Resident Parental and Family Leave Policy
Updated August 2020

PURPOSE
To clarify the parental and family leave policy specific to the General Surgery Residency Program.

PERSONS INVOLVED
Any Categorical General Surgery Resident

PROCEDURES
To access the McGaw Maternal Leave, Parental Leave, and Family and Medical Leave policies, please visit: https://www.mcgaw.northwestern.edu/benefits-resources/benefits/time-away-from-training.html

Specific to residents in the General Surgery Program, parental and family leave is subject to additional requirements from the American Board of Surgery (ABS), detailed below.

Family Leave: Per the ABS, residents may take documented leave to care for a new child, whether for the birth, the adoption, or placement of a child in foster care; to care for a seriously ill family member (spouse, son, daughter, or parent); or to recover from the resident’s own serious illness.

In general, the ABS requires 48 weeks of full-time clinical activity in each of the five years of residency, regardless of the amount of operative experience obtained. The remaining four weeks of the year are considered non-clinical time that may be used for any purpose, such as vacation, conferences, interviews, etc.

Individuals are entitled to take an additional two weeks off during the first three years of residency, for a total of 142 weeks required, and an additional two weeks off during the last two years of residency, for a total of 94 weeks required. The ABS does not require approval for this option.

If a resident wishes to take additional time off for maternity leave outside of the two weeks provided by the ABS and the individual’s allotted vacation time, prior written approval from the ABS is required. Options permitted by the ABS include:

- Extending chief year through the end of August. The ABS will still allow applicants to take that year’s Qualifying Exam.
- Completing the 5 clinical years of residency over a 6-year period. All clinical blocks must be 4 weeks in length.
- Other arrangements may be considered on a case-by-case basis.

The program will make these requests on behalf of the resident. To initiate this process, the program director must be notified about the resident’s interest as soon as possible. The ABS Family Leave Policy can be found here: http://www.absurgery.org/default.jsp?policygsleave

Note: The policy is likely to change in 2021, as ABS will have to respond to the ABMS parental leave policy, which can be found here: https://www.abms.org/board-certification/policies/parental-leave/