Policy on Medical Student Work Hours

In an effort to address the effects of fatigue and sleep deprivation on learning and patient care, the Core Clerkship Directors Committee has developed the following policy on student work hours. The spirit and intent of the policy is to guide students in their professional development by providing a structure for serving patients’ needs while also respecting one’s own health and fatigue. The developing physician must learn how to weigh factors (such as patient continuity of care, appropriateness for sign-out to on-call, and self-awareness of fatigue) for decision-making in the best interest of the patient.

- Students must not work beyond 30 continuous hours.
- Continuous on-site duty, including in-house call, should not exceed 24 consecutive hours. Students may remain on duty for up to 6 additional hours to participate in didactic activities, transfer care of patients, conduct outpatient clinics, and maintain continuity of medical and surgical care.
- Students must be provided with 1 day in 7 free from all educational and clinical responsibilities, averaged over a 4-week period.
- Adequate time for rest and personal activities should be provided. Optimally, this should be a 10-hour time period between shifts.
- When continuity clinic occurs on the afternoon following an on-call night, the clerkship will make one of the following adjustments to ensure that students do not violate work hour limits:
  - The student will be reassigned to an alternate call night when there is not a post-call clinic commitment,
  - The student will be sent home at 8 pm on their call night and return the following morning for team responsibilities until they attend afternoon continuity clinic,
  - If the clerkship director can advise the Primary Care Clerkship of anticipated conflicts within enough lead time (at least 4 months), the clinic will be rescheduled as soon as possible.