

Patients and Residents Use Buddy System to Reduce Handoffs

LOS ANGELES, CA - The UCLA Medical Center is using a patient-resident buddy system in response to a recent study about restricted resident work hours and concerns about patient handoffs.

“It’s been great!” reports Annette, a PGY-3. “I rest assured knowing that when I get off, my patient goes to the safety of their own home and not to the incompetent hands of my fellow residents.”



To make the new system work, residents work 96-hour shifts. Patients are admitted at the beginning of the shift and discharged when residents leave. Patients requiring longer care are given home instructions and readmitted when their resident returns.

“We have completely eliminated patient handoffs,” exclaimed one hospital administrator. Previously, administrators had to reduce resident work hours to improve their quality of life, but now they’ve realized it’s not necessary. “Since it doesn’t matter, we want to continue reducing hand offs.”

Patients are glad their doctors are with them the whole time. Historically, patients have been frustrated that doctors are not empathetic to the poor sleep they get on overnight hospital stays. “Now, they look just as sleep-deprived as me! I really appreciate the solidarity.”

Residents also enjoy new games with the changes. “The other day I was so tired I wrote a note to order *Spartacus*.” The residents bonded while guessing what *Spartacus* must have meant to the sleep-deprived resident. “We all decided that I meant to order spirometry.”

“Resident exhaustion is not a concern as long as they are still able to interpret

their notes.”