Impaired Housestaff Policy

**PURPOSE:** To establish a policy that addresses behavioral issues associated with impaired housestaff, provides assistance to the impaired housestaff, and protects the health and safety of patients.

**POLICY:**
An impaired housestaff is one who is unable to participate within the University environment and perform his/her job duties with requisite skill and safety. This impairment may be due to drug and/or alcohol dependency, mental and/or emotional disorders or physical impairment or disability. The signs and symptoms of such impairment could include but are not limited to a pattern of the following:

- Physical signs such as fatigue, deterioration in personal hygiene and appearance
- Unusual or inappropriate behavior
- Negative changes in performance of assigned duties and/or academic performance
- Frequent or unexplained absence and/or tardiness from duties and/or academic responsibilities
- Repeated or unexplained illnesses, injuries or accidents
- Conduct which may constitute violations of law
- Significant inability to contend with routine difficulties and act to overcome them
- Drug use indicators: agitation, edginess, bloodshot eyes, noticeable odor of alcohol or cannabis, dilated or pinpoint pupils, slurred or rambling speech, lack of coordination in walking such as staggering or weaving

**PRELIMINARY REPORT & INVESTIGATION:**
The person who observes the suspected impaired behavior must document the behavior. The Program Director, or their designee, if not the initial observer, should also assess the housestaff and document any observed behavior or impairment, or in the event that they find the housestaff to be fit to return to work, allow the housestaff to return to their duties.

**LEAVE OF ABSENCE**
Housestaff that need to take a leave of absence from training due to an impairment may do so in accordance with Family & Medical Leave Act (FMLA)/California Family Rights Act (CFRA)/Disability guidelines. Paid leave time (sick and vacation time), if available, is required to be used prior to going into unpaid status. Refer to the contents of the UCSF Fresno Leave of Absence policy for detailed information.

**COURSE OF ACTION:**
The UCSF Fresno Well Being Committee will review the documented behavior and assess the housestaff. Upon completion of the assessment, the Well Being Committee will make one of the following decisions:

1. If further evaluation is thought to be warranted, the housestaff will be referred to an appropriate specialist for an evaluation.
2. The Program Director and the Well Being Committee will confer about the housestaff’s options regarding any leave of absence and/or suspension from the Medical Education Program in accordance with the UCSF Fresno Leave Policy.
3. The GME office will consult with UCSF Counsel to determine whether any conduct must be reported to law enforcement or other government agencies.
4. Should a housestaff about whom the concern has been expressed be determined not to be impaired the individual will be allowed to return to the Medical Education program.
IMPAIRMENT DUE TO SUBSTANCE ABUSE:
In the event that there is a reasonable suspicion of impairment due to housestaff being under the influence, the housestaff should be discreetly removed from service and the Program Director notified. The housestaff should be asked to complete body fluid testing to screen for alcohol or controlled substances should an assessment by their Program Director or designee corroborate the suspicion of impairment. There is a three hour window in which this testing should take place. (See Appendix A for testing locations and hours). At this time, if necessary, the Program Director, or designee, will escort the housestaff to the designated location (see Appendix A) for body fluid testing. Once the testing is completed, if necessary, the Program Director, or designee, will ensure that the housestaff has safe transportation to their residence. If the impairment is due to something other than the housestaff being under the influence of alcohol or a controlled substance, then the housestaff should be discreetly removed from service for evaluation and the Program Director notified. With suspicion of either type of impairment, there will also be an automatic referral to the UCSF Fresno Well Being Committee (See UCSF Fresno Well Being Committee Referral Policy).

TREATMENT & MONITORING
The Well Being Committee will serve as liaison with the evaluating/treating physician and update the Program Director as necessary. When it is determined by the evaluating/treating physician that the housestaff is ready to re-enter the Medical Education Program, the Well Being Committee will assist the housestaff in the re-entry to the Medical Education Program.

PREVENTION & EDUCATION SERVICES:
1. Each year during the New Housestaff Orientation and the Chief Resident’s Orientation, an educational component addressing Housestaff Impairment policies and services will be presented by a Well Being Committee member.
2. At departmental request, a designated representative will be available to provide educational lectures addressing Impaired Physician issues.

(Original signed Policy is available in the UCSF Fresno Office of Medical Education)

Michael Peterson, M.D., Interim Associate Dean, Chair GMEC
APPENDIX A

CRMC EMPLOYEE HEALTH
2828 Fresno Street, Suite 203
Fresno, CA 93721
559.459.6416 (ext. 56416)
Hours: 7:00 a.m. - 4:30 p.m. Monday – Friday (excluding holidays)

CRMC EMERGENCY DEPARTMENT
2823 Fresno Street
Fresno, CA 93721
559.459.6000
Use only when Employee Health is not available.