

IOWA LUTHERAN HOSPITAL FAMILY MEDICINE RESIDENCY PROGRAM

Policy: Residents/Consultants

The residents at Iowa Lutheran Hospital are, in fact, licensed physicians who, in the role of "family physicians," hold the responsibility of their patient's medical care through an implied contract in the same manner as any other physician.

This responsibility is not abrogated if a consultant is called for advice or to render concurrent care, but there should be a clearly understood agreement between the physicians that defines specific areas of accountability.

Because of the unique nature of residency training, the resident is expected to work closely with consultants but to retain management of the patient. Consultants may offer advice and suggestions, but it is the resident's final decision as to patient management. The resident is expected to write all orders on his/her patient with few exceptions.

Doctors must recognize that there may be more than one approach to a problem and that the chief requirement for unhindered patient care is to have free and open communication. If there is a serious disagreement that is unresolved by face-to-face discussion, one physician, with the agreement of the patient must withdraw.

A conflicting order should never be written on the chart without notifying the other physician(s). However, emergency and critical situations are exceptions.