

Policy for the Provision of Health Care Services to Students

Rationale: LCME Standard MS-27-A states that “The health professionals who provide psychiatric/psychological counseling or other sensitive health services to medical students must have no involvement in the academic evaluation or promotion of the students receiving those services.” Because the definition of “sensitive issues” can vary widely by physician and/or student, and because most faculty members and residents are at one time or another responsible for the assessment of students, the following policy has been established:

Policy

Medical students are discouraged from seeking health care from faculty or residents of the institution; however, they cannot be prohibited from choosing their provider. The associate dean for student affairs, who has no role in student evaluation, is available to assist students in seeking care outside the institution and will be responsible for keeping students apprised of resources.

If a student elects to establish a provider relationship with a faculty member or resident, that individual is precluded from any evaluation role for that student (irrespective of the wishes of the medical student) because of dual-relationship and conflict of interest issues. The conflict created by this dual role could affect both the quality of medical care and the content of evaluations:

- a student-patient might be less likely to report a sensitive medical issue (e.g., drug abuse) to his/her physician if that physician will be providing an evaluation or grade
- a faculty member’s evaluation or grade (which is likely to include some subjective elements) might be, despite the evaluator’s commitment to neutrality, positively or negatively affected as a result of the therapeutic relationship

In instances of pre-existing doctor–patient/student relationships, the physician must discuss with the student the potential for a dual relationship and inform the student that he/she will recuse him or herself from any situation in which an evaluation is required. In emergent situations or other instances in which an alternative referral is not available, a student can seek the care of any faculty member or resident. In this circumstance as well, the physician must discuss with the student the potential for a dual relationship and recuse him- or herself from any situation in which a formal evaluation is required.

All medical school evaluation forms will include an attestation in the form of a required check box that a medical provider relationship between the student and the evaluator does not exist.