

**Proposed Indiana University of Pennsylvania College of Osteopathic Medicine
(Proposed IUPCOM—Candidate Status—Seeking Accreditation)**

COCA Pre-Accreditation Element 9.8: Mental Health Services
Pre-Accreditation Submission 9.8-1: Mental Health Services

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that all medical students have access to confidential, timely, and professional mental health services to support their emotional well-being, academic success, and personal development throughout their medical education.

Policy Statement

The medical school is committed to promoting the mental health and well-being of its students. Professional mental health services—including counseling, crisis intervention, psychiatric care, and referrals—shall be readily accessible, confidential, and free from academic or disciplinary reprisal.

Scope

This policy applies to all enrolled medical students, regardless of academic year or enrollment status (full-time or leave of absence), and includes services provided both on-campus and through affiliated providers. This includes confidential access to an effective system of counseling and mental health care from mental health providers, with a mental health provider available/accessible 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, and 365 days a year, accessible at all locations (including clinical rotation sites) where students receive education from the COM. Please refer to *Pre-Accreditation Element 9.8-3* for a listing of mental health services available to students at all teaching locations (including rotation sites) with service locations and hours.

Guiding Principles

- Mental health is an essential component of overall student wellness and professional development.
- Seeking support is encouraged and does not negatively impact a student's academic standing or future career.
- Services will be delivered in a culturally sensitive, trauma-informed, and inclusive manner.
- Providers of mental health care will not participate in student academic assessment or promotion decisions.

Available Mental Health Services

The school will provide or facilitate access to:

- Individual counseling and psychotherapy
- Crisis intervention and emergency mental health support
- Medication management and psychiatric services
- Workshops and support groups on topics such as stress management, burnout, anxiety, and resilience
- Referrals to community mental health professionals for ongoing or specialized care

Services may be offered:

- On-site through the institution's health or wellness center
- Via telehealth platforms approved by the school
- Through external providers under agreement with the school

Access and Confidentiality

- Mental health services are available by self-referral or referral by faculty, staff, or peers.
- Services are offered at no cost or reduced cost to students, and efforts will be made to minimize financial barriers to care.
- All mental health records are **confidential** and maintained separately from academic records, in compliance with FERPA, HIPAA (if applicable), and state law.
- Mental health providers will not be involved in the teaching, evaluation, or promotion of students under their care.

Crisis and Emergency Protocol

Students in crisis will have access to **24/7 emergency mental health support**, which may include:

- A dedicated crisis hotline
- On-call licensed mental health professionals
- Coordination with campus safety or community crisis response teams when necessary

Promotion of Services

- Information about available mental health services will be clearly communicated during orientation, included in student handbooks, and regularly promoted via emails, class announcements, and the school website.
- Faculty and staff will receive guidance on how to recognize signs of student distress and refer students appropriately.
- All students will be required to meet with an administrator for a mental health/wellness check-in within the first semester of matriculation. Students who return to school after a Leave of Absence will be required to complete an administrator mental health/wellness check within 90 days of returning to school.
- Students will be able to request excused absences from lectures and clinical rotations

times to be able to attend mental health appointments.

Training and Education

The medical school will provide periodic programming to:

- Destigmatize mental health care
- Educate students on recognizing and addressing signs of burnout, depression, and anxiety
- Promote self-care, peer support, and available wellness resources

Student Leave for Mental Health

Students may request a leave of absence for mental health reasons. These requests will be considered under the school's Leave of Absence Policy and handled with sensitivity and support for the student's well-being and academic reintegration.

Policy Review

This policy shall be reviewed every two years, or more frequently as needed, to ensure it remains aligned with accreditation standards, student needs, and best practices in medical education.

Policy/Procedure Details	
Policy Owner	Director of Student Affairs
Effective Date	08/29/2025
Last Reviewed	08/29/2025
Review Frequency Requirements	3 Years
Related Policies and Documents	1. IUPCOM Student Diagnostic, Preventive, and Therapeutic Health Services Policy 2. IUPCOM Student Handbook 3. IUPCOM Webpage for Mental Health Services and Availability at All Teaching Locations 4.
Reviewed and Approved by Dean's Leadership Council	08/29/2025
Revision Number	2025.01