

## **GME Disaster and Extreme Emergent Situations Policy**

UNIVERSITY OF ARIZONA COLLEGE OF MEDICINE  
Graduate Medical Education Committee  
Policies and Procedures

### **PURPOSE**

In order to meet ACGME Common Program Requirements for Graduate Medical Education, this policy is set forth by the University of Arizona College of Medicine Graduate Medical Education Committee (GMEC).

#### **I. Disaster Policy**

1. A disaster is an event or series of events that cause significant alteration to the residency/fellowship experience of one or more programs. The ACGME Chief Executive Office, with consultation of the ACGME Executive Committee and the Chair of the Institutional Committee, will make a declaration of a disaster.
2. The University of Arizona has a Disaster Recovery Plan (<http://security.arizona.edu>). The University recognizes that it is impossible to anticipate every possible major emergency or disaster situation that may be encountered and equally impossible to prepare detailed plans for incidents where the extent and nature of the event or condition is not known beforehand. For this reason oversight of any emergency response operation is required to provide appropriate coordination, communication, decision-making and appropriate recovery of an emergency. The University has established this team of individuals to provide this oversight and to advise the President with respect to actions that should be undertaken to deal with an emergency. The department can utilize this team as necessary and as described within this plan.
3. In the event of a devastating disaster, UA GME has developed a partnership with the University of New Mexico to provide information, support, and communications in case such resources were unavailable due to the disaster. Although our institutional disaster plan specifies the steps for recognition, responses, and command structure, we previously had not developed a GME communications and remote administrative disaster plan. Now, since the Hurricane Katrina disaster, the need for such a plan has become apparent.
  - a. In the case of a disaster requiring evacuation of the UA, but in which services and communication are intact, we would communicate with residents through our website with up-to-date postings of information and resources, as well as responses to specific questions via our email network.
  - b. In case of loss of our communication system and evacuation, we will partner with the University of New Mexico (UNM), 505-272-6225 to post information on their GME website and our residents will temporarily be accommodated in Albuquerque. We would also set up a

connected administrative structure in Albuquerque at the UNM. We would similarly intend to provide similar accommodations to the UNM should a disaster requiring evacuation befall them.

- c. Mr. Joe Sparkman from the UNM will be coordinator of the GME communications plan with the help of his staff. Thus, our GME Disaster Plan is as follows:
  - i. Notification: The UA President will declare a disaster and begin the implementation of the UA Disaster Plan. The Public Information Officer will provide updates concerning the nature and level of the disaster. Residents will be expected to respond as part of their appropriate departmental response per the UA Disaster Plan.
  - ii. Communication: The UA GME website will be used to communicate with all residents. The GME website will be responsible for providing timely updates and will communicate with the UA President, or designee, for specific information. If the UA GME website becomes inoperable, the UNM GME website will be utilized to provide information to all UA residents. Residents will be instructed concerning this backup mechanism at orientation. As soon as possible the UA GME website will be reactivated for communications. UA will provide a similar backup system for UNM in case of a disaster at that campus.
  - iii. Relocation: We will coordinate with the residents to be accommodated in Tucson at the UA. After assessment of the extent of the disaster, other long-term accommodations may be necessary. Similarly, UNM will help accommodate UA residents in the care of a disaster in Tucson.
4. The DIO of the University of Arizona will, within 10 days after the ACGME declares a disaster, contact the ACGME to discuss due dates that the ACGME will establish for the programs:
  - a. to submit program reconfigurations to ACGME, and
  - b. to inform each program's residents of resident transfer decisions. The due dates for submission shall be no later than 30 days after the disaster unless other due dates are approved by ACGME.

The DIO should communicate with the Institutional Review Committee Executive Director. The Program Directors should communicate with the appropriate Review Committee Executive Director. The Residents should contact the appropriate Review Committee Executive Director with information and/or requests for information.

## II. Extreme Emergent Situation Policy

1. Declaration of an extreme emergent situation may be initiated by a Program Director or by the DIO. Declaration of a qualifying local disaster is made by the DIO in collaboration with the affected hospital's CEO or designee, affected Program Directors, and Department Chairs. When possible, an emergency meeting of the GMEC –conducted in person, through conference call, or through web-conferencing – shall be convened for discussion and decision-making as appropriate.
2. After declaration of an extreme emergent situation:
  - a. The Program Director of each affected residency/fellowship program shall meet with the DIO and other university/hospital officials, as appropriate, to determine the clinical duties, schedules, and alternate coverage arrangements for each residency program sponsored by the

Institution. ACGME's guidelines for development of those plans should be implemented, including:

- Residents and fellows must be expected to perform according to the professional expectations of them as physicians, taking into account their degree of competence, level of training, and context of specific situation. Residents who are fully licensed in Arizona may be able to provide patient care independent of supervision in the event of an extreme emergent situation, as determined by the affected hospital's CEO or designee.
  - Residents are also trainees/students. Residents/fellows should not be first-line responders without consideration of their level of training and competence; the scope of their individual license, if any; and/or beyond the limits of their self-confidence in their own abilities.
- b. Program Directors will remain in contact with the DIO about implementation of the plans to address the situation, and additional resources as needed.
  - c. The DIO will call the ACGME IRC Executive Director if (and, only if) the extreme emergent situation causes serious, extended disruption that might affect the Institution/Program's ability to remain in substantial compliance with ACGME requirements. The ACGME IRC will alert the respective RRC. If notice is provided to the ACGME, the DIO will notify the ACGME IRC Executive Director when the extreme emergent situation has been resolved.
  - d. The DIO and the GMEC will meet with affected Program Directors to establish monitoring to ensure the continued safety of residents and patients through the duration of the situation; to determine that the situation has been resolved; and to assess additional actions to be taken (if any) to restore full compliance with each affected resident's completion of the education program requirements.

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