The ACGME defines a disaster as an event or set of events causing significant alteration to the residency/fellowship experience at one or more residency programs. This policy is designed to describe the protocol for handling such an event that affects the residency and fellowship programs under the purview of the Graduate Medical Education (GME). The goal of this policy is to minimize the impact of such a situation on the training of the residents and to protect their well-being, safety and educational experience.

This policy is in addition to emergency preparedness or emergency management plans in effect for Methodist Healthcare System (MHS). This policy applies to all residents associated with GME.

Responsibility
The Designated Institutional Official (DIO) along with the residency and fellowship Program Directors (PD) are responsible for ensuring that all procedures are followed.

Procedure
A. PREPARATION
   1. All residency programs must maintain up-to-date personal contact information for faculty, staff, residents and fellows at all times.

   2. All residency programs must prepare a phone tree for use in emergencies or disasters. This must include program faculty, staff, residents and other individuals determined by the Program Directors or the DIO to be necessary to maintain appropriate lines of communication. This phone tree must be distributed to faculty, staff, residents and other individuals involved, including the DIO, as soon as possible after the start of the program year.

B. RESPONSE
   1. PERSONAL SAFETY
      i. In the immediate aftermath of a disaster, program faculty, staff and residents are expected to attend to personal and family safety and then render humanitarian assistance where necessary. In the case of anticipated disasters, residents who are not designated in one of the clinical sites’ emergency staffing plans should secure their property and prepare to evacuate should the order come.

      ii. Personnel who are displaced out of town should contact their program directors and reestablish communication as soon as possible.

C. PROGRAM CONTINUITY
   1. Following the declaration of a disaster, the DIO, working with the GMEC and other leadership, will establish a central point of operations from which to manage the disaster response. It is anticipated that this will be the GME offices. Should the GME offices be unavailable an appropriate alternative will be determined.

   2. The DIO will notify ACGME IRC Executive Director through a phone call or email of the affected programs within 10 days of the declaration of the disaster. The DIO should provide
information and/or request information on available options for continuity of the affected programs.

3. The DIO and GMEC will determine whether existing educational and training programs can continue with or without restructuring at their home facilities or whether temporary or permanent transfer of residents to other facilities or programs is necessary and appropriate. The DIO will work through the ACGME if transfers are deemed necessary.

4. Temporary transfers are those which may encompass one or more rotations for a resident or fellow but will not be for the duration of the remainder of the resident’s or fellow’s training except in some cases for personnel in the final year of their training. Residents and fellows participating in temporary transfers will remain MHSGME employees and receive paychecks from MHSGME.

5. Permanent transfers are those in which residents or fellows leave their current program and finish their residency or fellowship training at another institution. In such cases, the resident(s) permanently transferring are no longer MHS employees and will not receive further paychecks from MHS. Permanent transfers will only be negotiated if, in the opinion of the DIO and the concerned PD, the residency program will not be able to resume functioning at an educationally appropriate level in a time period which will not unduly, adversely affect the resident.

   i. The DIO will ensure that financial and administrative support of all programs and residents will continue for the duration of the emergency. Since residents are paid by electronic direct deposit, it is not anticipated that any interruption will occur.

   ii. The DIO will notify ACGME within 30 days of all structural changes that have been instituted as a result of the disaster. In addition to a description of the changes, the DIO’s report will include anticipated durations for any changes as well as anticipated effects on residents, fellows and their training.