GRADUATE MEDICAL EDUCATION

TRAINEE POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

POLICY: Disaster Planning
Policy Number: 14.5
Chapter: Graduate Medical Education Committee

Purpose:

This Disaster Planning Policy is intended to augment existing institutional plans as well as serve as guidance for coordinating with affiliated institutions.

It is intended to protect the well being, safety and educational experiences of the residents/fellows, hereby referred to as trainees, enrolled in University of Utah GME training programs.

It provides guidelines for communication with trainees and program leadership to assist in reconstituting or restructuring the trainee’s educational experiences as quickly as possible after or during the disaster, or determining need for transfer or closure in the event of being unable to reconstitute normal program activity.

It provides general information and procedures to support University of Utah Health (UUH) GME training programs and trainees in the event of a disaster or interruption in their educational experience.

Definitions:

A disaster is defined herein as an event or set of events causing significant alteration to the trainees’ experience of a UUH GME training program.

This policy and procedure document acknowledges that there are multiple types of disaster including but not limited to acute disaster with little or no warning (e.g. tornado, bombing), and the insidious disruption or disaster (e.g. pandemic event). This policy
and procedure will address disaster and disruption in the broadest terms.

Scope:

This policy applies to all GME training programs sponsored by UUH.

Policy:

Following declaration of a disaster, the Designated Institution Official (DIO), Graduate Medical Education Committee (GMEC) and other sponsoring institution leadership will strive to restructure or reconstitute the educational experience as quickly as possible following the disaster. These efforts will be done in consultation with UUH, program and trainee leadership and in accordance with Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education (ACGME) guidance.

In the event of a disaster, modifications will be made in rotations and/or sites to ensure continued safe and appropriate educational and clinical experiences in order to maximize the likelihood that trainees will be able to complete program requirements within the standard time required for certification in that specialty.

If leadership determines that the sponsoring institution can no longer provide an adequate educational experience for its trainees, the sponsoring institution will, to the best of their ability, arrange for temporary transfer of trainees to programs at other sponsoring institutions until such time as the sponsoring institution is able to resume providing the educational experience.

Program Directors will give the trainees who temporarily transfer to other programs as a result of a disaster an estimated time that relocation to another program will be necessary. Should that initial time need to be extended, the trainees will be notified by their Program Director 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, permanent transfers will be arranged.
The UUH Designated Institutional Official (DIO) will be the primary institutional contact with the ACGME regarding disaster plan implementation and needs within the sponsoring institution.

Procedure:

1. **Upon the occurrence of a disaster and immediately following:**

   **DIO/GME Administration**
   The DIO will consult with the Office of the General Counsel (OGC), UUH leadership, and GME Office leadership to work through important details in managing the situation.

   Immediate communication summarizing the situation and plan will go out through the Office of Graduate Medical Education to program leadership, Vice Chairs of Education, GME trainees, and affiliated institutions. Planning efforts will be coordinated with core Residency Program Directors and Vice Chairs of Education who will coordinate efforts with their respective Fellowship.

   **Program Directors**
   Residency Program Directors are the first point of contact for their training program. They are responsible for communications with their trainees and if necessary to their fellowship directors in coordination with their Vice Chairs of Education. Program Directors must update their email list-serves and list of phone and pager numbers on an annual basis. Programs and/or departments must insure this information is kept in a safe location.

   **Residents/Fellows (Trainees)**
   Initially, trainees are expected to report to their originally assigned hospital/clinic location. In the event that the hospital/clinic is affected by the disaster and unable to operate in the usual fashion, some or all of the trainees may need to be reassigned by the DIO after discussion with the Program Directors and approval of UUH officials.

2. **Institutional Assessment and Decision-making Regarding Program and Institution Status and Potential Modifications to GME Trainee Educational Curriculum:**

   **DIO/GME Administration**
The DIO will communicate with ACGME regarding the impact of the disaster and coordinate institutional planning per their guidance and current situational policy.

The DIO will monitor progress of both healthcare delivery and functional status of GME training programs for their educational mission during and following a disaster. The DIO will work with the ACGME to determine the appropriate timing and action of the options for disaster-impacted institution and/or programs to:

- Maintain functionality and integrity of program(s),
- Temporarily transfer trainees until program(s) reinstated, or
- Permanently transfer trainees as necessitated by program or institutional closure as per ACGME policy.

Depending on the nature of the disaster, changes to operational processes and procedures may override GME policies on a temporary basis. Any temporary changes to current policies will be approved by the GMEC and distributed. Information and decision communications will be maintained with Program Directors and trainees as appropriate to circumstances of the individual disaster event.

Program Directors
In coordination with the DIO, Program Directors will communicate with their appropriate ACGME Review Committee(s) regarding the impact of the disaster.

3. When the Disaster Has Ended

- The DIO will coordinate with UUH Leadership, programs, ACGME, and affiliated institutions to ensure a smooth resumption of normal operations.
- Plans will be made with the participating institutions to which trainees were temporarily transferred for them to resume training at the University of Utah.
- Appropriate credit for training will be coordinated with the ACGME and the applicable Residency Review Committees.
- Decisions as to other matters related to the impact of the disaster on training will be made.

Finance:

During and/or immediately following a disaster, the University of Utah will make every effort to ensure that the trainees continue to
receive their salary and benefits, and/or accumulate salary and benefits until such time as utility restoration allows for fund transfer.

Longer term funding will be determined on the basis of the expected operations of the teaching sites, CMS and governmental regulations, and the damage to the infrastructure of the finance and hospital operations.

The GME office will track additional or shifts in costs associated with the disaster situation and coordinate reconciliation with UUH leadership.

Administrative Information Redundancy and Recovery:

GME Office information (e.g., Trainee demographic documentation program data and documents, GME policies) are maintained in a residency management system and/or local databases are backed up regularly and stored off-site on an external server.

Programs are responsible for establishing procedures to protect the academic and personnel files of their GME trainees from loss or destruction by disaster.

Legal and Medical-Legal Aspects of Disaster Response Activity

Residents/fellows serving under the direction of UUH GME and their program in disaster response efforts will be provided insurance or other indemnity for any liability as described in the policies in Section 6-Liability Coverage of the Graduate Medical Education Policy Manual.