

Communication

Scope

The policy applies to residents of the University of Alabama Family Medicine Residency-Tuscaloosa Program.

Purpose

To ensure communication lines between providers and staff are always open to provide quality patient care.

Definitions 401 Calls: This is University Medical Center's (UMC) after-hour answering service for UMC patients. The answering service receives patient calls and relays the message to the resident physician on-call for night and or weekend/holiday. The resident physician will call the patient back to address his/her concerns. The service is provided from 4:30 pm to 8:00 am during the week and 24 hrs/day on weekends and holidays.

Policy and Guidelines

- a. Residents are required to have their pager on at all times (except while on approved leave) and to respond to pages in a reasonable amount of time – no longer than 15 minutes.
- b. If tied up in an emergency, a procedure, or other situation that will not allow a prompt reply, another health professional should be asked to respond on the paged resident's behalf until free of the limiting activity.
- c. If paged in error, it is the resident's responsibility to help that person contact the correct resident.
- d. If the resident forgets his/her pager, notify the Residency Office immediately so that they can notify the appropriate personnel and provide alternate contact information: Attending, upper levels, residency office, clinic staff, operators, and answering service). If it is after hours, this notification process becomes the responsibility of the resident.
- e. Should the Residency Office be unable to reach a resident by pager, the resident will be contacted by cell phone. Should reasonable response time to pages become a problem (e.g., 15 minutes), the program director or his/her designee will request a personal meeting with the resident. Any ongoing or repeated instances will be considered unprofessional conduct and disciplinary action may follow.
- f. For 401 calls: It is the responsibility of the upper level resident to answer all 401 calls within a timely manner. All calls must be answered within one hour. These calls must be documented in the electronic medical record (EMR) and forwarded to the primary care physician (PCP). Residents are responsible to communicate any emergent patient issues to

the on call attending for Family medicine, Pediatrics or OBGYN. If the resident pager is malfunctioning, it is his responsibility to inform the 401 call center and provide a cell phone number as an alternative communication.

- g. For non-urgent communication, the residency office will contact residents via their @ua.edu email account.
- h. Emails sent to residents by faculty and administrative staff must be acknowledged and addressed ***within one business day***. Repeated emails or requests not answered in timely manner will be considered unprofessional conduct and disciplinary action may follow.
- i. The University/CCHS will communicate weather and or emergency events via MyBama (<http://mybama.ua.edu>), email, text and CCHS/UMC web sites. Please forward MyBama emails to your UA email account and maintain current contact and emergency information in MyBama and with the residency office at all times. No resident or fellow may leave their assignment until personally relieved of their duties by an oncoming provider.
- j. Per ACGME milestone project for family medicine residents:

The family physician demonstrates interpersonal and communication skills that foster trust, and result in effective exchange of information and collaboration with patients, their families, health professionals, and the public.

- Residents will develop meaningful, therapeutic relationships with patients and families.
- Residents will communicate effectively with patients, families, and the public.
- Residents will develop relationships and effectively communicate with physicians, other health professionals, and health care teams.
- Residents will utilize technology to optimize communication (Please review the ACGME milestones for more details).