



**San Antonio Uniformed Services  
Health Education Consortium  
San Antonio, Texas**

**Accommodation of Housestaff with Disability Policy**

**I. Policy.** SAUSHEC is committed to practices which do not discriminate on the basis of disability and to the provision of a safe, healthy work place that promotes high quality and safe patient care. Consistent with the spirit and intent of this commitment, SAUSHEC has developed this policy to safeguard the rights and responsibilities of qualified physicians with disabilities known to the health system.

Balanced against the need to accommodate disabled housestaff are military service needs, which require active duty military personnel to be capable of deploying world-wide. The Air Force and Army have longstanding, formal processes to manage disabled personnel. Restrictions range from temporary, light duty to medical retirement from active military service.

**II. Purpose.** This policy shall ensure protection of the civil rights of qualified physicians with disabilities; provide reasonable accommodations to qualified physicians with disabilities when appropriate; maintain the highest levels of patient care and safety; and manage administratively the disposition of residents with permanent disabilities.

**III. Definitions.**

A. *Disability* is defined as a permanent or temporary physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities, a history of a substantially limiting impairment, or being regarded as having a substantially limiting impairment.

B. *Qualified trainee with a disability* is defined as a trainee with a disability who, with or without a reasonable accommodation, is able to perform the essential functions of his/her position.

C. *Reasonable accommodation* is defined as any permanent or temporary measure taken by the health system to allow a qualified trainee with a disability to perform the essential functions of his/her position without imposing a hardship on the hospital and without posing a direct threat to the health and safety of that physician or others.

**IV. Process.** Physicians with disabilities who require reasonable accommodation to perform the essential functions of their positions must report their need for accommodation to their program director. SAUSHEC will not disseminate this information to any individuals who do not need to know. A request for accommodation may be made at any time prior to or during GME training. In order for the resident to receive maximum benefit from his/her training time, requests for accommodation should be made as early in the training process as possible. A program director who receives a

request for reasonable accommodation should work with the physician with a disability, a human resources generalist, and medical and/or vocational experts to define an accommodation for the physician with a disability, without imposing an undue hardship on the hospital and without posing a direct threat to the health and safety of the physician, professional peers, patients or other hospital personnel. The program director will coordinate with the necessary institutional staff and the resident to determine whether the requested accommodation would be effective, reasonable, and enable the resident to perform the essential functions of the position and achieve the essential educational program goals and objectives, or make a good faith effort to negotiate another accommodation. All medical-related information will be kept confidential. Supervisors and managers may be advised of information necessary to make the determinations they are required to make in connection with a request for an accommodation. First aid and safety personnel may be informed, when appropriate, if the disability might require emergency treatment or if any specific procedures are needed in the case of fire or other evacuations. Government officials investigating compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act may also be provided relevant information as requested.

Physicians unable to perform the essential functions of their positions, with or without reasonable accommodations, are not qualified under the terms of this policy. Program directors will ensure that disabled residents receive formal evaluations by the military disability system, which includes the use of medical profiles and, if necessary, presentation for formal military medical boards.