

VCU Health System

Graduate Medical Education Policy

DISASTER RESPONSE

PURPOSE

To establish a policy that addresses administrative support for Graduate Medical Education programs and residents in the event of a disaster or interruption in patient care. The intent of this policy is to minimize the impact of such a situation on the educational experience of the residents, protect the well being and safety of the residents, and make provisions for continuation of the educational experience and resident assignment.

POLICY

In the event of a disaster (as determined by Federal, State and/or local governments) that disrupts the training of residents for a significant period (as defined by the various Residency Review Committees of the Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education), the Graduate Medical Education Committee (GMEC), working with the Designated Institutional Official (DIO) and other sponsoring institution leadership at Virginia Commonwealth University Health System (VCUHS), will strive to restructure or reconstitute the educational experience as quickly as reasonably possible. The DIO will be the primary institutional contact and maintain communication among house staff, program directors, hospital administration, the Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education (ACGME) and Centers for Medicare/Medicaid Services (CMS).

In order to maximize the likelihood that residents will be able to complete the program requirements within the standard time required for certification in that specialty, the GMEC and DIO will determine if transfer to another program is necessary on either a temporary or permanent basis. These decisions will be consistent with ACGME policies and procedures and CMS rulings relevant to the relocation and funding of residents affected by the disaster.

Once the GMEC and DIO determine that the sponsoring institution can no longer provide an adequate educational experience for its residents, VCUHS will attempt to arrange for the temporary transfer of residents to programs at other sponsoring institutions until such time as VCUHS is able to resume the training experience. Residents who transfer to other programs as a result of a disaster will be provided by the DIO with the estimated time that relocation to another program will be necessary. Should that initial time estimate need to be extended, the resident will be notified by the DIO using written or electronic means identifying the estimated time of the extension.

If the disaster prevents the sponsoring institution from re-establishing an adequate educational experience within a reasonable amount of time following the disaster, then permanent transfers will be arranged to the extent reasonably possible.

VCUHS GRADUATE MEDICAL EDUCATION OFFICE DISASTER RECOVERY PLAN

A disaster is defined as a natural or man made event that significantly disrupts the environment in which the VCUHS provides care (for example, damage to the hospital's building(s) and grounds due to severe winds, storms, or earthquakes; loss of utilities such as power, water, or telephones; civil disturbances, accidents, or emergencies within the hospital or in its community); or that results in sudden, significantly changed, or increased demands for the hospital's services (for example, bioterrorist attack, building collapse, plane crash in the hospital's community).

Disaster recovery planning is part of the larger process of business continuity planning which seeks to fully maintain the process of graduate medical education (GME) throughout the VCU Health System.

In the event that a disaster interrupts any part of GME, VCUHS is committed to recovery as it might involve maintenance or improvement in operations or restructuring the educational experience for residents as soon as possible.

Any disaster may also create safety issues and impact the health and well-being of residents, and these issues will need to be assessed and considered in recovery planning.

The Designated Institutional Official (DIO) is responsible for maintaining communication among Program Directors (PD) and the School of Medicine to assess the impact of a disaster on any and all areas of GME and maintaining business and educational continuity. The Dean of the School of Medicine will appoint an interim Senior Associate Dean for Medical Education and an interim DIO if both parties are unavailable or incapacitated.

The DIO will make every attempt to prevent data loss by developing offsite back-ups using remote facilities, if necessary, for microfilm or similar storage techniques. The DIO will also work with IT to complete transition to electronic data capture and storage in a timely fashion. The current residency management software system, New Innovations, is deployed with complete hardware system redundancies limiting downtime due to hardware failure. Data is backed up continuously and is stored off-site daily.

Communication between the DIO, GME Office, the PDs, and the residents is critical in the event of a disaster to assess the impact of that disaster on education and the health and well-being of the residents.

The PDs will immediately assess the impact of a disaster on their own programs, assess the programs' function, and if necessary, develop a recovery strategy and timetable and a written plan to address response, recovery, and resumption of education and services. The PD should also assess the health and well-being of the residents within that program. This will be done by the following:

- Contacting residents in the program to gather information
- Referring affected residents to available resources for care
- Assessing the functionality of the facilities and operations in the institution that supports that particular educational program

In the event of a disaster, the DIO will be in contact with all PDs to assist in assessing the impact on the educational experience for that program. The DIO assessment will include the following:

- Immediate contact and discussion with PDs to determine the availability of residents
- The feasibility of continuing on-site training within VCU.

The GME Office expects all residents, program coordinators and PDs to be familiar with the Medical Center Policy on Disaster Plans.

ACGME NOTIFICATION

The DIO will notify the ACGME Executive Director of the disaster and, if appropriate, request a declaration of disaster. The ACGME will post a notice on its website, www.acgme.org.

As soon as feasible and to the extent that it is possible, the DIO, the GME Office, and the PDs will determine whether the disruption of each program's ability to maintain the educational experience is temporary or permanent.

In the event that the DIO, in conjunction with the PDs, determines that a program can no longer provide an educational experience for the residents, the PDs and the DIO will do the following:

- Arrange for temporary transfers to available programs to complete the educational experience on an interim basis, or
- Assist the residents to achieve permanent transfers to other programs or institutions, if necessary.

The DIO will, within 10 days after the declaration of the disaster, contact the ACGME to discuss the timeframe and dates pertinent to maintaining the education of the residents within affected programs, including

- Submission of program reconfigurations within VCUHS to the ACGME, and
- Informing residents of any transfer decisions

This will be accomplished no later than 30 days after the disaster unless other dates are approved by the ACGME.

The ACGME will assist with communications during any declared disaster. The ACGME will maintain phone numbers and email addresses for emergency communications with disaster-affected institutions.

- The DIO will call or email the RRC Executive Director with information or requests for information
- The PDs will call or email the appropriate RRC Executive Director with information and requests for information
- Residents will call or email the appropriate RRC Executive Director with information and requests for information

The ACGME will provide instructions on its website so that a resident can change his/her information on the Web Accreditation Data System. In the event of a disaster, VCU and the GME Office will communicate directly with PDs and residents via all available communication techniques to provide guidance for the affected residents. These communications will include the VCUHS GME website and the ACGME website.

The ACGME will establish a fast-track process for reviewing and approving or not approving submissions by programs related to program changes to address the effects of a disaster including

- Addition or deletion of participating institutions
- Change in format of the educational program
- Change in the approved resident complement

If a resident is **temporarily** transferred, he or she will be informed of the minimum duration and the estimated actual duration of the temporary transfer. In the event that the transfer will continue, the program must inform the resident who has transferred.

The condition of an affected program may determine that a site visit is required by the ACGME. Prior to this visit, the DIO and PD will receive notification of the information that will be required. This information may be used for accreditation purposes. Site visits that were scheduled prior to a disaster may be postponed.

Approved, Graduate Medical Education Committee, December 13, 2011