



Emergency Medicine Residents' Association

January 6, 2017

An open letter from EMRA to the Emergency Medicine Community:

In light of the recent change in the emergency department staffing contract at Summa Akron City Hospital, we are writing to express our deep concerns on behalf of our fellow residents in the emergency medicine (EM) residency program. We urge the hospital administration to work with the EM residents to quickly identify and appoint qualified clinical faculty, ensure the safety of patient care in the emergency department with adequate oversight of trainees, and develop a clear plan for the future that maintains Summa Akron's long history of training quality EM residents.

Summa Health hosts a well-established and widely respected EM training program, known for its dedication to resident education, with a strong base of core faculty that is actively promoting the advancement of our specialty through research and molding future leaders in our field.

The ACGME program requirements for EM residencies highlight the essential nature of these program features, specifically noting the need for "faculty with documented qualifications to instruct and supervise all residents at that location" and who devote sufficient time to their supervisory and teaching responsibilities. Moreover, they specify that an EM residency program "must be committed to and responsible for promoting patient safety and *resident well-being* in a *supportive educational environment*."¹

Following our conversations with our fellow members in Akron, we became gravely concerned the current situation at Summa falls short of meeting these requirements and is not providing a "supportive educational environment" that promotes the well-being of EM trainees. While the new contract at Summa employs board certified emergency physicians, as of January 1st, there were *no* named core faculty on staff in the ED, suggesting the transition of contracts was done without ensuring the presence of ACGME certified educators for the residency.

Additionally, the residency's program director was dismissed without working on a transition plan as required by the ACGME and without a new director physically present to guide the program's 30 EM residents through this transition.

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As a result, the current interview and Match season has become tenuous, risking the loss of federal GME funding to the program as well as quality residency positions – an unacceptable possibility in a time when our country already faces a shortage of EM physicians and is in desperate need of the high caliber emergency doctors that Summa Akron is known for producing.

Collectively, these changes have added tremendous stress to the already physically, mentally, and emotionally demanding job of being an emergency medicine resident, particularly in a high-volume, high-acuity, tertiary care center like Summa Akron City Hospital.

The Graduate Medical Education (GME) Policies & Procedures Manual for the Summa Akron City Hospital (2015-16) states the hospital is “*firmly committed* to graduate medical education” and that “maintaining high-quality graduate medical education programs is *vital* to [their] success in providing the highest quality care to the citizens of [their] community.”² Despite these words, the aforementioned oversights give the impression that the high-quality training Summa residents were assured was not a top consideration for the hospital administration and has left residents feeling like an afterthought in the process.

We realize it is inevitable that some emergency departments will change contracts and make administrative and operational changes. However, the recent abrupt contract change at Summa has put the residency program in jeopardy.

As the voice of emergency medicine physicians-in-training, EMRA stands firmly with the Summa residents. Moving forward, it is imperative that any major transitions in an emergency department that hosts an EM residency prioritize the education and well-being of their residents and remain compliant with ACGME policy. While this serves to fulfill hospitals’ contractual and ethical obligations to trainees, far more importantly it ensures the safest and highest quality patient care for the communities we serve.

Sincerely,

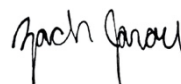
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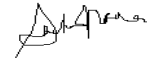
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¹ [ACGME Program Requirements for Graduate Medical Education in Emergency Medicine](#), last revised July 2016

² Statement of Commitment. 2015-16 Graduate Medical Education Policies & Procedures Manual for Summa Akron City & St. Thomas hospitals.