

Department of Surgery Parental Handbook

Trainee Version



Family and Maternity Task Force

5323 Harry Hines Boulevard, Dallas, TX 75390

DEPARTMENT OF SURGERY

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A Message From the Chair



I am extremely grateful to the faculty, residents, and staff who put so much time and effort into this handbook. The results speak for themselves. I predict that this handbook will serve as a blueprint for many other departments now and in the future when they consolidate their efforts around best practices for parental leave. But what transcends the handbook is really the cultural change it reveals. A paradigm shift in the surgical world is palpable in these pages. Surgeons now recognize the importance of work-life balance and wellness. This will undoubtedly only strengthen our profession by enabling our workforce to live life to its full capacity.

Herbert J. Zeh, III, MD, FACS

Professor and Chair of Surgery

Hall and Mary Lucile Shannon Distinguished Chair

UT Southwestern Medical Center

Statement on Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

The Department of Surgery's Office of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion would like to express its profound gratitude to Dr. Akarichi (task force chair), the entire family and maternity task force, and Dr. Zeh (our department chair) for making this process a reality.

The work and effort to produce this handbook is a testament to who we are as a department and who we can become. This is just the beginning for us and we look forward to continuing the work to strengthen the culture of diversity, equity, and inclusivity for the entire department.

Anthony J. Froix, MD, MBA, FACS

Vice Chair of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion - Department of Surgery

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Introduction

The UT Southwestern Department of Surgery established the family and maternity task force in 2020 under the direction of Dr. Herbert Zeh, chair of the department. The task force is comprised of surgery faculty, staff, and trainees. Its mission is to support parents throughout the family planning, pregnancy, adoption, and parenting stages of their lives. It has developed best practice recommendations for the department and collects current parental resources. As a department, we hope to encourage a happier and healthier surgery workforce by meeting the needs of faculty, staff, and trainees throughout their family planning transitions and by promoting the development of strong bonds between parent and child.

Stress is commonly reported among surgeons considering parenthood, which is related to peer attitudes, inflexible schedules, guilt over the burden imposed on colleagues by parental leave, challenges with breastfeeding and childcare, and concern for maternal-fetal health (Rangel et al., 2018). Additionally, surgeons who report conflict between work and home life have an increased risk of burnout, job dissatisfaction, and attrition (Dyrbye et al., 2011, and Sullivan et al., 2013). This Parental Handbook is to serve as a reference for our department's expectations, guidelines, and resources.

Our department wishes to be supportive of all surgery faculty, trainees, and staff and encourage balance between work and family.

Disclosure

The department recognizes that decisions regarding family are personal and confidential. Trainees will never be required to disclose their personal medical information or family plans. Trainees who wish to access departmental resources voluntarily may contact:

Office of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion
Department of Surgery
UT Southwestern Medical Center
5323 Harry Hines Blvd., E7.108
Dallas, TX 75390-9031
Phone: 214.648.8993

Email: surgerydeioffice@utsouthwestern.edu

Information voluntarily provided will be treated as confidential and not shared outside of the Office of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion except as required by UT Southwestern policy or with permission (e.g., disclosure to Human Resources for purposes of leave requests). As a trainee in the Department of Surgery, (1) you will be given the opportunity to select or be assigned a family advocate (further description below), and (2) a meeting will be scheduled with your program director, program coordinator, and family advocate (optional). During this meeting, preparations will begin in order to provide you with as much support as possible as you transition into/progress as a surgeon parent. Three follow-up meetings will be scheduled at this time.

Please see the [Meeting Preparation Guide](#) in the [Addendum](#) for suggestions on how to optimize this meeting.

Four-Meeting Framework

The four-meeting framework is a series of meetings to ensure that appropriate resources are made available to you. These meetings are conducted so that the necessary planning occurs to seamlessly transition you into leave status, transition you back to clinical status successfully, and to support trainees who are on parental leave. In order to secure necessary adjustments, these meetings will include your program director, program coordinator, and family advocate (if you choose to take advantage of the family advocate resource).

First Meeting:

- Occurs within 4 weeks of notice of the need for parental leave
- Discuss request form that needs to be completed for leave
- Discuss plans for off-ramping
 - Include plans to transfer clinical and non-clinical responsibilities and any adjustments that need to be made in the clinical schedule
- Discuss anticipated leave dates and duration
 - Paid time off options, if relevant
- Applicable leave policies and request forms
- Discuss operating room and hospital environmental safety and exposures

Second Meeting:

- Occurs within 4 weeks prior to scheduled leave date
- Follow up on matters discussed in the first meeting
- Confirm appropriate request form is submitted
- Confirm leave authorization
- Discuss on-ramping or graded return to clinical and non-clinical responsibilities upon return from leave

Third Meeting:

- Occurs within 2 weeks of return from leave
- Check-in
- Revisit on-ramping/graded return plan

Fourth Meeting:

- Occurs 2-3 months after the return from parental leave
- Ensure that the trainee has successfully transitioned back from leave

Family Advocate Program

The family advocate program is designed to empower expecting surgical trainees. Participation in the program is voluntary. Trainees who opt in to the program may select a surgery faculty member as their advocate. The advocate is expected to serve as a sounding board, share surgeon parenting experiences, provide advice, give insight, and ensure that trainees receive support and resources that are available to them. This advocate must be prepared to meet with the expecting surgery trainee on multiple occasions (virtually, in-person, or via telephone). The advocate will ensure that the surgery trainee has received the appropriate version of this handbook. If a surgery trainee would like an advocate but does not select one, an advocate will be assigned. The advocate will have access to the vice chair of the Office of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion for further support if necessary.

Examples of topics discussed with advocates:

- Clinical responsibilities (i.e., call schedule, rotation schedule)
- Non-clinical responsibilities (i.e., committees, research)
- Professional and personal advice
- Resources
- Support
- Burn-out assessment

Schedule Adjustments for Expecting Trainees

Expecting parents, mothers and fathers, may have their schedules adjusted before or after the birth or placement for adoption of a child, as appropriate to the trainee's specific job responsibilities and circumstances. Some examples of adjustments are:

- Avoid overnight calls after 36 weeks gestation
- Night float rotations avoided after 36 weeks gestation
- Hour-heavy rotations avoided 3 months prior to expected due date
- Hour-heavy rotations avoided 3 months following a return from parental leave
- Trainee WILL NOT be expected to "make up" call assignments missed while on parental leave
- A trainee going out on parental leave is not expected to have calls "front-loaded" (increasing the number of calls prior to scheduled leave) to account for future missed calls

Year	Before Parental Leave			After Parental Leave		
	Most Favorable	Acceptable	Avoid	Most Favorable	Acceptable	Avoid
PGY 1	Day Surgery	MIS, Peds, Burns, Snyder, VA Gen Surg, SICU	EGS/Trauma, Surg Onc, Vascular	Day Surgery	MIS, Peds, Burns, Snyder, VA Gen Surg, SICU	EGS/Trauma, Surg Onc, Vascular
PGY 2	Day Surgery	Snyder, Parkland SICU, CVTS, VA Gen Surg	EGS/Trauma	Day Surgery	Snyder, Parkland SICU, CVTS, VA Gen Surg	EGS/Trauma
PGY 3	Breast	CVTS, Endoscopy, VA Gen Surg	EGS/Trauma, Vascular, ACES	Breast	CVTS, Endoscopy, VA Gen Surg	EGS/Trauma, Vascular, ACES
PGY 4	MIS	Endoscopy, Peds, CVTS, VA Gen Surg	EGS/Trauma, Surg Onc	MIS	Endoscopy, Peds, CVTS, VA Gen Surg	EGS/Trauma, Surg Onc
PGY 5	Snyder	Presby, VA Gen Surg	EGS/Trauma, Surg Onc	Snyder	Presby, VA Gen Surg	EGS/Trauma, Surg Onc

**ACES, acute care emergency surgery; CVTS, cardiovascular thoracic surgery; EGS, emergency general surgery; MIS, minimally invasive surgery; Peds, pediatrics; Presby, presbyterian hospital; SICU, surgical intensive care unit; Surg Onc, surgical oncology; VA gen surg, veteran affairs general surgery*

Graduate Medical Education Policies & Resources

FAMILY AND MEDICAL LEAVE ACT

The Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) entitles eligible employees of covered employers to take unpaid, job-protected leave for specified family and medical reasons with continuation of group health insurance coverage under the same terms and conditions as if the employee had not taken leave. Eligible employees may take 12 work weeks of leave in a 12-month period for one or more of the following qualifying reasons:

- The birth of a child and to care for the newborn child within one year of birth
- The placement with the employee of a child for adoption or foster care and to care for the newly placed child within one year of placement
- To care for the employee's spouse, child, or parent who has a serious health condition
- A serious health condition that makes the employee unable to perform the essential functions of his or her job

Employee guide to the FMLA:

<https://www.dol.gov/whd/fmla/employeeeguide.pdf>

For information about applying for FMLA leave, refer to the graduate medical education (GME) paid time off utilization policy: <https://www.utsouthwestern.edu/education/graduate-medical-education/assets/paid-time-off-utilization-2022.pdf>

STATE PARENTAL LEAVE

It is UT Southwestern policy to provide certain employees who are not eligible for FMLA leave up to 12 weeks of unpaid parental leave. Trainees who are UT Southwestern employees should refer to the GME paid time off utilization policy for information about applying for state parental leave: <https://www.utsouthwestern.edu/education/graduate-medical-education/assets/paid-time-off-utilization21.pdf>

REASONABLE ACCOMMODATION DUE TO DISABILITY

Reasonable accommodations will be provided to enable qualified trainees to participate in UT Southwestern's GME programs. For information about how to request a reasonable accommodation due to disability, refer to the GME policy on reasonable accommodations for qualified residents with disabilities: <https://www.utsouthwestern.edu/education/graduate-medical-education/assets/reasonable-accommodations-for-qualified-residents-with-disabilities21.pdf>

SHORT-TERM DISABILITY

Short-term disability is a type of insurance benefit that provides a percentage of your compensation for non-job-related injuries or illnesses that render you unable to work, which may include pregnancy, postpartum recovery, and related health issues. It is important to note that "non-job-related" injuries are covered by short-term disability. Injuries that occur while working will typically be covered by workers' compensation rather than by short-term disability.

UT Southwestern-Paid Trainees

All benefits-eligible, active UT Southwestern employees may enroll in voluntary short-term disability insurance. At UT Southwestern as of September 1, 2021, the benefit is 60% of your weekly earnings up to a maximum of \$850 per week. Short-term disability benefits begin after you have satisfied the elimination period of 7 continuous days of injury or sickness and will continue for up to a maximum of 22 weeks. Each occurrence of benefits will have a predetermined time period depending on the condition. While receiving benefits, the enrollee pays 100% of the premium for the voluntary short-term disability insurance.

There are exclusions that need to be considered when enrolling in group short-term disability insurance. Specifically, benefits may not be payable for a condition that existed before enrolling for coverage. A preexisting condition means a condition that was caused by or results from a sickness or injury for which you received medical treatment. You must not have received advice or a prescription or recommendation of care, whether or not the sickness was diagnosed at all or was misdiagnosed within 3 months before your effective date of enrollment. A preexisting condition results in a disability that begins in the first 12 months after your effective date.

For help with short-term disability or any other UT Southwestern employee insurance, please contact Employee Benefits at 214-648-9830 or submit your request through the [UTSW ServiceNow portal](#) or via email at benefits@utsouthwestern.edu.

Parkland-Paid Trainees

For questions regarding your Parkland paycheck, W-2 status, personal time off (PTO), FMLA, or any Parkland-related benefit questions, you may contact Raju George (a GME finance specialist) at raju.george@phhs.org or Elizabeth Ponce (the director of graduate medical education) at elizabeth.ponce@phhs.org.

EFFECTS OF LEAVES OF ABSENCE

An employee may donate earned sick leave accruals in any amount (up to the balance of accruals the employee has earned) to another UT Southwestern employee in accordance with our sick leave policy.

Trainees should be aware that graduation and board certification depends on the completion of a specified amount of training. Please refer to the GME policy on effects of leaves of absence: <https://www.utsouthwestern.edu/education/graduate-medical-education/assets/effects-of-leaves-of-absence21.pdf>.

More information about American Board of Surgery (ABS) leave policies is available at the following links:

[General Surgery](#)

[Vascular Surgery](#)

[Pediatric Surgery](#)

[Complex General Surgical Oncology](#)

[Surgical Critical Care](#)

IMPORTANT OFFICES AND CONTACTS

All Trainees

- UT Southwestern Office of Graduate Medical Education
Tel: 214-648-3433
Email: GME@utsouthwestern.edu
- You MUST always keep your address up to date. Should you move while in the training program, you need to notify the following:
 - Parkland GME office at PHHSGraduateMedicalEducation@phhs.org
 - Parkland PeopleSoft if you are a Parkland-paid trainee
 - UT Southwestern program coordinator for MedHub
 - UT Southwestern PeopleSoft
 - Texas Medical Board

UT Southwestern-Paid Trainees

- Leave Administration Division, Office of Human Resources
UT Southwestern Medical Center
Tel: 214-648-9840 Fax: 469-694-8424
Email: LeaveAdministration@UTSouthwestern.edu
Intranet: <http://www.utsouthwestern.net/intranet/hr/benefits/time-away/>
- Employee Benefits Division, Office of Human Resources
UT Southwestern Medical Center
Tel: 214-648-9830
 - Or submit your request through the [UTSW ServiceNow portal](#)
 - Or submit your request via email at benefits@utsouthwestern.edu

Parkland-Paid Trainees

Parkland GME Office

Contact Parkland GME office with issues/questions related to trainee leave, paychecks, paid time off, FMLA, or benefits

Elizabeth Ponce: Elizabeth.Ponce@phhs.org (director of graduate medical education)

Raju George: Raju.George@phhs.org (graduate medical education finance specialist)

Please see the addendum for more resources to help with parenting and family needs.

Addendum

MEETING PREPARATION GUIDE

The following will help you prepare for the four meetings related to your leave:

- Anticipate that your program director, program coordinator, and family advocate (optional) will be present.
- Know the estimated due date or date of arrival (for an adopted child)
- Review your available paid leave
- Have a copy of your most updated call schedule available
- Have a list of your clinical responsibilities (e.g., rounding, clinic, OR coverage, etc.)
- Have a list of your non-clinical activities (e.g., research education, committee service, leadership roles, etc.)
- Include your role in each activity and a potential/confirmed person to replace you for the time you will be on leave
- Bring a list of questions/concerns that you may have

ACCOMMODATIONS FOR THE AMERICAN BOARD OF SURGERY EXAM

Trainees taking the American Board of Surgery (ABS) examination for initial certification can find information on lactation support and accommodations for medical conditions here:

<https://www.absurgery.org/default.jsp?policyaccommodations>.

Accommodations for in-training examinations do not require ABS approval. For information about how to request a reasonable accommodation due to disability, refer to UT Southwestern's GME policy:

<https://www.utsouthwestern.edu/education/graduate-medical-education/assets/reasonable-accommodations-for-qualified-residents-with-disabilities21.pdf>.

Lactating trainees who will be taking the ABS in-training examination should notify their program director in advance to request extra time for lactation during the examination.

LACTATION SUPPORT

UT Southwestern provides lactation support in accordance with policy ETH-155:

https://secure.compliance360.com/ext/j7_QMRgGnlfzxBt00P8A-g==

A list of lactation rooms is maintained at <https://www.utsouthwestern.edu/employees/hr-resources/wellness/pregnancy.html>. This webpage also includes information about how to find lactation rooms at off-campus locations such as Parkland, the VA North Texas Health System, and Children's Medical Center.

For information about Texas Health Frisco, you may contact Laura Freund via LauraFreund@texashealth.org or 817-433-2200.

CHILD CARE

Information about UT Southwestern's child care resources is available at the following: <https://www.utsouthwestern.edu/employees/hr-resources/wellness/child-care.html>. Please note that some of these resources are available only to UT Southwestern-paid trainees. Options for child care are shown below:

Callier Center

- Contact: Dawn Wolf (administrator)
- 972-883-3099
- Location: 1966 Inwood Road
- Hours: 7:30 a.m. to 6:30 p.m., Mon-Fri
- <https://calliercenter.utdallas.edu/child-development/>

First Step Learning Centre

- Contact: Wendy Mireault (owner)
- 214-352-8608/469-930-9339
- Email: firststeplearningcentre@gmail.com
- Location: Paul M. Bass Administration and Clinical Building
- Hours: 6:30 a.m. to 6:30 p.m., Mon-Fri
- <https://firststeplearningcentre.com/>

Bright Horizons

[Bright Horizons Care Advantage: Find local child care and senior care providers with Sittercity and YearsAhead](#)

Acknowledgments

I would like to thank all the members of the family and maternity task force for conceiving the idea of the Parental Handbook and the programs featured within it. I would like to acknowledge the UT Southwestern Office of Legal Affairs for its valuable guidance and feedback. A special thank you goes to the Department of Surgery's Office of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion for its assistance with producing the final product. Lastly, I would like to extend my sincere gratitude to the chair of the Department of Surgery, Dr. Herbert Zeh, for his unwavering support for the publication of this handbook and the necessary culture change it represents.

Chiaka O. Akarichi, MD, FACS

Family and Maternity Task Force Chairperson

Assistant Professor of Surgery

Division of Burn, Trauma, Acute and Critical Care Surgery

UTSouthwestern
Medical Center[™]
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