

WVU Graduate Medical Education

Fitness for Duty/Physician Impairment Policy (Institutional Requirement 4.9.b.)

Purpose

WVU GME is committed to ensuring a safe learning environment and the delivery of high-quality patient care. Physician impairment—whether due to substance use, mental health conditions, physical illness, fatigue, or other causes—may compromise patient safety, professional performance, and trainee well-being.

Scope

This policy applies to all residents and fellows participating in WVU SOM GME-sponsored programs.

Policy Statement

Residents and fellows are expected to report to duty fit for clinical responsibilities. Any behavior, condition, or circumstance suggesting impairment that may affect professional performance or patient safety must be promptly addressed.

Identification and Reporting

Concerns about potential impairment may be identified through self-report, peer observation, faculty supervision, or institutional monitoring processes. Individuals are encouraged to report concerns promptly to program leadership or GME administration without fear of retaliation. Program directors, program managers, faculty, and trainees will be educated on the signs and symptoms of impairment.

Evaluation and Management

The **process for assessment, evaluation, and determination of fitness for duty** will be conducted in accordance with the **West Virginia University Hospitals Fitness for Duty Section 4.5.5 of the Credentialing Policy**. WVU GME defers to this policy for procedural steps, including referral, evaluation, recommendations, and clearance to return to duty.

Interim Actions

When necessary to protect patient safety or trainee well-being, a resident or fellow may be temporarily relieved of clinical duties pending evaluation, consistent with institutional policy.

Confidentiality and Support

All matters related to physician impairment will be handled confidentially to the extent permitted by law. WVU GME supports access to appropriate treatment, wellness resources, and reasonable accommodations when indicated.

Non-Retaliation

Good-faith reporting of concerns related to impairment will not result in retaliation.

Approved by Taskforce: 8/6/26

Approved by GMEC:8/14/26

WEST VIRGINIA UNIVERSITY HOSPITALS <i>Credentialing Policy</i>	Article IV – Questions Involving Medical Staff Members Effective: 12/05/18
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4.5.5 Fitness for Duty Evaluation

Members of the West Virginia University Hospital Medical Staff (physicians, dentists and podiatrists), West Virginia University School of Medicine residents and fellows, Advanced Practice Professionals (APRN and PA) as well as all other persons granted clinical privileges at West Virginia University Hospitals, Inc. are expected to report to work in a mental, emotional, and physical condition (including free of the effects of drugs and alcohol) necessary to perform his/her job in a safe and effective manner.

Any provider exhibiting behaviors which suggest he/she may not be fit for duty will be immediately removed from the patient care environment and escorted to Employee Health for a fitness for duty evaluation. Fitness for duty evaluations are performed by or at the direction of Employee Health, and may include, without limitation, a health history, physical and/or psychological examination, alcohol and drug testing and any medically indicated diagnostic studies. As circumstances warrant, Employee Health may arrange for an evaluation by a licensed clinician to determine whether or not there is a psychological impairment. Based on the results of the fitness for duty evaluation and at the discretion of the Clinical Department or Medical Staff Affairs, the provider may be required to complete additional evaluations.

Concerns arising outside of Employee Health's normal business hours will require the House Supervisor to be contacted and the provider to be escorted to the Emergency Department for the fitness for duty evaluation.

Medical Staff Affairs or the Administrator On-Call must be notified immediately of any circumstances which prompts a fitness for duty evaluation.

Non-compliance with a request for a fitness for duty evaluation shall be cause for summary suspension of the provider's clinical privileges or the residency/fellowship agreement pending further investigation.

All providers determined to be not fit for duty will be provided a safe escort and/or transportation to his or her home or other safe location.

All providers determined to be not fit for duty will be referred to the Practitioner Health Committee for further review and recommendations. Referrals to the Faculty and Staff Assistance Program, Employee Assistance Program, West Virginia Medical Professionals Health Program, West Virginia Restore Program, Dental Recovery Network or others will be determined on an individual basis.

Regardless of the outcome of the fitness for duty evaluation, the provider may not return to patient care activities until cleared by Medical Staff Affairs or the Administrator On-Call.

