



Department of Family Medicine Policy

Policy Name:	Working & Learning from home/remotely (Family Medicine Block Time Specific)
Application/Scope:	All Family Medicine Residents enrolled in the Residency Program
Approved Date & Approved By:	March 3, 2021: Executive Management Committee, Department of Family Medicine January 20, 2021: Residency Program Committee, Postgraduate Medical Education (PGME) January 13, 2021: Education Directors Subcommittee, Postgraduate Medical Education (PGME)
Review Date:	Five years from the approved date
Revised (Date):	

1. BACKGROUND AND REASON FOR POLICY:

Due to our new reality of COVID-19, presently and future planning, we need to consider the likelihood of residents needing to work from home. It is already occurring that preceptors, residents or both are having to isolate at home due to illness or exposure. We want to minimize the loss of learning opportunities and clinical experience/exposure that will obviously happen when residents are not able to attend clinical duties in person.

We have all pivoted quickly, and our current EMR system allows remote access. We have the technical means to allow residents to work from home and now we have the virtual care model to allow this to happen.

2. DEFINITIONS:

Synchronous virtual care: Care that occurs directly with a patient by telephone or videoconferencing where there is no, or minimal delay in providing assessment, advice and treatment plans

Asynchronous virtual care: Care that occurs through email, texting, fax, or secure platform such as eConsult. History and physical examination information and an opinion or treatment plan are separated by a matter of hours or days. Only secure forms of communication are recommended for asynchronous care.

3. POLICY AND PROCEDURE STATEMENTS

Expectations:

- 3.1. Learners will only access working from home policy in the event of self isolation or requirements due to Occupation Health recommendations, Public Health advisory or site specific requirements.
- 3.2. Other circumstances may be considered on a case-by-case basis.
- 3.3. Residents need to follow their site/clinic specific guidelines and objectives.
- 3.4. Learners needs to communicate with the primary preceptor and the Education Director about the dates of the isolation, so that virtual clinic time can be planned.
- 3.5. Learners would need to ensure that they had good internet access for remote EMR access, and a reliable phone system.



Department of Family Medicine Policy

- 3.6. Learners will ensure that they only provide care in a space that is secure and where confidential conversations can occur. Working from home policy would not include a public space, such as a library or coffee shop. If they use their own cell phone or landline, it is reasonable to block their call display on their phone.
- 3.7. Learners will communicate about the encounter as soon as is reasonably possible with their attending physician. This can be done by secure messaging apps such as Imprivata, or by a direct phone call.
- 3.8. On occasion, a three-way conference call be arranged, either to assist with a difficult conversation, or to allow the attending to observe the encounter more thoroughly, in order to provide better feedback.
- 3.9. When beginning a virtual encounter with a patient, learners need to ensure that the patient provides consent for the conversation and that the patient is in a place where it is safe and confidential to proceed with the consultation. Learners must document both the consent and confidential nature of the conversation in the chart.

4. REVIEW AND EFFECT ON PREVIOUS STATEMENTS

- 4.1 The Review Date for this Policy and Procedure is five (5) years from the date it is approved by the Executive Management Committee, Department of Family Medicine.
- 4.2 If this document is revised or repealed, any related documents shall be reviewed as soon as possible to ensure that they comply with the revised document, or are in term revised or repealed.
- 4.3 This Policy supersedes all previous governing documents dealing with the subject matter addressed in this document.

5. POLICY CONTACT

Please contact the Family Medicine Postgraduate Program Director with questions regarding this document.

6. REFERENCES

Site/clinic Specific Guidelines and Objectives in addition to this policy.