

## PROCEDURE GME07

**Subject:** PAID TIME OFF AND OTHER LEAVES OF ABSENCE

**Effective Date:** NOVEMBER 2004

**Applies to:**  
THE METHODIST HOSPITAL SYSTEM – GME PROGRAMS

**Date Revised:** May 2016

**Originating Area:**  
GRADUATE MEDICAL EDUCATION COMMITTEE

**Target Review Date: May 2019**

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### **I. GENERAL STATEMENT**

All Houston Methodist employees, including Residents, are eligible for Paid Time Off (PTO), Bereavement, Family Medical Leave and other Leaves of Absence. Houston Methodist Human Resources (HR) policies and procedures concerning these leaves apply to all employees. In addition, Residents must fulfil the criteria for completion of their respective residency program, as set forth by their specialty board, which include stipulations on leaves of absence. This procedure outlines the process for requesting leave and highlights the exceptions to HR policies for Residents. The definitions of the various terms include references to the appropriate HR policies and procedures. Each Resident is responsible for reading and complying with all pertinent GME and the referenced HR policies and procedures.

### **II. GENERAL REQUIREMENTS**

- A. Paid Time Off. PTO is deposited into each Resident’s account annually. Saturdays and Sundays do not count against Paid Time Off, but Residents must ensure that the Absence Request Form includes permission for weekend days for purposes of coverage.
1. PGY1 Residents are granted sixteen (16) Working Days (128 hours) of PTO per year. PGY2 Residents and above are granted 21 Working Days (168 hours) of PTO. Five (5) Working Days of Educational Leave are granted per year for PGY2 Residents and above.
  2. Residents may use PTO for medical or personal reasons including, but not limited to, vacation, holidays, personal reasons, severe weather emergencies, or family or personal short-term illness.
  3. Unused PTO will automatically carry over to subsequent training years. Upon termination, Residents who have worked for Houston Methodist Hospital System for at least one year from their most recent hire date, will be compensated for their unused PTO (less applicable taxes), not to exceed the amount of PTO that was awarded for the current academic year. Example: A resident has finished the third academic year at Methodist and has 208 hours remaining in the Bank PTO balance. Once the employment terminates, 168 PTO hours will be paid out with 40 hours being forfeited. Residents are not eligible to participate in the PTO sell program that is available to other Methodist employees.

4. Residents who are ill or for whom a family illness prevents them from working should notify their Program Coordinator and the service on which they are scheduled as soon as possible. A completed GME Absence Request Form for Paid Time Off must be submitted within fourteen (14) calendar) days after the occurrence.
- B. Residents and Fellows are expected to work on holidays based on the needs of the Program/department. Schedules are worked out within the Program and based in part on staffing needs during any "holiday" period. Patient care is every Program's first priority; leave for religious observances cannot be guaranteed. When requested leave for religious observances conflicts with scheduled clinical duty, it is the responsibility of the Resident to make appropriate arrangements with the Program Director in advance to ensure adequate patient care coverage. It is the Resident's responsibility to ensure that his or her assigned rotation duty is covered. Appropriate substitute coverage must be approved in writing in advance by the Program Director. Residents who work on holiday should ensure that their Residency Coordinator has entered the appropriate notation into API Laborworkx.
- C. Bereavement Leave: HR47 applies to Residents without exception (see <http://www.tmh.tmc.edu/reference/mhcsproc/hr/hr47.htm>). Residents may be granted up to three (3) days absence per occurrence when a death occurs in the immediate family. Immediate family is defined as the Resident's husband/wife, father, step-father, mother, step-mother, mother-in-law, father-in-law, grandmother, grandfather, son, step-son, daughter, step-daughter, brother, step-brother, sister, step-sister, grandson, granddaughter, brother-in-law, or sister-in-law. The Resident should notify the Program Coordinator and the Supervising Faculty of the service on which they are scheduled as soon as possible of the death in the immediate family and the Resident's expected date to return to work. A completed GME Absence Request Form must be submitted to the GME Coordinator upon returning to duty.
- D. Educational Leave: Requests to attend educational conferences or professional meetings must be appropriately documented on the Absence Request Form. Residents may not use Educational Leave to present the same paper or poster more than once. Examples of Educational Leave include:
1. Presenting papers at professional conferences/meetings
  2. Presenting poster exhibits at professional conferences/meetings
  3. Time off to take a licensure or board certification examination
  4. Attendance at meetings of professional organizations in which residents occupy official positions as officers or representatives
- Educational Leave is not intended to be used for job interviews. Residents seeking time off for job interviews should use PTO.
- E. Family and Medical Leave: In accordance with the Family and Medical Leave Act of 1993 (<http://www.dol.gov/dol/topic/benefits-leave/fmla.htm>), Residents who have been employed by Methodist for at least 12 months preceding the effective leave of absence date are entitled to 12 weeks of leave per year for qualified medical leave including:
1. Birth of a child and to care for that child

2. Placement of a child for adoption or foster care and to care for the newly placed child
3. Care for a spouse, child or parent with a serious health condition
4. Serious health condition of the Resident
5. If the Resident is the immediate family member (spouse, son, daughter or parent) of military personnel or reservists who have "any qualifying exigency" arising out of the service member's active duty, or if the service member has been notified of an impending call or order to active duty in the Armed Services in support of a contingency operation.
6. If the Resident is the spouse, son, daughter, parent, or next of kin who is caring for a covered service member who is injured in the line of duty. Covered employers are required to provide up to a combined total of 26 work weeks of unpaid leave during a 12 month period for eligible employees who meet the criteria.

The Resident must notify the GME Coordinator in writing 30 days in advance for foreseeable leave and as soon as practical for unforeseeable leave. The written notice must include a completed Absence Request Form and the Methodist FMLA Certification Form ([http://www.houstonmethodist.org/workfiles/services/tmh/hr/benefits/fml\\_ee\\_packet.pdf](http://www.houstonmethodist.org/workfiles/services/tmh/hr/benefits/fml_ee_packet.pdf)). Extended leave may result in extension of a Resident's training time beyond the projected completion date of training.

- F. Military leave: Absences for participation in the National Guard or military reserve activities must be coordinated with and approved by the Resident's Program Director. Absences may be charged to leave without pay or to PTO, if desired. An Absence Request Form with signatures from the Program Director and the Supervising Faculty on the service affected by the Resident's absence must be submitted in advance of the leave.
- G. Unpaid Leave of absence. A Resident must use all available Sick and Vacation leave before being placed on unpaid leave status, except for Military Leave. Health insurance and other benefits remain in effect only if the Resident pays for them during any unpaid leave of absence.
- H. Effect of Leave on Training: Some Residency Review Committees and specialty boards (of the American Board of Medical Specialties) have established lengths of training for each year of residency. Leaves of absence, regardless of the type, in excess of these requirements may result in extension of training beyond the projected completion date. These issues must be discussed with the individual Program Director. When additional time is needed by a Resident to fulfill Board or RRC requirements, a new Agreement of Appointment must be issued with the new dates that reflect the amount of additional training required by the Resident.

Program Directors must report to the Texas Medical Board (TMB) any Resident who holds a Physician-In-Training Permit and has been or will be absent from the Program for more than 21 consecutive days (excluding vacation, military or family leave not related to the Resident's medical condition) and the reasons why. If the absence will result in an extension of training, the Program Director may need to request a temporary complement increase from the Residency Review Committee.

- I. Program Policy on Leaves of absence: Each Program must have a written policy on leaves of absence that details the process for taking leave and any restrictions. The policy must be posted on New Innovations and be distributed to Residents and Faculty and must be consistent with HR and GME procedures and policies. A program may limit the number of Residents who may take Educational, Military, and Paid Time Off (other than for personal or family illness) at the same time and may limit the months in which Educational, Military, and Paid Time Off (other than for personal or family illness) may be taken.

### **III. COMMITTEE REVIEWING/APPROVING PROCEDURE**

1. Graduate Medical Education Committee [11 November 2004] revised [14 July 2005] [10 June 2010] [12 May 2011] [May 12, 2016]

#### AUTHORITATIVE REFERENCES

Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education, Institutional Requirements, IV.G.