



Graduate Medical Education Support for Wellness of Lactating Residents and Fellows*

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Introduction

Graduate Medical Education at Bassett Medical Center is committed to protecting the health and well-being of our diverse resident and fellowship program participants. This document will serve as a guide and resource to corroborate our support of the needs of lactating residents/fellows during their workdays. Adequate attention to this work helps to promote the health of parents and children which improves the workforce with lower rates of absenteeism, among many other benefits. To that end, program management pledges to distribute and post these guidelines. We further pledge to enforce compliance with these guidelines.

In recognition of the often unresolved challenges faced by lactating residents/fellows it is important to provide support for them. The need for this effort is reinforced by our belief that:

- Infrequent/Insufficient expression can lead to plugged ducts, mastitis or a decrease in supply.
- Lactating mothers may develop increased emotional complications when insufficient time to express milk (pump) is taken.
- Child wellness can be improved through improved lactation support which may also enhance the resident's/fellow's wellness and disposition.
- Resident/Fellow commitment to clinical obligations may potentially result in:
 - Infrequent, insufficient, or missed pumping.
 - An inability to schedule lactation breaks in advance given the unpredictable nature of clinical practice.

Clinical Department Support

We strive to create a welcoming and inclusive environment for the needs of our diverse workforce. Accordingly, every lactating resident/fellow will be provided:

- The right to pump at work in a safe, private space.
- Adequate time and access to a private lactation space.
- A computer in the room.
- A small table for pump and supplies.
- A comfortable chair.
- Refrigeration.

Responsibilities of Lactating Residents/Fellows

Lactating residents/fellows are expected to ensure:

- Patient care and careful consideration for clinical continuity when determining appropriate times to pump.
- Helping others on the team with advanced notice to the Program Director and residents/fellows on the service to assist when she will require time to pump upon return from maternity leave.

**Reviewed by multiple faculty members and consultant Erika W. LaChance, MD, Assistant Professor of Pediatrics at UMass Chan Medical School – Baystate, IBCLC certified.*



Responsibilities of Lactating Residents/Fellows (Cont.)

- Clear communication with the Program Director, attending physicians and other residents/fellows regarding specific needs for lactation/pumping (time intervals, specific concerns, etc.).
 - If issues or concerns arise regarding a lactating resident's/fellow's scheduling time pump, the Program Director will lead conflict resolution to define and meet her specific needs.
 - The Program Director will facilitate in circumstances where communication between colleagues about this subject is perceived to be difficult.

Assignment-specific notes for lactating residents/fellows:

- Inpatient service
 - Service-specific call rooms (or other appropriately equipped locations) may be designated and prioritized as daytime lactation rooms (8:00AM-5:00PM).
 - Clear communication with team members (co-residents/co-fellows, PAs, NPs) regarding pumping needs.
 - As is always the case, team care residents may need to help each other to complete care due to many potential needs that can conflict with urgent patient care.
- In clinic
 - Lactating residents/fellows will be allowed to leave clinic to pump at reasonable intervals between patient care encounters.
- In operating room
 - Lactating residents/fellows will notify attending surgeon(s) on each service that they will require lactation breaks during prolonged procedures.
 - Lactating residents/fellows will reach out to available team members to serve in their absence, if possible.
 - Lactating residents/fellows will avoid leaving the operating room during critical portions of the case if an appropriate colleague is not available to replace them.
- In conference
 - Lactating residents/fellows are allowed to leave mandatory teaching conferences for pumping, if necessary.