AAFP Policy: Medical Learner Safety and Wellness During Pandemic Crisis

The AAFP is concerned about the safety and wellness of medical learners including medical students, early medical school graduates, and residents. To assure that learner safety and wellness is optimally achieved, the following principles must be consistently applied:

- Inclusion of trainees in the provision of clinical services, especially in direct care of patients, beyond the education requirements of their training must be on a voluntary basis both at initiation and ongoing.
- Personal protective equipment (PPE) must be provided for all trainees in accordance with best practices and all learners must be appropriately trained in effective use of PPE.
- All trainees must be appropriately supervised when providing clinical services.
- Supervising entities must assure that learners adhere to applicable work hour regulations.
- When including medical students in provision of clinical services beyond the originally planned educational requirements of their training, the utmost consideration should be given to ensuring students have adequate personal insurance (including but not limited to health insurance) and benefits, have adequate housing, are fairly compensated, are prepared and trained, and are given the opportunity to earn appropriate educational credit.
- Medical learners should be included in decision-making regarding their roles during crises and informed as decisions are considered and made regarding their responsibilities and opportunities.
- Regarding residents, the sponsoring program must comply with ACGME requirements for work hours, vacation time, and protected education time.
- When safety can be ensured in clinical settings, for example conducting telemedicine visits, efforts should be made to include students in patient care for their education.
- Every effort should be made to maintain and protect residents’ and students’ educational timelines and requirements. When necessary to adjust timelines and requirements, every consideration and effort should be made to ensure fair and accessible opportunities for learners to complete requirements effectively and efficiently.
- Patient safety and high-quality clinical care must be maintained. Patients should have access to learners with appropriate medical knowledge, skills, and expertise for their indicated needs, as well as the ability to consult with other members of the health care team.