



American Board of Neurological Surgery: Statement on Family & Medical Leave

Residency

For residents who desire to take time away from training for legitimate family or medical reasons (e.g., the birth or adoption of a child; extended illness), the Program Director should follow the Human Resources policies of his/her institution and applicable law when determining whether to approve such leave requests, in whole or in part, and whether any time away from training needs to be made up at the back end of the resident's training. It is the Program Director's responsibility to ensure that residents who receive less than 84 months of training nevertheless successfully complete the program, receive the full range of neurosurgical training and are able to practice as safe neurosurgeons following their residency.

If any such leave results in a resident receiving less than 84 total months of training in residency, the following will apply:

- Under no circumstances may a resident receive less than 54 months of core training (i.e., any reduction from the standard 84 months of training must come from the resident's 30 months of elective time).
- In connection with the resident's future application for Certification, the resident's Program Director must submit a letter to the ABNS indicating: (a) that the Program Director approved any leave that resulted in less than 84 months of training; and (b) that the Program Director determined that the resident at issue received full training and was able to successfully complete residency in less than 84 months.

Post-Residency

The ABNS is aware that many neurological surgeons take time off or work reduced schedules at some juncture during their first few years of practice for legitimate family reasons, such as in connection with the birth or adoption of a child, to care for an immediate family member with a serious health condition, or when the physician himself/herself is unable to work due to a serious medical condition.

Taking time off or working a reduced schedule may make it difficult for Certification candidates to meet one or both of two ABNS requirements: (a) the requirement that candidates collect and submit 150 consecutive cases over a period of no more than 18 months; and (b) the requirement that candidates submit their completed applications no later than four (4) years following the completion of residency training.

ABNS rules permit the ABNS Directors to extend these time periods at their discretion, on a case-by-case basis, for good cause. Requests for extensions must be made in writing and submitted to the ABNS Administrative Office. As a policy matter, the ABNS Directors generally grant extension requests that are related to absence of practice (or reduced work schedules) for legitimate family leave reasons.

However, the ABNS is also wary of potential abuses of this policy. Consequently, any granted extensions will be no more than appropriate in light of the circumstances in each case. In addition, the ABNS may request documentation of a candidate's absence from practice or reduced time schedule for family leave reasons.