PURPOSE

It is the fellow’s responsibility to discuss any leave time with the Program Director to ensure that training requirements are not adversely affected, which may extend their fellowship training period. The fellows understand that the amount of time taken off in access of GME policy may affect their completion date.

SCOPE

This policy applies to all Creighton University residents and fellows and their respective programs.

POLICY

The following leave is outlined below and in accordance with Creighton University policy.

Resident Responsibilities:

Residents are expected to perform their duties as physicians for a minimum period of eleven months each calendar year. Therefore, absence from the program for vacation, illness, personal business, leave, etc., must not exceed a combined total of one (1) month per academic year.

Time away from the residency program for educational purposes, such as workshops or continuing medical education activities, are not counted in the general limitation on absences but should not exceed 5 days annually.

Continuity of Care The requirements for continuity of care and the Family Medicine Practice (FMP) site experience are defined by the ACGME in its "Program Requirements for Graduate Medical Education in Family Medicine."

A resident is expected to be assigned to one FMP site for all 3 years, but at least throughout the second and third years of training. The total patient visits in the FMP site must be met, and residents must be scheduled to see patients in the FMP site for a minimum of 40 weeks during each year of training.

Vacation, Illness, and Other Short-Term Absences Residents are expected to perform their duties as resident physicians for a minimum period of eleven months each calendar year. Therefore, absence from the program for vacation, illness, personal business, leave, etc., must not exceed a combined total of one (1) month per academic year. The ABFM defines one month as 21 working days or 30 calendar days.

Vacation periods may not accumulate from one year to another. Annual vacations must be taken in the year of the service for which the vacation is granted. No two vacation periods may be concurrent (e.g.,
last month of the G-2 year and first month of the G-3 year in sequence) and a resident does not have the option of reducing the total time required for residency (36 calendar months) by relinquishing vacation time.

The Board recognizes that vacation/leave policies vary from program to program and are the prerogative of the Program Director so long as they do not exceed the Board's time restriction.

Time away from the residency program for educational purposes, such as workshops or continuing medical education activities, are not counted in the general limitation on absences but should not exceed 5 days annually.

**Long-Term Absence**

Absence from residency education, in excess of one month within the academic year (G-1, G-2 or G-3 year) must be made up before the resident advances to the next training level, and the time must be added to the projected date of completion of the required 36 months of training. Absence from the residency, exclusive of the one month vacation/sick time, may interrupt continuity of patient care for a maximum of three (3) months in each of the G-2 and G-3 years of training. Leave time may be interspersed throughout the year or taken as a three-month block.

Following a leave of absence of less than three months the resident is expected to return to the program and maintain care of his or her panel of patients for a minimum of two months before any subsequent leave. Leave time must be made up before the resident advances to the next training level and the time must be added to the projected date of completion of the required 36 months of training. Residents will be permitted to take vacation time immediately prior to or subsequent to a leave of absence.

In cases where a resident is granted a leave of absence by the program, or must be away because of illness or injury, the Program Director is expected to inform the Board promptly by electronic mail of the date of departure and expected return date. It should be understood that the resident may not return to the program at a level beyond that which was attained at the time of departure. All time away from training in excess of the allocated time for vacation and illness, should be recorded in the Resident Training Management (RTM) system.

Leaves of absence in excess of 3 months are considered a violation of the continuity of care requirement. Programs must be aware that the Board may require the resident to complete additional continuity of care time requirements beyond what is normally required to be eligible for certification.

**Waiver of Continuity of Care Requirement for Hardship**
While reaffirming the importance of continuity of care in Family Medicine residency training, the Board recognizes that hardships occur in the personal and professional lives of residents. Accordingly, a waiver of the continuity of care requirement or an extension of the leave of absence policy may be granted when a residency training program closes or when there is evidence of the presence of a hardship involving a resident. A hardship is defined as a debilitating illness or injury of an acute but temporary nature, or the existence of a threat to the integrity of the resident's family, which impedes or prohibits the resident from making satisfactory progress toward the completion of the requirements of the residency program.

A request for a waiver of the continuity of care requirement or an extension of the leave of absence policy on the basis of hardship must demonstrate:

- That the absence from continuity of care does not exceed 12 months;
- The nature and extent of the hardship;
- That excused absence time (vacation/sick time) permissible by the ABFM and the program for the academic year has been reasonably exhausted by the resident;
- That a medical condition causing absence from training is within the Americans with Disabilities act (ADA) definition of disability.

**Vacation Policy for Department of Family Medicine**

Requests for leave are approved by the Program Director and confirmed by the Program Coordinator.

Any time taken off without prior proper notification and approval will result in time off without pay or benefits. An unexcused absence of three days during the residency program will result in immediate termination from the program.

**REFERENCES**

American Board of Family Medicine (ABFM)
Creighton University Policy
House Staff Agreement Contract

**AMENDMENTS OR TERMINATION OF THIS POLICY**

Creighton University reserves the right to modify, amend or terminate this policy at any time.

*This policy supersedes all program level policies regarding this area/topic. In the event of any discrepancies between program policies and GME policy, the GME policy shall govern.*