

Medical Student Orientation

General/Acute Care Surgery Service

Welcome to the General/Acute Care Surgery Service. While many think of this as the “trauma service” we do, in fact, provide a full spectrum of general surgery and surgical critical care to patients. You will have the opportunity to participate in a wide variety of cases and participate in the care of patients with a wide range of pathology.

In general, students will be expected to take responsibility for 2 to 3 patients. You should round on these patients independently prior to morning rounds with the attending and be prepared to present your patients to the attending. Do not let the residents present a patient you are following to the chief resident or the attending. This is how we evaluate your clinical performance. So be aggressive about interrupting a resident who tries to present your patient and letting everyone know that this is your patient and you are prepared to present them. For your patients, you should follow them to the operating room and scrub on their case. On rounds you should present your assessment of the patient and have formulated a care plan for the day. Take responsibility for following up on any laboratory, radiologic procedures, or other testing performed on your patients. Communicate those results to your chief resident when they review the patients at the end of the day. If a significant abnormality is identified that needs to be addressed urgently or that may alter the plan of care for the day, make a point of communicating that to the chief resident as soon as possible.

Rounds generally begin at 6 AM on 10 West. The residents meet prior to that to go over the events of the previous night. You should be present at that session as well.

Students should plan to be in the operating room for at least one case on most days. We encourage students to see a variety of cases on this service as well as other Department of Surgery services. If you are not scrubbing on a case on this service on any given day, find a case on another service that interests you or that you need to see to meet your case requirements. Please make sure, though, that, in the morning, you make the chief resident aware that you are scrubbing on a case on another service and contact them or another resident on the service after that case is finished so you can get back in touch with what is happening on the service. We do expect that students will have reviewed patient data prior to any case upon which they intend to scrub and, if possible, we expect students to see the patient prior to the case to get their own relevant history and physical examination. Attendings have been known, at times, to ask students questions about the patient and about the disease entity being treated. Occasionally, an attending may throw a resident out of the room if they haven’t prepared for the case. They might do the same to a student! So be prepared when you come to the operating room.

We ask that each student attend at least two clinic sessions during their rotation. Our on-campus clinic is on the 7th floor of the Rutledge Tower building. Clinics are held on Monday, Tuesday and Thursday afternoon beginning at 1 PM. Work with your fellow students on the service to avoid having multiple students attending the same clinics.

Morning report is held daily at 8 AM in room 419 CSB. Students should attend this session daily unless they are in the operating room or attending another required student activity (small group, anesthesia teaching session, Dr Van Heerden's teaching session, sim lab, etc). Students are also expected to attend the departmental Grand Rounds and Surgical M and M conferences. In addition, we have a monthly joint conference with radiology held on the fourth Thursday of each month. Cases for presentation are selected by the attendings. Students will be asked to present the cases during that conference. The chief resident should be able to assist you in preparing those cases. We also have a weekly Thursday morning conference at 7 AM in room 419CSB. This is a review of a critical care topic generally conducted by our Surgical Critical Care fellow. On the third Thursday of each month this is a combined conference with Emergency Medicine where interesting trauma resuscitations are discussed.

We also maintain a "midlevel service" for patients that are cared for primarily by our midlevel providers rather than the resident staff. Students are welcome to discuss these patients with the midlevel providers or with the attending surgeons, particularly if you were involved in the patients care.

As students on the "trauma service" you will be paged every time a trauma patient is coming to the emergency department. This is our "trauma alert" system. If you are not otherwise occupied with an educational activity or in the operating room, you should come to the emergency department and participate in the initial evaluation and management of these injured patients.

While on the service, you will be expected to have a faculty member observe your performance of a focused history and physical examination. You will likely need to make a point of identifying these opportunities and ask a faculty member to observe your performance and provide feedback.

Students are expected to get feedback on their performance midway through the rotation. Please meet with the chief resident or, if that resident is unavailable, the mid level resident on the service, and have them go over the first page of the "mid course feedback form" available to you on moodle. After that, please set up an appointment with Dr Norcross or, if he is unavailable, Dr Montgomery, Dr Fakhry or Dr. Crookes, to complete the second side of that form. Use that session as an opportunity to seek assistance in identifying opportunities to complete any, as yet, uncompleted case or procedure requirements.

We have a website that describes our service with links to a variety of material you may find useful. The link to that site is here:

<http://academicdepartments.musc.edu/surgery/divisions/general/index.htm>

We enjoy having students on our service and pride ourselves on the positive feedback we receive about this service from students. If you have any concerns, please contact Dr. Norcross so they may be addressed as soon as possible.