

Internal Med/Pediatrics

Frequently Asked Questions

Thank you for your interest in the Spectrum Health internal medicine/pediatrics residency, in partnership with Michigan State University College of Human Medicine. Here are the answers to some frequently asked questions. Learn more on our website or contact our program coordinator.

What are the class sizes for Med/Peds and the categorical programs?

- Med/Peds: 4 per year
- IM: 12 per year
- Peds: 20 per year

What is the clinic schedule?

Med/Peds residents have two half days of clinic per week, one in Medicine clinic, one in Pediatrics clinic. These are shared clinics with the categorical programs and allow for great relationships with co-residents in each respective program. Med/Peds attending physicians from the community regularly staff in the IM clinic, and occasionally staff in the Pediatrics clinic, so not only are you learning from your categorical attendings, but also from Med/Peds physicians who practice in the community! On certain rotations, one or both clinics are cancelled for the block (i.e. MICU, EM, PICU, Night float, Peds floor senior, Peds EM) to help with continuity of care and/or high acuity seen on these blocks.

How often do you switch between internal medicine and pediatrics?

As an intern, the switch is made every three blocks. As a senior resident, the switch is made every 3-5 blocks. This allows for seasonal variability, especially during the winter months on the pediatrics side.

Are mentors available for residents?

Each resident is assigned a mentor at the start of training that they meet with twice yearly at minimum. As a resident's interests and career goals evolve, there is an option to change your mentor to one that could better assist in achieving your goals.

What didactics are residents expected to attend?

While on IM elective rotations, residents attend Grand Rounds on at noon on Thursday (one hour) and Friday lectures (three hours). On IM Floor rotations, in addition to Grand Rounds and Friday lectures, there is also Morning Report (Mon/Tues/Wed – 30 min). While on Peds rotations, residents attend Morning Report twice weekly (Mon/Fri – 30 min), Grand Rounds on Tuesday morning (one hour), Multidisciplinary Rounds on Wednesday morning (one hour), and Thursday lectures (four hours).

What support is offered to ensure a smooth transition for interns early on?

During the first couple of days of the first rotation, interns are paired with a senior Med/Peds resident (an “Angel”) who works alongside them to help navigate the EMR, familiarize them with the hospital layout, and answer any questions that come up while adjusting to the system. Prior to the first switch from IM to Peds (or vice versa); interns and senior residents meet for dinner to discuss transitioning to the other side and reminders of need to know information. Senior Med/Peds resident are assigned to interns at the switch point to be of help during the transition.

How long is intern year?

Intern year is 12 months long, or 13 Blocks. We do not have “super-interns” and you will transition to a senior on par with that of your categorical peers.

What board preparation supplies are available?

Each resident is provided with MKSAP text and questions (IM board prep) and PREP questions (Peds board prep). Additionally, each resident is given yearly stipend for additional education funds.

Who creates the schedule? What are the requirements?

We are compliant with ACGME rules for Med/Peds graduation requirements when it comes to scheduling. However, you still have a lot of room for electives in your schedule, even starting as an intern. The schedules are created by the Med/Peds program coordinator with assistance from the Med/Peds Chief Residents. We have two fourth year chiefs who represent the Medicine and Pediatrics side respectively. There are mandatory rotations on both Pediatrics and Medicine that you must complete within your four years, and every year you will do two medicine floor months and 1-2 peds floor months, but the schedule leaves a lot of room for elective rotations early into residency.

What call requirements can I expect?

During rotations on floors or ICU, each resident is guaranteed a minimum of four days off. During elective rotations on both Peds and Medicine, residents are expected to cross cover for floors or ICUs on weekends. This typically amounts to 1-3 days of cross coverage per block, often overnight, but sometimes daytime coverage. Residents are able to request certain weekends off by placing a call request 60-90 days in advance. There is one block per year that is a guaranteed “No Call” month while on elective on Pediatrics, and often on IM you will have elective months you are not on the call schedule. As both IM and Peds have a night float system, there are no 24-hour call requirements. As a senior resident on Peds rotations, you will occasionally have home call for the clinic where parents of patients call to ask questions.

What is the vacation schedule?

Residents have three weeks of vacation (five-week days + one guaranteed weekend) that they may take during elective blocks in addition to one week off during the winter break (either Christmas or New Year's).

Am I able to take time off to attend conferences?

After intern year, residents can take up to five days off to attend conference; this does not count towards vacation time used.

What are the career trends of your alumni after graduation?

- 50% practice Outpatient Medicine
- 20% go into Fellowship
- 30% practice Hospital Medicine

Will I be able to do research?

Yes! Not only does Spectrum Health have a great research department, many of the faculty are readily involved and always looking for residents to help with projects or are eager to help a resident with a project of their own. Peds hosts a yearly "research mixer" which helps link up studies with interested residents. Additionally, every year Spectrum Health's Office of Research and Education hosts Research Day, which allows for residents, attendings, and medical students to present posters, case reports, or abstracts.

Are there opportunities for international health experiences?

Yes! Dr. Switzer (our PD) goes on a yearly trip to Guatemala and he encourages residents to join if they are interested! Additionally, our pediatrics attendings regularly go on trips to Haiti, and residents are encouraged to set up any international rotations they are interested in. In the last year, Peds and Med/Peds residents have done rotations in Jordan, Guatemala, Malawi, and Costa Rica.

Where is parking? How far away are the clinics?

There is onsite, covered parking available for all residents with immediate access to the hospital system. All our residency clinics are onsite of both the adult and pediatric hospital, which make up one large hospital system. Additionally, many of the pediatric outpatient elective clinics and some adult elective clinics are onsite of the hospital system. Some of our outpatient electives will have clinics that are off-site, but all are usually within a 20-minute drive from the hospital system.

Are there moonlighting opportunities?

Yes, residents can start moonlighting after they finish their second year if they are considered to be in good academic standing. Moonlighting requires a permanent license and DEA license, and residents need to comply with duty hour regulations once they start moonlighting, meaning they cannot exceed 80 hours per week averaged over a four-week period. Additionally, moonlighting should not interfere with any training requirements. Residents have been able to moonlight at other local hospitals and urgent cares.

Do you get a meal stipend?

We get a meal card with a stipend based on the amount of overnight/call shifts our residency program typically works. This is usually enough to make it through the whole year, and it gets replenished yearly! It can be used at any of our cafeterias, as well as the food court (Qdoba, Smashburger, Zoup, and Starbucks!).

Where do the residents live?

There is a wide variety of housing options in and around downtown Grand Rapids. A few residents live in apartment complexes within walking distance to the hospital system, while others have rented or bought homes both in the downtown area and in the neighborhoods outside the city. Most residents live within 30 minutes of the hospital system.

What are some fun things you do as a program?

The highlight of our year is always our Med/Peds Retreat! Usually in early Spring, every Med/Peds resident and their family/significant other is invited up to a large and beautiful retreat house on Lake Michigan where we spend time bonding, take part in helpful lectures from Dr. Switzer, and explore northern Michigan! In addition to our retreat, we also have our monthly wellness sessions, where our Med/Peds family can meet up together during an IM or Peds lecture time to touch base, catch up, and talk about how we are doing. We have also done Med/Peds weekly trivia nights, gone to concerts together, and have had Winter, Fall, Spring, and Summer parties!

What are the strengths of the Spectrum Health Med/Peds Program?

Not only are our residents supportive of each other, but they have fostered a close-knit, familial environment amongst each other. Awesome program leadership supports us, led by our program director who stands up for and supports his Med/Peds residents with ferocity. We also have Med/Peds faculty interwoven throughout the hospital, including combined Med/Peds hospitalist, subspecialists, and outpatient physicians. We feel supported by our categorical program leadership, who often feel and treat us as if we were one of their own when we are on their rotations. We have strong inpatient and outpatient experiences. As the largest and only Level 1 Trauma Center in West Michigan on the adult side, and the only freestanding children's hospital in West Michigan on the pediatrics side, we are a catchment for all of middle, western, and northern Michigan and the upper peninsula and can see some truly interesting pathology. By rotating in both the internal medicine and pediatric outpatient clinics weekly, we are seeing more patients and gaining more experience in managing common outpatient issues in a diverse patient population.

What is Grand Rapids like?

Grand Rapids is the second largest city in the state of Michigan, but has a down to earth, neighborhood feel with big city amenities. Yes, we have sports teams. They are obviously not the biggest sports teams in the state, but we have a professional hockey team with frequent games throughout the Fall/Winter and great deals on seats, a professional baseball team with frequent games throughout the Spring/Summer and great deals on seats, and a basketball team. We have art museums, science museums, botanical gardens, and a zoo. We have GREAT access to musicals (Broadway in Grand Rapids!), as well as a ballet, opera, and tons of concert venues where most big names travel through. For significant others, the job market is on par with that of any other city. We are also about 30-40 minutes from Lake Michigan, with TONS of beach access, and there are innumerable hiking trails with some fantastic views. We are two hours from Detroit and three hours from Chicago and we have our own international airport.