

Policy for a Resident/Fellow Crisis or Sudden Death

Background: In the event of a resident/fellow crisis (e.g., suicide, suicide attempt, major injury or illness, victim of a crime, etc.), these guidelines will serve as a basis for communicating the crisis to appropriate constituencies, responding to the crisis, and identifying ways to prevent future crises.

GME Crisis Team and Communication

A GME Crisis Team includes the Vice Dean for Education and Academic Affairs, the Designated Institutional Official (DIO), Assistant DIO, Chief Wellness Officer, Chief Medical Officer, Program Director of resident's home program, and all members of the GME Taskforce. When notified of a resident/fellow crisis, the Vice Dean and/or DIO will schedule an emergency meeting of the GME Crisis Team. The Executive Dean, and/or DIO, or designee, will communicate the crisis to the Vice President/Executive Dean of the School of Medicine, CEO of WVU Medicine, and the Chief Medical Officer.

Program Director must notify the DIO/ADIO and Central GME of resident/fellow crisis or sudden death as soon as possible.

When appropriate, the crisis response team will notify and/or contact:

- Resident(s)/Fellow(s)
- The residency/fellowship program of interest including the chair and program director
- Family members
- General counsel for health sciences and WVU Medicine
- Risk Manager/Privacy Officer
- Director, Communications & Marketing, School of Medicine Administration
- Hospital chaplain
- WVU Police
- The home institution if the resident/fellow was a visiting resident/fellow.
- Faculty and Staff

Crisis Response: The Vice Dean and/or DIO will serve as the leader for the emergency crisis response meeting. The Vice Dean and/or DIO will designate specific tasks and duties. The immediate duties and responsibilities may include the following:

When appropriate, the GME crisis response team will reach out to the resident/fellow and/or family to:

1. Express condolences and/or offer assistance.
2. Collaborate with the Vice President of Clinical Programs at WVU Hospitals to provide referrals to counseling services available in family's locale.
3. Solicit information about funeral arrangements, family's wishes regarding privacy and confidentiality, family's wishes related to attendance by school community at funeral and any other requests from family. Assist in hotel arrangements near campus.
4. Ask for the name and phone number of an appropriate family representative for the School to maintain communication with the family.
5. Contact general counsel if a resident/fellow was a victim of a crime.

When appropriate, the GME Crisis Team will:

1. Send counseling staff immediately to location of crisis.
2. Meet immediately with any individuals identified as having a close relationship to the resident/fellow in crisis or known to be "at-risk."
3. Communicate crisis to residents/fellows, faculty, and staff and arrange times and locations for counseling sessions/crisis stations for residents/fellows, faculty, and staff.
5. Alert faculty and staff to signs and symptoms of "at-risk" individuals that should be reported to the Vice Dean and/or DIO.

When appropriate, the GME Crisis Team will collaborate with appropriate leadership and the Director, Communications & Marketing, School of Medicine Administration to:

1. Send a letter of condolence to family.
2. Disseminate information about funeral and/or memorial service to faculty, staff and residents/fellows.
3. Consider whether school memorial service, moment of silence, or other gestures are indicated.
4. Consider requests for tangible memorials, such as plaques, scholarship funds, etc.,

When appropriate, the GME Crisis Team will work with the training program to:

1. Arrange for personal items to be returned to family. Empty desk, locker and mailbox and maintain inventory of items returned to family.
2. Remove resident's/fellow's name from rosters and directories.
3. Consider providing sympathy cards at a central location for hospital community to write notes and sign.
4. Consider leaving resident's/fellow's photo in any class composite photographs.
5. Close academic record.
6. Remove from mailing and email distribution list
7. Determine if the resident/fellow has pending rotations that may require modifications.
8. Determine if the resident/fellow applied to any residency or fellowship programs and communicate accordingly.

When appropriate, the GME Crisis Team will contact Shared Services to:

1. Inactivate all addresses and e-mail lists.
2. Assist resident/fellow and family to determine coverage and potential benefits.

Approved by GME Taskforce: 4/2/26

Approved by GME: 4/10/26