoes, and enjoy warm food and drinks to heat you from the inside out.
5. Help others—Focusing on something outside of yourself can improve life satisfaction. Clean out your closet and donate the clothes you don’t need, do something nice for a friend, or help your partner with an extra chore around the house.
6. Listen to music—Listening to cheerful music can improve your mood, even after the song ends. Put away the sad songs and ballads and create an upbeat playlist.
7. Find something to focus on—Keeping your mind active with a new interest helps ward off winter blues. Consider starting a new hobby, calling an old friend for dinner, or planning an upcoming vacation so you have something to look forward to in the future.

Spend time with others—It’s easy to isolate at home in the winter weather. Make an active effort to get out of the house and socialize, even if it’s only for a little while. If you know you are someone who flakes on promises more during the winter, ask a friend to help encourage you to keep your commitments.
Wellness Strategies

- Hang blackout curtains in your bedroom and use a white noise machine to improve the quality of your sleep.
- Replace one sugary drink (soda, juice, etc.) each day with a tall glass of water.

Wellness Resources

- GME Wellness Service: Dr. Allison Harlow, Psychologist (allisonharlow@creighton.edu)
- Employee Assistance Program (800-424-4831)
- Office of the Chaplain: Fr. Ben Osborne, SJ (benosborne@creighton.edu)

Wellness Trivia

According to the Medscape Residents Lifestyle & Happiness Report in 2018, what is the biggest challenge faced in residency?

   a. Fear of making a mistake  
   b. Finding time to study  
   c. Work-life balance  
   d. Making ends meet

Stop by the GME office with your answer and win some Creighton swag.

Research Highlights


This population-based survey of US physicians in active practice found that physician burnout, fatigue, and work unit safety grades were independently associated with major medical errors. The authors conclude that to reduce medical errors, interventions must address physician well-being and work unit safety.

Wellness Shout-Out

Thank you to Dr. Sarah Renna, Family Medicine PGY2, who has been instructing our monthly yoga sessions. Your wellness leadership is appreciated!

Upcoming Events
Violence Intervention and Prevention (VIP) Center
Brandeis Hall, Lower Level, room B04

The VIP Center provides confidential advocacy to first- and second-hand survivors of sexual violence, dating violence, stalking, harassment, discrimination, and more. An advocate is someone who will provide one-on-one individualized support to individuals. These services are free, confidential, and available to all students. Individual advocacy can include the following:

- Support after an incident of violence
- Safety planning
- Assistance with class absences, coursework extensions, and housing
- Assistance with reporting incidents—both on and off campus
- Assistance filing Protection Orders
- Resources to assist a friend, partner, or family member
- Campus and community referrals

Prevention Education

Creighton’s violence prevention program, Green Dot, is a nationally-recognized program focused on reducing incidents of power-based personal violence. Green Dot challenges each participant to take a proactive stance against violence and provides individuals with a variety of options to make the community safer, both directly and indirectly. A Green Dot is a moment in time when someone makes the decision to do something in a potentially high-risk situation. This could be a small or large action, but it’s the decision to act that makes a difference.

The VIP Center also offers trainings, workshops, and programs on the topics of dating violence, healthy relationships, sexual violence, consent, and stalking.

Annual Events

The Violence Intervention and Prevention Center hosts annual awareness events for students on campus throughout the school year. This includes programming for Dating Violence Awareness Month in October and Sexual Assault Awareness Month in April. During the month of April, the VIP Center also hosts Denim Day and Take Back the Night to raise awareness about sexual violence and provide a safe space for survivors to tell their stories or victimization and survival to the larger Creighton community.

Contact Us

For more information, please visit www.creighton.edu/vip or 402-280-3794 or send a confidential email to VIPcenter@creighton.edu

Meredith Lierk
Associate Director
VIP Center
meredithlierk@creighton.edu
402-280-3794