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Policy Area Rehabilitation  
Therapies  
Applicability UNC Medical  
Center

## Leave Policy for Rehabilitation Therapies Residents and Fellows

### I. Description

Describes the policy and procedures for all duly appointed residents and fellows (referred to as “trainees” in this policy) within a University of North Carolina (UNC) Hospitals' Rehabilitation Therapies Residency/Fellowship program regarding unpaid and paid time off (PTO) through various leave procedures (Vacation, Sick, Parental, Family and Medical (FML), Serious Medical Illness & Parental Leave (SMIPL), Military).

A leave will be granted when operating conditions permit or when necessary to comply with federal guidelines (FML / Military). PTO will be prorated for all trainees based upon their clinical work hours as well as those who are appointed for only partial terms, or whose appointments are extended for less than a one-year period of time.

### II. Rationale

Trainees within training programs at UNC are classified as temporary employees and do not qualify for the UNC Medical Center's Paid Time Off (PTO) Leave policy, UNC Health's [Leaves of Absence - System Policy](#), and UNC Health's [Paid Parental Leave- System Policy](#). As such, these trainees require unique policies that provide similar, but not equivalent, leave periods.

Each trainee must meet certain education requirements, as defined by the training program and may be required to make up time away due to a leave prior to completion of the training program. Association standards (APTA, AOTA, ASHA etc.) vary in their requirements regarding board eligibility and certification.

Trainees with an appointment other than UNCMC GME, shall defer to their appointed work site for

PTO and leave policies.

## III. Policy

### A. Paid Time Off

Paid time off may be granted for personal illness or approved vacation.

### B. Leave of Absence

A leave of absence (paid or unpaid) may be granted for the following reasons:

- Family Medical Leave (FML), including Service Member Family Leave - follows federal/state guidelines
- Military Leave - follows federal guidelines
- Bereavement Leave- Bereavement Leave is incorporated into PTO. For the death of an Immediate Family Member (spouse, child, step-child, parent, step-parent, brother, sister, step-brother/sister, grandparent, grandchild, step-grandchild, foster child, mother/father-in-law, brother/sister-in-law, daughter/son-in-law, aunt, uncle), a trainee may take up to three days of PTO or up to five days if travel outside the state of North Carolina is required. Additional usage of PTO may be approved at the discretion of the Work Supervisor after consultation with the Program Director/Coordinator. If a trainee does not have PTO available at the time of the death of an Immediate Family Member, then the trainee may take an equivalent amount of unpaid Bereavement Leave.

Processes related to obtaining a leave of absence should be reviewed with the Program Director/Coordinator and Work Supervisor at the time of new hire onboarding.

Family Medical Leave, Service Member Family Leave and Personal Leaves are based on a rolling calendar year.

Trainees ineligible for FML during their first year of employment may be eligible for Serious Medical Illness and Parental Leave.

Leave provided will be prorated for all trainees who are appointed for only partial terms, or whose appointments are extended for less than a one-year period of time.

It is the responsibility of the Work Supervisor – not of the trainee taking a leave - to make arrangements for coverage of the trainee's clinical responsibilities in the case of sick, family, medical or bereavement leave.

### C. Types of Leave

1. Twenty (20) days are granted for vacation, holidays, sick leave, bereavement, wellness and education.  
Sick Leave can be used to attend medical or dental appointments, illness significant enough to interfere with the performance of duty inclusive of time needed for mental health, or when advised by Occupational Health directives (e.g. related to a

communicable disease) or care for an immediate family member.

Leave must be taken in half or full day increments.

- a. Unused PTO is not eligible to be paid out upon separation.
  - b. When a trainee has given their resignation they are not eligible to request PTO. Prior approved PTO will be granted.
  - c. If a Program Director/Coordinator and Work Supervisor requests verification of the need for time off for absences greater than 3 consecutive days, the trainee shall coordinate this with their health care provider.
2. Serious Medical Illness and Parental Leave (SMIPL) -See [UNC Medical Center Graduate Medical Education Resident and Subspecialty Resident Serious Medical Illness](#) and [Parental Leave Policy](#) for qualifying reasons related to serious medical illness and parental leave.
  3. Personal Leave- trainees are eligible for a job-protected Personal Leave of Absence. In addition, the trainee must not have received a written warning or higher corrective action.
    - A trainee must apply in writing for a Personal Leave of Absence, setting forth the reason for the leave, the date on which the trainee wishes the leave to begin, and the date on which the trainee anticipates returning to active employment. In the event the need for Personal Leave is unforeseeable, the trainee must submit a written request for Personal Leave within 7 days of the beginning of the leave. Trainees who fail to submit the written request within the 7-day time frame risk disciplinary action up to and including termination of employment.

## D. Eligibility for Personal Leave

Trainees are eligible for a job-protected Personal Leave of Absence upon approval of Program Director/Coordinator and Work Supervisor. In addition, the trainee must not have received a written warning or higher corrective action. Trainees who need a Personal Leave of Absence based on exigent circumstances and who have not received counseling sessions or Program Director/Coordinator/Work Supervisor feedback regarding other issues, such as tardiness problems for example, may be considered for a Personal Leave of Absence, at the discretion of the trainee's Program Director/Coordinator and Work Supervisor and after consultation with Human Resources.

Following these guidelines, a trainee may request and may be granted Personal Leave of absence for the following reasons:

- The trainee's serious health condition, which renders the trainee unable to perform the essential functions of the job, as documented by a physician (or other licensed health care provider working within the scope of her or his license).
- For birth of a son or daughter, and to care for the newborn child.
- For placement with the trainee of a son or daughter through adoption or foster care.
- To care for the trainee's spouse, son, daughter, legal ward or parent, in-laws, or sibling with a serious health condition, as documented by a physician (or other licensed health care provider working within the scope of her or his license).

- A family crisis, which may include, but is not limited to, house fire; death of a spouse, child or parent; ill or injured parent; or family member who lives out of the local area and the trainee is needed to help care for him/her.

A trainee can be granted a maximum of 4 weeks for an unpaid Personal Leave of absence and must use all available Paid Time Off prior to taking unpaid Personal Leave. Trainees requesting Personal Leave in connection with the birth of a child may be granted a maximum of 6 weeks of Personal Leave, but must use all available Paid Time Off prior to taking unpaid Personal Leave. The trainee is required to return from the Personal Leave on the originally scheduled return date. If the trainee does not return to work as scheduled, it will be considered a voluntary resignation unless other action is required by applicable federal or state law. A trainee is eligible for only one Personal Leave of Absence in a 12-month period from the date the leave starts.

## **E. Benefits During Personal Leave**

**Paid Time Off:** Trainees must use all available Paid Time Off prior to taking an unpaid Personal Leave of Absence.

**Benefits and Insurance:** Trainees on a continuous Personal Leave of Absence may continue coverage(s) by arranging through Human Resources payment of the appropriate premium(s). Discuss in detail with your local Benefits Analyst prior to going on leave.

Expenses for dependent care incurred during a period of Personal Leave greater than 2 weeks are not reimbursable under any dependent care flexible spending account benefit program.

## **F. Payroll Consideration**

Following a Personal Leave of Absence, it may be necessary for pending deductions (such as for missed benefit contributions) to be taken from the first paycheck after the trainee returns to work.

## **G. Professional Leave**

This leave is determined and granted by the individual Program Directors/Coordinators and Work Supervisors. Time spent presenting or attending program-related educational activities such as conferences, may not be counted as PTO if the activity is approved by the Program Director/Coordinator and Work Supervisor.

# **IV. Procedure**

## **A. Scheduling Leave**

Whenever the need for leave is foreseeable, the trainee will make a reasonable effort to schedule the leave so as not to unduly burden the program, and give notice no fewer than thirty (30) days before the leave is to begin. If the nature of the leave requires that the leave begin in fewer than thirty days, the trainee will give notice as soon as is practicable. A trainee should give the Program Director/Coordinator and Work Supervisor notice as far in advance as possible regarding planned parental leave or family medical leave; six months (confidential) notice is requested for

planned leave after the birth of a child, in order to facilitate appropriate scheduling.

When a trainee requests leave under FML, the trainee should also contact the [third party administrator](#).

When a trainee requests serious medical illness and parental leave, the UNC GME Serious Medical Illness/Parental Leave Request Form must be completed and signed by the trainee, Program Director/Coordinator, and the OGME designee and must include the Certification of Health Care Provider.

## B. Effects on Completion of Residency/Fellowship Program

Each program must provide its trainees with the following:

1. A written policy in compliance with its Program Requirements concerning the effect of leaves of absence, for any reason, on satisfying the criteria for completion of the residency/fellowship program.
2. Information relating to access to eligibility for certification by the relevant certifying board.
3. Upon initiation of leave, it is the responsibility of the Program Director/Coordinator to determine what specific experiences or activities that may be missed during a leave need to be made up, even if the time spent on leave does not need to be made up. A tentative plan to fulfill expected program requirements should be signed by the Program Director/Coordinator and the trainee as close to initiation of the leave period as possible. A copy of this agreement must be sent to the Office of Graduate Medical Education.

## V. Related Policies

[Leaves of Absence - System Policy](#)

[Paid Parental Leave- System Policy](#)

[Parental Leave](#)

[UNC Medical Center Graduate Medical Education Resident and Subspecialty Resident Serious Medical Illness](#)

### Approval Signatures

Step Description

Approver

Date

Policy Stat Administrator	Kimberly Novak-Jones: Nurse Educator	08/2024
	Stephen Finch: VP Operations - UNCMC	08/2024
	Mark Prochazka: Admin Dir Rehab Svcs	08/2024
PolicyStat Administrator	Kimberly Novak-Jones: Nurse Educator	08/2024
	Kristel Maes: Therapy Services Educator	08/2024

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## Applicability

UNC Medical Center

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