

Housestaff Council Quarterly Meeting #1 Minutes, 9/13/21

Summary:

- HSC 2021-2022 Priorities: FMLA/Parental Leave, increasing Housestaff Council participation and presence, fostering collegial community among trainees
- Issues addressed by GME:
 - o Resident incentive pay – the recent announcement by hospital administration regarding incentive pay does not apply to residents; GME is currently working on addressing communication issues between hospital administration and trainees. A 3% pay raise for residents only, advocated for by GME, is already effective as of July 2021.
 - o FMLA, Maternity/Paternity leave – Dr. McNeal-Trice and GME are currently finalizing a policy that would give all trainees 4 weeks of parental leave, in addition to current 15 days vacation PTO and 12 days wellness PTO already available. Goal is to have this policy live by January 1st, 2022.
- Attend the Improvement Scholars Symposium – Tuesday September 21, 3PM-5PM to learn about the UNC Institute for Healthcare Quality Improvement’s 2020-2021 projects
- Questions? E-mail unhousestaffcouncil@gmail.com
 - o Or, any of the individual HSC Board members: fazila.aseem@unhealth.unc.edu, leslie.appleton@unhealth.unc.edu, emma.bick@unhealth.unc.edu, carolyn.tsai@unhealth.unc.edu, juan.mira@unhealth.unc.edu, selena.an@unhealth.unc.edu, fernando.diaz@unhealth.unc.edu
- Submit comments/concerns/suggestions to <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/P2WW2VP>
- Check out the HSC website: <https://www.unhealthcare.org/about-us/house-staff-council/>
- Follow HSC on Twitter: @UNC_HSC

Attendance: Kenya McNeal-Trice, Kathryn Hill, Fazila Aseem, Leslie Appleton, Fernando Diaz, Emma Bick, Juan Mira, Carolyn Tsai, Daniel Markwalter, Deborah Kiserow, Jordan Fenner, Julia Stephens, Shenell Reynolds, Eleanor Saunders, Dillon Cockrell, Anya Golkowski, Byron Parker, Karina Paci, Krissi Fajgenbaum, Em Trambert Kylstra, Jill Hagey, Angela Ning, Dean Homen, Meredith J, Zachary Oaks, 14107035117, 18474316604, Alisa Siebrasse, Natasha Marvi, Kunal Jakharia

Introductions

Dr. McNeal Trice – Senior Associate Dean for GME, administrative representative, advocates for all UNC Housestaff (the largest housestaff program in the state)

Kathryn Hill – Business manager for GME, helps manage program requirements for resident programs, helps to send messages via MedHub

Co-Presidents: Fazila Aseem PGY-4 Neurology, Leslie Appleton – PGY-3 Internal Medicine

- Contact: fazila.aseem@unhealth.unc.edu, leslie.appleton@unhealth.unc.edu

Mission Statement: The UNC Housestaff Council serves to advocate for trainee well-being, to foster a collegial community of trainees across specialties, and to empower residents and fellows to be agents of change.

The Housestaff Council sends representatives to the Medical Staff Executive Committee, the Medical Center Improvement Council, the GME Committee, the Professional Liability & Advisory Committee, the Mortality Review Committee, the PLC Case Review Committee, the Hospital Infection Control Committee, and the Integrated Well-Being Program to advocate for resident issues.

Housestaff Council Priorities for 2021-2022

- FMLA/Parental Leave – awaiting clarification from GME about how much of the recent paid parental leave changes applies to residents
- Increasing Housestaff Council Participation and Presence – Will interact more regularly with department-appointed liaisons, will ask for feedback more regularly, added new positions to the council
- Fostering collegial community among trainees – creating more ways for housestaff to connect with each other virtually, increasing more interdisciplinary rather than departmental events – including with M&Ms, educational series

Housestaff Communication Structure

- All programs should have one or more representatives at the HSC meeting – this can be a different resident at each meeting
- Announcements will be sent through Medhub by Kathryn Hill or Kelly Cash
- HSC website has helpful resources for residents: <https://www.unchealthcare.org/about-us/house-staff-council/>
- Check the HSC Twitter @UNC_HSC for updates on events and meetings

Treasurer: Emma Bick PGY-2 Med-Peds

- Organizing HSC financial affairs, organizing and overseeing all revenue-generating activities
- COVID has limited events we can have, but trying to come up with creative solutions for that
- Ways to donate:
 - o Paypal – [paypal.me/TarheelHSC](https://www.paypal.com/merchot/?x=1&from=paypalme&source=paypal)
 - o Venmo - @tarheelhsc
 - o Credit Card
 - o Check: Tarheel House Staff Council
 - o Cash
- Contact: emma.bick@unchealth.unc.edu

Secretary – Carolyn Tsai, PGY-4 Neurology

- Keeping accurate meeting minutes, attending to all correspondence (announcements, e-mails), maintaining HSC website, keeping attendance, disseminating any new resolutions or information to department representatives
- Manages HSC e-mail: unhousestaffcouncil@gmail.com
- Created a HSC twitter: @UNC_HSC
- Contact: carolyn.tsai@unchealth.unc.edu

VP QI – Juan Mira, PGY-9 Surgery

- Previously has experience in this role at University of Florida
- Developing a sustainable trainee-led QI committee for residents
- Providing trainees resources to develop interdisciplinary projects together
- Interdisciplinary M&M – trying to integrate education into these, such as Just Culture and Root Cause Analysis
- Attend the Improvement Scholars Symposium – Tuesday September 21, 3PM-5PM to learn about the UNC Institute for Healthcare Quality Improvement’s 2020-2021 projects
- Contact Juan with ideas about interdisciplinary discussion ideas: juan.mira@unchealth.unc.edu

VP Well-being – Selena An, PGY-3 General Surgery

- Big brother, big sister program – to connect new interns with housestaff across specialties
- Exploring COVID-friendly initiatives for social interaction to optimize resident wellness
- Hold forums for resident suggestions to improve well-being
- Expand well-being resources for residents, both at UNC and in the Triangle community
- Contact: selena.an@unchealth.unc.edu

VP DEI – Fernando Diaz, PGY-5 Hematology-Oncology

- Goal – fostering a diverse and inclusive community that encourages high performance, teamwork, respect, and accountability to better serve our patients and recognize their diversity
- Endeavoring to better assess the diversity of our institution
- Serving as a liaison for DEI for residents to connect between departments, avoid duplication, foster interdisciplinary DEI initiatives
- Contact: fernando.diaz@unchealth.unc.edu

Questions for GME – answered by Dr. McNeal-Trice

- Results of resident survey brought up two main issues:
- **Resident hazard/incentive pay:** Why were residents not included in the recent incentive pay announcement?
- Background: GME office was not made aware of the plan for incentive pay until the announcement was e-mailed out. They have already reached out to hospital leadership regarding frustration about the plan not being communicated initially with them, and also expressed the frustration about residents not being included.
 - o This is an ongoing issue – Dr. McNeal Trice is meeting with hospital administration about how to avoid this communication error going forward.
 - o Historically, trainees have not been included in employee pay changes because there are several requirements that limit resident inclusion:
 - Employees have to be employed for at least 12 months to qualify for pay changes, and this would leave interns out
 - Employees have work at UNC Main Hospital for at least 6 months of the year – this could exclude fellows, research residents, residents that rotate at other hospitals
 - o In recognition of the work trainees put in during COVID times, GME office advocated for and successfully implemented a 3% pay raise already effective as of July 2021, only for residents (this did not apply to other hospital employees)

- Moving forward, GME is working with hospital administration to reform communication to:
 - 1) avoid further announcements related to trainees being sent out without being vetted through GME first
 - 2) reduce e-mails that do not pertain to trainees being sent to trainees
 - 3) improve transparency of policies especially as they pertain to trainees
- **FMLA, maternity/paternity leave**
 - GME has been working on this for 1-2 years, this has been one of GME's top initiatives
 - Background: The HSC worked with GME leadership 2019-2020 to make revisions to the leave policy for trainees – this revision was made July 2020
 - This policy had a designation of PTO for vacation AND PTO for wellness leave (extra 12 days for wellness was added, not part of existing 15 days vacation)
 - However, GME has still been trying to ensure resident leave policy aligns with that available for the healthcare system's employees, and also aligns with American Board of Medical Subspecialties requirements
 - As it stands parental leave policy for residents still differs from that for hospital employees
 - GME has working with the medical staff executive committee and hospital administrators (including Janet Hadar) to rewrite the policy so it can be formally approved, voted up on by GMEC and medical staff executive committee, and ready to be in place by January 1st, 2022 (and thus implemented at the same time the leave policy will be made available for all hospital employees)
 - Dr. McNeal-Trice is currently rewriting the leave policy
 - This policy will make trainees eligible for 4 weeks of paid parental leave (in line with American Board of Medical Subspecialties requirements), in addition to 15 days of vacation PTO, and 12 days of wellness PTO.
 - Trainees will not have to exhaust their vacation/wellness days in order to be eligible for 4 weeks of parental leave. If trainees want to extend to 6 weeks they can use part of their 12 days of wellness and/or vacation.
 - Parental leave should now apply to all residents regardless of if they had worked <12 months
 - Previously FML (family medical leave), which was being used in place of parental leave, had a requirement that residents had to work at least 12 months to be eligible
 - Currently you need to exhaust vacation days in order to be eligible for FML; GME is also working on changing this policy
 - Additional supplemental leave – called serious medical illness leave – may be applied if further time beyond 6 weeks is needed due to pregnancy complications, ex: C-section.
 - Final draft of the parental leave policy will be ready to be sent to legal for review this week – the goal is to have a final draft by 2nd week of October so that vote for approval from medical staff executive committee occurs in November, with policy to go live January 1st.

- Goal is for this to be standardized across programs. Ideally, trainees should not have to extend training if they use parental leave once during their residency. However, each subspecialty board will ultimately determine if time off needs to be made up.

Brief resident town hall discussion

- There has been yearly pay increase by 2-2.5% for the last 2-3 years – we have now met the median resident pay level for our region (Southeast)
- Hazard pay was brought up by HSC Council last year during COVID, but was only offered by hospital administration to certain select groups of people
- Increasing resident participation/awareness of the HSC – there is power in numbers; if we have more active participation, we could organize into subcommittees to address several issues at once

How to get involved

- There were numerous other issues brought up in the recent survey, including concerns about resident education being sacrificed to perform clinical operation duties, consult etiquette, patient volumes being unsafe for residents at time, residents feeling unsupported by attendings, and parking.
 - We will continue to work on addressing these issues going forward, but we need your help:
 - Who would you like to hear from to address these resident issues?
 - What resources would you like to see made available to help improve housestaff experience?
 - We want to stay up to date on resident concerns, so we continue to encourage you to submit them at <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/P2WW2VP>
- We encourage anyone who has questions, concerns, suggestions, or topics to advocate for to e-mail us at unhousestaffcouncil@gmail.com.