

RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE PATIENT

Postgraduate medical training is a program of supervised, graduated patient responsibility. The degree to which responsibility is assigned to you in each patient's care is a reflection of your own competence and your level of training, as determined by the attending physician. The ultimate responsibility for each patient's care is that of the attending physician. When a problem arises with a patient, the attending physician covering your service or whose private patients you are caring for must be called and the problem discussed with him/her for the purpose of reaching a resolution. That resolution may, in fact, be yours and may require relatively little input by the attending physician. However, the attending physician must always be aware of what is happening with the patients assigned to him/her. These house officer-attending contacts are not only necessary to assure continued quality of patient care, but also are an integral part of your professional education and growth. This relationship and its maintenance is the heart of postgraduate medical education.