

## DEPARTMENT OF ANESTHESIOLOGY

VANDERBILT  UNIVERSITY  
MEDICAL CENTER

### Standard Operating Procedure Title: **POLICY ON RESIDENT DUTY HOURS**

**Policy Number: C 120**

**Date Established: 1/1/2011**

**Date Reviewed: 2/28/2013**

**Date Revised:**

#### **C 120**

The Vanderbilt GMEC is committed to compliance with the ACGME duty hour guidelines. Duty hours are defined as all clinical and academic activities related to the program; i.e., patient care (both inpatient and outpatient), administrative duties relative to patient care, the provision for transfer of patient care, time spent in-house during call activities, and scheduled activities, such as conferences. Duty hours do *not* include reading and preparation time spent away from the duty site. The following requirements apply to all residency training programs at Vanderbilt:

#### *General Guidelines*

1. House Staff are responsible for accurately reporting their duty hours, **including all time spent in Internal and External Moonlighting**, per program requirements.
2. Program Directors are responsible for monitoring and enforcing compliance with duty hour guidelines.
3. If specialty/subspecialty-specific program duty hour requirements as defined by an individual RRC for that specialty/subspecialty are more restrictive than the above requirements, then the duty hour requirements of that RRC will be included in the policy of that specialty/subspecialty program and will supersede the institutional requirements.
4. Concerns regarding duty hours may be reported to the Associate Dean for GME or through the Confidential Helpline, 615-343-0135. Concerns may be reported anonymously.

#### *Maximum Hours of Work per Week*

5. Duty hours must be limited to eighty hours, averaged over a four-week period per rotation or a four-week period within a rotation excluding vacation or approved leave. Any requests for exceptions to the maximum weekly limit on duty hours must be presented by the Program Director to the GMEC for review and approval. Any exceptions must conform to the Policy and Procedures for Resident Weekly Duty Hour Limit Exceptions.
6. Time spent in Internal and External Moonlighting (as defined in the ACGME Glossary of Terms and in the Vanderbilt University *House Staff Manual*) will be counted toward the eighty-hour maximum weekly hour limit on duty hours as outlined in #5 above.

#### *Mandatory Time Free of Duty*

7. House officers must be scheduled for a minimum of one day free of duty every week (when averaged over four weeks). "Duty" includes all clinical and academic activities related to the program as described above. At-home call cannot be assigned on these free days.

#### *Maximum Duty Period Length*

8. Duty hour periods of PGY-1 house officers must not exceed 16 hours in duration.
9. PGY-2 house officers and above may be scheduled to a maximum of 24 hours of continuous duty in the hospital. House officers may be allowed to remain on site for an additional four hours to ensure effective transitions in care; however, they may not be assigned additional clinical responsibilities after 24 hours of continuous in-house duty.

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**10.** VUMC encourages house officers to use alertness management strategies, including strategic napping, in the context of patient care responsibilities, especially after 16 hours of continuous duty and between the hours of 10pm and 8am.

**11.** In unusual circumstances and on their own initiative, PGY-2 house officers and above may remain beyond their scheduled period of duty to continue to provide care to a single patient. Under such circumstances - which only include continuity of care for a severely ill or unstable patient, a transpiring event of unusual academic importance, or humanistic attention to the needs of a patient or family – the resident must appropriately hand over the care of all other patients for their continuing care and document the reasons for remaining to care for the patient in question. Such documentation must be submitted to the Program Director in every circumstance. The Program Director is responsible for tracking both individual resident and program-wide episodes of additional duty.

### *Minimum Time Off Between Scheduled Duty Periods*

**12.** PGY-1 house officers should have 10 hours and must have 8 hours free of duty between scheduled duty periods.

**13.** Intermediate level house officers as defined by the respective Residency Review Committees should have 10 hours free of duty, must have 8 hours between scheduled duty periods, and must have at least 14 hours free of duty after 24 hours of in-house duty. Individual residency programs must construct their own duty hour policies in compliance with their individual program's requirements.

**14.** House officers in the final years of education must be prepared to enter the unsupervised practice of medicine and care for patients over irregular or extended periods. While it is desirable that house officers in their final years of education have eight hours free of duty between scheduled duty periods, there may be circumstances when these house officers must stay on duty to care for their patients or return to the hospital with fewer than eight hours free of duty. Individual programs must construct their own duty hour policies in compliance with their individual program's requirements as to the definition of "final years of education" and the circumstances where house officers may have less than 8 hours free between duty periods. In all instances, such circumstances must be monitored by the Program Director.

### *Maximum Frequency of In-House Night Float*

**15.** House officers must not be scheduled for more than six consecutive nights of night float. Individual residency programs must construct their own duty hour policies in compliance with their individual program's requirements defining maximum consecutive weeks of night float and maximum number of months of night float per year.

### *Maximum In-House On-Call Frequency*

**16.** In-house call will occur no more frequently than every third night, averaged over a four-week period.

### *At-Home Call*

**17.** At-home call, or "pager call," is defined as call taken from outside the assigned site.

**18.** When house officers are called into the hospital from home, they may care for new or established patients and the hours spent in-house, exclusive of travel time, are counted toward the eighty-hour limit. Such episodes will not initiate a new "off-duty period."

**19.** At-home call must not be so frequent or taxing as to preclude rest or reasonable personal time for each resident.

**20.** At-home call may not be scheduled on the resident's one free day per week (averaged over four weeks).

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Any concerns or questions concerning the hour guidelines must be directed to the Associate Dean or Administrative Director for GME.

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