

## Wellness Afternoons

Why They Started, How to Get Them, and Answers to (Most of) Your Questions

### *Introduction:*

Wellness **half-day afternoons** are intended to add time for you to spend on your own wellness. What you do during this time is up to you and does not need to be made up. We do not need to know the reason and understand we all (yes, physicians too) need to take a break. Wellness afternoons begin at 1pm. You can take **one half-day off during every 4-week and 6-week clerkship block** (once on pediatrics, once on obstetrics/gynecology, once on psychiatry, once on neurology, once on family medicine). You can take **two half-days off during every 12-week clerkship block** (twice on internal medicine, twice on surgery). It must be requested with at least ONE WEEK notice. Please inform your team as soon as you complete your Maxient form to allow this one-week notice to the team.

Note that this year we will be tracking these on Maxient, our WSU wide student information system. Notification of completion of this form will go to the clerkship and the WSUSOM Academic and Student affairs office. You still need to notify and get clearance from your team before filling out the form.

### *When and how can I request a wellness afternoon?*

1. **Log the date on the Maxient form**
2. [https://cm.maxient.com/reportingform.php?WayneStateUniv&layout\\_id=49](https://cm.maxient.com/reportingform.php?WayneStateUniv&layout_id=49)
3. **Email a copy to the clerkship coordinator** (unless told of another contact during orientation)
4. **Inform your team!** Completing the Maxient form does NOT automatically notify your team. This is your responsibility, without it your team will expect you there
5. **Enjoy your afternoon**

### *What days are NOT possible to request a wellness afternoon?*

You CANNOT be off:

- During the first week of the clerkship
- On the first day of switch to a new service
- On the last day of the clerkship **ie the day before the study day (usually Wednesday)**
- When your team is on call
- During required clerkship didactics or exams

These rules were made after consultation with all clerkship directors to make sure that you do not miss times that are most important to your clerkship experience and learning.

### *What about my counselor, do I have to check with him/her?*

**No.** For wellness afternoons you do NOT need to inform your counselor.

### *Should I save wellness afternoons to use when I get sick or need to go to an appointment?*

**No.** These afternoons do not replace excused absences from your counselor for medical appointments or sick time. If you are sick or need to attend a medical appointment email your counselor for an excused absence. Note that for these absences, you may be required to make up the missed time, depending on the clerkship director's instructions.

*Are there any changes in the wellness afternoon considering the impact of COVID?*

Each clerkship is committed to wellness afternoons. Each clerkship is also affected differently by COVID. There may be limitations on specific days to make sure you don't miss out on especially important clinical experiences that are limited or harder to schedule this year. The clerkship director will let you know of any special circumstances.

*Can I save up multiple wellness afternoons to use together?*

Sometimes. For special events (ex. religious holidays) you may combine your half-day with the one which follows in your **next** clerkship (or, combine the 2 half-days during surgery and IM) into one full day off. For these special events only, please email your counselor to request this format as it is not currently part of the standard Maxient form and allows us to track all wellness afternoons appropriately.

*How are wellness afternoons monitored?*

The list of dates (on the Maxient form) is sent to the clerkships and also monitored by the year three Clerkship Committee. The success of this program really relies on your professional behavior. The actions of your peers during the past 2 years allowed this program to expand from its original pilot into a regular part of your clerkship year. As with all clinical activities, we place a lot of trust in your sense of professionalism to use this program within its intentions.

*What do our clinical sites know about approved absences? Are they aware of wellness afternoons?*

We have told the clinical sites that the only reasons (from the SOM) you are absent would be  
A. An excused absence which is communicated from the counselors to the clerkships  
B. The wellness half-days  
C. Occasional events at the SOM notices of which are sent out well in advance (ex townhall, ERAS). Usually these will be online now so as to not interfere with clinical activities.  
Keep in mind that wellness afternoons are still new to many residents and faculty. Word will continue to spread.

*What occurs if the program is misused ex. taking multiple afternoons within a 6-week clerkship?*

When misuse is found it will result in a professionalism citation. A professionalism citation goes on your permanent record and may lead to appearance before the professionalism committee and a note regarding the occurrence on your MSPE letter. Misuse of the program by multiple students may also result in its closure for all.

*Why is the time off in the afternoon rather than the morning or a whole day off?*

We are balancing flexibility for time off with clerkship continuity. On many of the clerkships, rounding with the team, time with the faculty, and initial checks on your patients occur at the start of the day. We want to ensure you are able to participate in these importance aspects of clerkship learning.

*What do I do if I have further questions or encounter a problem?*

Email either Dr. Steffes ([csteffes@med.wayne.edu](mailto:csteffes@med.wayne.edu)) or Dr. Waineo ([ewaineo@med.wayne.edu](mailto:ewaineo@med.wayne.edu)). We appreciate the feedback from you about the program and strive to make it run as smoothly as possible. We have already made improvements based on the initial pilot. Everyone agrees the concept is good, and the details are adjusted as we see what works best.

*Final thoughts:* We appreciate everyone's cooperation. Success ensures that this continues to be a regular feature of the clerkship year and becomes part of the culture of the medical school. We encourage you to take these wellness afternoons!!

Drs. Steffes and Waineo

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