

Resident Wellbeing Committee (RWBC) Maternity and Parental Leave Checklist

Whom should you contact when you are considering taking a maternity and/or parental leave?

Program Director (PD)

- It is up to you when you tell your PD that you are pregnant or that you are planning to take maternity and/or parental leave. We recommend you tell your PD at least at the same time as when you start telling other people, as your program really should hear it from you. The earlier you tell them, the earlier they can help you with rotation planning, reduced call schedules, etc.
- You will need to complete a [PGME Leave of Absence \(LOA\)](https://www.ualberta.ca/medicine/media-library/programs/pgme/form/leave-of-absence-form.pdf) request form and send it to your PD for their approval and signature. After PD approval, they will send it to the PGME Office.
<https://www.ualberta.ca/medicine/media-library/programs/pgme/form/leave-of-absence-form.pdf>

Postgraduate Medical Education (PGME)

- Once the PGME receives your signed LOA form, they will start the process with AHS.
 - **Please be sure to give at least 3 months' notice for this process.**
- If you have any questions for the PGME, you can contact an admin at PGME at pgres@ualberta.ca.

Alberta Health Services (AHS)

- Once approved, the PGME will forward your signed LOA request form to AHS informing them of your planned leave. If applicable, a Record of Employment (ROE) will be sent to Service Canada.
- Before you start your maternity leave, AHS will send you a maternity benefit package. If you do not receive this package one month before the start of your maternity leave, call the AHS HR Contact Centre at 1-877-511-4455 or email hrcontactcentre@ahs.ca.
- You need to know your AHS email address and should ensure your contact information in ePeople is correct. When AHS corresponds with you by email, they will **only** use your AHS email.
- After the baby is born, mothers must call the AHS HR Contact Centre at 1-877-511-4455 to report the actual date of delivery, as there are specific aspects to your benefits that are unique to the mother and must be coordinated with AHS.
 - For any other AHS related questions, please contact Muntasir Moin at the AHS Academic Medicine Medical Affairs Office (780-735- 0712 or Muntasir.Moin@albertahealthservices.ca).

Employment Insurance (EI)

- You must contact Service Canada to apply for Employment Insurance, phone 1-800-208-7218 or visit: <https://www.canada.ca/en/services/benefits/ei/ei-maternity-parental.html>
- You need to have accumulated 600 insured work hours to be eligible. Please remember this only includes regular duty hours and that on call work is not included in this calculation.
- According to their website:
 - *You should apply for EI as soon as possible after you stop working.*
 - *If you delay applying for benefits later than four weeks after your last day of work, you risk losing benefits.*
 - *You can apply for EI maternity benefits before you give birth (as soon as during the 8th week before your due date or before the actual week you give birth).*
 - *You cannot receive EI maternity benefits more than 17 weeks after the week you were expected to give birth, or the week you actually gave birth, whichever is later.*
 - *The date you submit your application is very important, since it affects the amount of maternity benefits you are entitled to receive.*

Points to remember from the current (2022-2024) Resident Physician Agreement:

[https://www.para-ab.ca/uploads/source/Agreement_January_1_2022_to_June_30_2024\(FEB\)_-_no_signatures.pdf](https://www.para-ab.ca/uploads/source/Agreement_January_1_2022_to_June_30_2024(FEB)_-_no_signatures.pdf)

Maternity Leave (see article 11.03)

- You must have worked as a resident for at least 8 weeks before you become eligible for maternity leave pay and benefits. Once eligible, you can receive up to a maximum of 17 weeks of maternity leave. Such leave may commence up to 8 weeks prior to the predicted date of birth.
- You will receive up to 17 weeks of sufficient pay to match 90% of your salary (regardless of EI eligibility). If eligible for EI, this "top up" will be reduced by the EI benefits received during the period so that the total income will be 90% of your salary. AHS will begin processing your application for the top up payment at the **end of the 17-week maternity period**. If waiting until the end of the 17 weeks will create significant financial hardship for you, please contact PARA to see if they can assist in requesting an exception for you.
- If you have a valid health related reason for being absent from work in excess of the 17 weeks of maternity leave you are eligible for paid sick leave. In this case, the sick leave ends and the maternity leave starts the day the child is born. • Keep in mind that if you take maternity leave in your final year, your

benefits terminate at the end of the appointment year, unless your training is extended and you have to return after your maternity leave in order to complete your program.

Parental Leave (see article 11.04)

- Partners of birth mothers and parents of adopted children can take up to 2 weeks leave of absence with full pay and benefits. They are then able to take unpaid parental leave to a maximum of 62 weeks total.
- The Agreement allows birth mothers to take up to 78 weeks total leave (17 weeks maternity, 61 weeks of unpaid parental leave).
- It is important to remember that parents who are both resident physicians can share the parental leave, but the combined total cannot exceed the maximum length of parental leave allowable.

Benefits and Insurance

- To maintain benefits, resident physicians must pay the employee portion of their Blue Cross premiums during the 17-week maternity leave. While on the unpaid portion of parental leave, residents will lose their Blue Cross benefits unless they “opt-in” and pay 100% of the premiums. In either case, residents continue to have access to their Flexible Spending Account, and PARA will continue to pay their premiums for Long Term Disability Insurance and Life Insurance.

Other things to consider:

Information from [PARA \(Professional Association of Resident Physicians of Alberta\)](https://www.para-ab.ca/) <https://www.para-ab.ca/>

- Check out the PARA website for more information by logging into the member’s section and checking for the Frequently Asked Questions page about Maternity and Parental Leave.

Child Care

- The RWBC’s Child Care Resource List has information about some local childcare options. Please remember that some day cares have very long wait lists, so it is important to get your name on the list as soon as possible!

Returning to Work and Accommodation

- Keep in touch with your program and let them know when you are coming back so they can get you back on the schedule.
- If you require scheduling or training accommodation (examples include for family reasons, medical needs, or to facilitate breastfeeding), please contact AHS or the OAW for assistance prior to your return to work. The application form can be found through AHS Insite: <https://insite.albertahealthservices.ca/Main/assets/frm/frm-19566.pdf>
- **Breastfeeding:** You are welcome to breastfeed or pump breast milk wherever you feel comfortable! The following are lactation spaces which are also available to you:
 - **UAH:** The designated space is 2C2.29. Please note it does not have an option for milk storage.
 - **RAH:** The designated space is on the 5th floor of the Robbins Pavilion and requires swipe card access. There is also a fridge/freezer for milk storage. Neither the UAH nor RAH spaces have a pump/supplies.
 - **GNH:** The lactation consultant room on Unit 34 is available to all staff.
 - **MCH:** NICU on the 3rd floor has space for staff.
 - Both the GNH and MCH spaces offer the use of a Medela Symphony pump, but users are encouraged to bring their own pumping equipment.
 - The GNH and MCH spaces do not offer milk storage.
 - Details about accessing these spaces will be available when you apply for accommodation, please contact AHS or the OAW for more information.
- If you choose to extend your leave from the original planned date of return, you must inform PGME (who will update AHS for you), as well as re-apply for EI to extend your benefits if applicable.
- Contact the AHS Academic Medicine Medical Affairs Office for any concerns with access to Connect Care, Netcare, or PACS.
- Call the AHS HR Contact Centre (1-877-511-4455) to ensure they have the correct return to work date so you can be paid and have your benefits reinstated.
- For Edmonton Zone, contact the Parking Services/Security Office to set-up your parking and get your ID reactivated:
 - Security: <https://insite.albertahealthservices.ca/pscoe/Page8372.aspx>
 - Parking: <https://insite.albertahealthservices.ca/pps/Page6283.aspx>
- If any certifications have expired (i.e. BLS and ACLS), you should get re-certified prior to your return.
- Get a complete list from your program on what is required to complete your residency, such as specific courses you may have missed while on leave.

Need Help?

If you have any issues, questions or are in need of support, please contact **Dr. Bina Nair, Assistant Dean Resident & Fellow Affairs** at bnair@ualberta.ca and/or the **Office of Advocacy & Wellbeing (OAW)** at oawadmin@ualberta.ca, or contact **PARA** at 780-432-1749 or para@para-ab.ca.