

GME: Paid Time Off and Leave Policy

Scope

Applies to all St. Clair Health Graduate Medical Education (SCHGME) sponsored residency and fellowship programs.

Purpose

To provide guidance to training programs for the purposes of vacation, illness, interviews and conference attendance, and other leave.

Policy

A. Paid Time Off/Vacation

- a. At the outset of each year's training contract, all residents are provided a minimum of 4 weeks paid time off per contracted year. SCHGME provides residents with paid time off (PTO) for vacation, sickness, and personal time as well as to attend conferences or interviews for career progression with the approval of the program director and the Office of GME.
- b. To ensure the delivery of quality patient care, SCHGME requires advance scheduling of PTO whenever possible. SCHGME will encourage programs to accommodate residents' requests for PTO, but such requests cannot be guaranteed.
- c. PTO shall be available uniformly across all residents in their respective program.
- d. Unused PTO days will not be paid at the end of any academic year or at completion of training.
- e. PTO may be used for unscheduled time off for personal emergencies that are not pre-scheduled. Unscheduled PTO is to be reported by the resident according to established program procedures and standards. Individual program standards may vary. Any unauthorized absence may result in an unpaid absence and/or result in corrective action. In those instances where additional absences would result in a critical staffing shortage, unscheduled PTO may be denied. Proof of emergency situation may be required.
- f. Residents submit their request for PTO through the Resident Management System to be reviewed by the Office of GME for approval.

B. Paid or Unpaid Leave

- a. Residents receive six weeks of paid approved parental, medical, and caregiver leave(s) of absence for qualifying reasons that are consistent with applicable laws once and at any time during a graduate medical education program, starting the day the resident is required to report (first day of program appointment).
- b. A leave of absence for exceptional personal circumstances may be granted by the program director only with approval of the DIO and is not to exceed 12 months. All PTO will be paid before leave without pay begins.
- c. Generally, at least 30 days' advance notice is required where possible and, when not possible, notice is to be given within one business day of the resident learning of the need for leave.

- d. Leave requests must be submitted directly through the Resident Management System to facilitate program-specific approval processes.
 - e. Use of FMLA is independent of whether or how one is paid. FMLA itself is unpaid.
 - f. Residents on FMLA are allowed to receive other types of pay for which they are concurrently eligible:
 - i. Residents on FMLA may be concurrently eligible for paid time such as short-term disability (STD), Workers' Compensation or PTO;
 - ii. STD is provided at no cost by St. Clair Health and supplemental STD is also available at additional cost; eligibility requirements apply.
 - iii. Use of paid and unpaid time will be counted towards the maximum entitlement of 12 weeks of FMLA.
- C. Leave- Emergency/Bereavement
- a. SCHGME programs may grant short periods of paid absence (3 days) due to serious illness or death in the resident's immediate family.
 - b. A bereavement absence may be taken immediately after receiving notification of a death and/or later (within 6 months) to attend a service for the deceased family member.
 - i. Time away for bereavement is generally taken in consecutive calendar days.
 - ii. Bereavement absence days may be taken in separate blocks of time to allow for both immediate time away upon notice of death and time away at a later date to attend a service.
 - c. Requests for leave of absence greater than seven days must be approved by the Office of GME and recorded in the resident's training history in Resident Management System.
 - d. During absences due to serious illness or death of a family member, the resident's stipend and benefits continue.
 - e. Time off with pay (3 days maximum) is available for immediate family members. Members of the immediate family include:
 - i. Mother, father, sister, brother, husband, wife, daughter, son, grandparent, parent-in-law, son-in-law, daughter-in-law, grandparent-in-law, grandchild, great-grandparent, and great grandchildren as well as all legally recognized step relatives
 - 1. Legally recognized step relatives are defined as:
 - a. step-mother, step-father, step-sister, step-brother, step-daughter, step-son, step-grandparent, step-grandchild, step-great grandparent and step-great grandchildren.
 - f. Any circumstance which arises and does not fall within the scope of the above will be reviewed by the Office of GME in conjunction with the Human Resources Department.
 - g. Circumstances requiring a longer absence must be reviewed in advance by the program and the Office of GME to determine how the time will be recorded (i.e., paid leave, unpaid leave or vacation).
- D. Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA) Eligibility
- a. An eligible resident is allowed up to 12 weeks of FMLA during a 12-month period, for one or more of the following reasons:
 - i. For the birth of a son or daughter, and to care for the newborn son or daughter, or for the placement of a son or daughter with the resident for adoption or foster care;
 - ii. To care for the resident's spouse, son, daughter (including adult son or daughter "incapable of self-care because of a mental or physical disability"), or parent (does not include in-laws) with a serious health condition;

- iii. Because of a serious health condition that makes the resident unable to perform any of the essential functions of the resident's job; and,
 - iv. Because of any qualifying exigency arising out of the fact that the resident's spouse, son, daughter, or parent is a military member on covered active duty or called to order to cover active duty status.
 - b. Residents will submit FMLA requests through the Office of GME, in partnership with the Human Resources Department.
 - i. The Office of GME will receive notification of approval or denial for FMLA benefits by the Human Resources Department.
 - c. Resident and dependent coverage for medical, dental/vision, life, and accidental death and dismemberment insurance benefits will continue in the same manner and at the same levels as provided when the leave began, subject to any changes that took place while the resident was on FMLA leave.
 - d. Short-Term Disability (STD) and Long-Term Disability (LTD) may apply during the course of an FMLA Leave.
- E. Military FMLA
 - a. An eligible resident is allowed up to 26 weeks of unpaid leave, including incremental leave, in a 12-month period for a covered service member with a serious injury or illness, when the resident is the spouse, son, daughter, parent, or next of kin of the current service member. The single 12-month period for military caregiver leave begins on the first day the resident takes leave for this reason and ends 12 months later, regardless of the 12-month period established by the employer for other FMLA leave reasons.
 - i. The resident is not required to be the only individual available to care for a qualified family member or covered service member.
 - b. A rolling 12-month period is measured backward from the date a resident uses FMLA leave, except for Military Caregiver leave.
 - c. The 12-month leave period for Military Caregiver leave is measured forward from the date of the resident's first FMLA leave to care for the covered service member.
- F. Certification of Resident or Family Member's Serious Health Condition
 - a. SCHGME reserves the right to:
 - i. Require medical certification from a health care provider in support of a resident's request for leave due to the resident's own serious health condition or a covered family member's serious health condition;
 - 1. Request for leave related to either Military Caregiver or Qualifying Exigency leave will be accompanied by a Certification for Serious Injury or Illness of a Veteran for Military Caregiver leave or a Certification of Qualifying Exigency for Military leave.
 - 2. A certification from the health care provider must be required for intermittent and reduced schedule medical leaves.
 - ii. Periodic recertification of a serious health condition, as permitted under FMLA regulation; and
 - iii. Require second or third medical opinions at St. Clair Health's expense.
- G. Leave - Specialty Certification, Specialty Board, or Licensure Examinations Policy
 - a. SCHGME will provide paid time away for required certification exams, specialty board, or licensure examinations as outlined below in addition to resident's vacation time.
 - b. Resident's benefit coverage continues during approved paid time away for taking required certification exams, specialty boards, or licensure examination.

- c. Medical Licensure Examinations
 - i. Paid time away to fulfill SCHGME medical licensure requirements is provided for USMLE (United States Medical Licensing Examination), COMLEX (Comprehensive Osteopathic Medical Licensing Examination), or MCCQE (Medical Council of Canada Qualifying Examination), previously known as LMCC (Licentiate of the Medical Council of Canada) examinations for state medical licensure.
 - d. Specialty Board Examinations
 - i. Paid time away for up to a total of five days throughout training, subject to program director approval, is provided for specialty board (e.g., American Specialty Board or Canadian Fellowship) examinations and travel time in the U.S. or Canada.
 - ii. This paid time away does not include study and preparatory time.
 - iii. Residents must request approval of time away for this purpose through the Resident Management System to facilitate program-specific approval processes.
 - iv. Board review courses can be taken as:
 - 1. The one attendance trip during the residency or fellowship program,
 - 2. Vacation time, or
 - 3. An unpaid personal leave
 - a. If using vacation or unpaid personal leave, SCHGME does not assume financial responsibility for the cost of a board review course.
 - v. Time away for out-of-state licensure examinations must be taken as an unpaid personal leave or vacation and submitted through the Resident Management System for approval.
 - e. Certification Exams
 - i. Paid time away to fulfill certification required prior to graduation to meet eligibility requirements is provided for certifications.
 - 1. Residents will be reimbursed for first time exam fees and transportation to a regional testing site.
 - 2. Residents will be responsible for exam fees and transportation and must use vacation or unpaid personal leave for retakes.
 - 3. SCHGME will not reimburse additional conference registration fees where these certification exams may be offered. Residents may complete certification exams in conjunction with a presentation or attendance trip.
- H. Parental, Medical and Caregiver Leave
- a. Leave policies begin on commencement date.
 - b. Residents receive six weeks of paid approved parental, medical, and caregiver leave(s) of absence for qualifying reasons that are consistent with applicable laws at any time during a graduate medical education program, starting the day the resident is required to report (first day of program appointment).
 - i. Residents must inform the program director of the request.
 - ii. Formal requests must be submitted through the Resident Management System.
 - c. SCHGME:
 - i. Provides residents with at least the equivalent of 100 percent of their salary for the first six weeks of the first approved parental, medical, or caregiver leave(s) of absence taken.

- ii. Provides residents with a minimum of one week of paid time off reserved for use outside of the first six weeks of the first approved parental, medical, or caregiver leave(s) of absence taken.
 - 1. The week is to be available within the appointment year(s) in which the leave is taken.
 - iii. Ensures the continuation of health and disability insurance benefits for residents and their eligible dependents during any approved parental, medical, or caregiver leave(s) of absence.
 - iv. Ensures that each of its programs provides its residents with accurate information regarding the impact of an extended leave of absence upon the criteria for satisfactory completion of the program and upon a resident's eligibility to participate in examinations by the relevant certifying board(s).
 - d. Birth Parent Leave
 - i. Birth parent is provided up to 12 weeks of leave.
 - 1. Residents have the option to receive a six-week, paid, parental leave once per training program, provided the resident has not previously received a six-week paid parental, medical or caregiver leave in the program.
 - 2. If the leave exceeds six weeks, residents may also utilize PTO and/or STD and/or FMLA benefits, if eligible and available.
 - ii. Once approved by the program, residents must also submit a "Birth or Placement of Child" form to the Human Resources Department.
 - e. Non-Birth Parent Leave
 - i. May be used for birth, adoption, or fostering of a child during training by a non-birth parent.
 - ii. Residents have the option to receive a six-week, paid, non-birth parent leave once per training program, provided the resident has not previously received a six-week paid parental, medical or caregiver leave in the program.
 - iii. Once approved by the program, residents must also submit a "Birth or Placement of Child" form to the Human Resources Department.
 - f. Medical Leave
 - i. Residents have the option to receive a six week, paid, medical leave once per training program, provided the resident has not previously received a six-week paid parental, medical or caregiver leave in the program.
 - ii. Should residents require more than one medical leave during their training period, applicable SCH leave processes are followed.
 - iii. Applicable FMLA/STD benefits may apply.
 - g. Caregiver Leave
 - i. Under the Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA), American Board of Medical Specialties (ABMS), and SCHGME policy, caregiver leave is granted:
 - 1. To a resident to care for resident's immediate family member (child, spouse, or parent) with a serious health condition.
 - ii. For spouse and parent:
 - 1. Six-week caregiver leave is allowed once per training program provided resident has not previously received a six-week paid parental, medical or caregiver leave in the program.
 - iii. Federal FMLA applies to caregiver leave.
- I. Jury Duty

- a. If jury duty will seriously disrupt training, a resident may ask the court to reschedule or to be excused from serving. The request must be signed by the program director and the DIO.
 - b. If a Resident serves on a jury, each day must be entered in the Resident Management System to facilitate the program specific approval process.
 - i. The program may require that the resident provide documentation of the summons or subpoena within one week of receipt or at the time of receipt as part of the approval process.
 - c. Resident stipend continues during leave for jury duty.
 - d. If the resident cannot serve on the jury as scheduled but would be able to at a later date, the resident must provide the jury manager an alternative two-week time period and ask for the jury assignment to be rescheduled.
 - e. If there is not a future date that coordinates with the resident's schedule, residents must ask their program director to contact the Office of GME who will advise and coordinate requests for residents to be excused from jury duty, as appropriate.
- J. Court Appearances
- a. Residents asked to become involved with or testify in any legal action involving SCH, an external facility, or a physician must notify their program.
 - b. The program, in coordination with the Office of GME, will contact the Chief Legal Officer to review conflict of interest or liability.

Policy Notes

Impact of leaves on board eligibility and program completion must be documented by programs and distributed to all residents. Absences in excess of specialty/board or program requirements may result in extension of the resident's training program. Individual ABMS specialty board leave requirements may be more limiting than applicable SCHGME leave policies. The impact of leave must be made clear to the resident at the time of leave approval.