

RESOLUTION

Subject: Terminology Clarification of the Term “Resident” Amongst Health Professionals in Training

Submitted by: Greater Louisville Medical Society

Referred to: Reference Committee

WHEREAS, a resident is a fully licensed physician who holds the degree of MD, DO, MBBS/MBCh, is undergoing postgraduate training and actively engaged in advanced clinical training in a specific medical specialty, often within a hospital setting under the supervision of a consultant physician⁸; and

WHEREAS, post graduate year students (PGY-X) are required to adhere to the standards and protocol of residency programs, as determined by the Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education (ACGME), including residency components, ACGME competencies, curriculum organization and residency responsibilities¹; and

WHEREAS, a study conducted in 2021 in response to the COVID-19 pandemic highlighted the long-standing role confusion among patients in understanding the role of a resident⁵; and

WHEREAS, Nurse Anesthesia Resident (NAR) is a term that refers to a registered nurse pursuing advanced training to become a Certified Registered Nurse Anesthetist (CRNA)⁴; and

WHEREAS, a resident pharmacist is a term used for a newly qualified pharmacist who rotates through the various areas within the pharmacy following a structured training program⁶; and

WHEREAS, in the UK, the term "resident doctor" has recently replaced the previous term “junior doctor” to better reflect the expertise and responsibilities of these doctors. The British Medical Association (BMA) is now working with the National Health Service (NHS) and stakeholders including healthcare organizations, royal colleges, and media outlets to strongly encourage the wider adoption of the term “resident doctors” for which it has received support of the Secretary of State⁷; and

WHEREAS, according to survey conducted by the American Medical Association (AMA) between the years of 2008 and 2017, results show that 79% of patients responded with “Support” to the question of, “Would you support or oppose legislation in your state to require all health care advertising materials to clearly designate the level of education, skills and training of all health care professionals promoting their services?”²; and

WHEREAS, the AMA has engaged with academic institutional programs to promote educational programs and dissemination materials to “create alternative, clarifying nomenclature in place

of “resident,” “residency,” “fellow,” “fellowship,” “attending” and other related terms to reduce confusion among the public.”²; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that KMA supports legislation to form clear distinction between the medical professional roles of attendings, residents, and all subsequent health care professionals to mitigate patient confusion and clarifying scope of practice for attending physicians; and be it further

RESOLVED, that KMA supports legislation that encourages a fully licensed physician be referred to as a “resident physician” to create a clear distinction between the various resident pharmacists and nurses in training who are non-physicians, while a resident physicians has undergone five years of medical education and adheres to the standards and protocol of residency programs, as determined by the Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education (ACGME); and be it further

RESOLVED, that KMA develop dissemination materials such as posters, brochures, and resources available to online platforms that inform patients about the subsequent role of each health care provider in a manner that clarifies expectations for both the patient and the provider; and be it further

RESOLVED, that KMA works with the Kentucky Hospital Association to provide clarification and transparency to patients regarding health professionals’ titles in the hospital setting.

References:

1. ACGME. (n.d.). *Common program requirements*. ACGME. <https://www.acgme.org/programsand-institutions/programs/common-program-requirements>
2. Ama-ASSN. (n.d.). https://www.ama-assn.org/sites/ama-assn.org/files/corp/mediabrowserpremium/arc/tia-survey_0.pdf
3. Jennifer Whitlock, R. (2025, June 15). *Resident vs. attending physician: What’s the difference?* Verywell Health. <https://www.verywellhealth.com/types-of-doctors-residents-interns-andfellows-3157293>
4. *Nurse anesthesia*. Columbia School of Nursing. (2025, May 15). <https://www.nursing.columbia.edu/academics/academic-programs/doctor-nursingpractice/nurse-anesthesia#:~:text=year%20average:%2099%25-,Curriculum,contingent%20upon%20meeting%20academic%20policies>
5. Shapiro, M.A. Competence vs. Identity, Trainees vs. Physicians: How COVID-19 Has Highlighted Role Confusion in Residency Training. *Acad Psychiatry* 45, 545–548 (2021). <https://doi.org/10.1007/s40596-020-01346-2>
6. Philadelphia College of Osteopathic Medicine. (2023, April 20). *Pharmacy residency programs - what is a residency?*. Pharmacy Residency Programs - What Is a Residency? <https://www.pcom.edu/academics/programs-and-degrees/doctor-of-pharmacy/school-ofpharmacy/blog/pharmacy-residency-programs.html>
7. The BMA. (2024, September 17). *Junior doctors are changing their title to “resident doctors.”* The British Medical Association is the trade union and professional body for doctors in the UK. <https://www.bma.org.uk/news-and-opinion/junior-doctors-are-changing-their-title-to-residentdoctors>
8. *What is a residency and how do I get one?*. ACCP. (n.d.). <https://www.accp.com/stunet/compass/residency.aspx#:~:text=Completing%20a%20pharmacy%20residency%20after,supervision%20of%20an%20experienced%20preceptor>