

## **Mental Health Fund Disbursement Procedures**

Recent events, including the COVID-19 pandemic, the economic downturn, and the rise in social unrest, have resulted in an increase in mental health symptoms in students. The pandemic alone had already been associated with increased levels of anxiety and depression in women, minorities, individuals with pre-existing conditions, and adults under 34 years of age, and the recent civil unrest has only accelerated this trend. African American students in particular, are experiencing exceptional mental stress (see Proposal for Ongoing Mental Health Services for Black Medical Students) and could benefit greatly from having access to additional resources to support their mental health. Because mental health care is variably covered by insurance, the expense of care can be a barrier for students seeking treatment. We propose establishing a fund of \$30,000 to award students grants of up to \$500.00 per semester to pay for mental health care not covered by insurance. The \$500.00 award may be renewed with documentation from the student's external mental health care provider that the previous funds were used for services and that there is a need for continuing care. This program is contingent on the availability of funding.

### **ELIGIBILITY AND SELECTION CRITERIA**

Any medical student with financial need and a current enrollment, in either the School of Medicine or an approved dual degree program, may apply for a grant to help cover expenses related to mental health, including sessions with an external psychiatrist, psychologist, psychiatric social worker, or therapist

Priority will be given to students with the greatest financial need as determined by the SOM Office of Financial Office aid based on the following:

- Completion of the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA)
- Exhaustion of their full financial aid award
- Average loan debt by class:
  - MSI - \$50,000
  - MS2 - \$85,000
  - MS3 - \$117,000
  - MS4 - \$137,000

### **GRANT DETERMINATION PROCESS**

In order for students to access funds, they must follow the following steps:

1. Student must meet first with one of the SOM CAPS Counselors
2. SOM CAPS Counselor determines if student has need for additional mental health care outside of the CAPS system and an expressed financial need
3. Student signs a release of information form
4. CAPS Counselor notifies the SOM Director of Financial Aid
5. Student completes the fund disbursement application and submits it to the SOM DFA
6. The Director of Financial Aid discusses the financial need for funding based on the criteria above
7. The Director of Financial Aid notifies student of outcome
8. If approved, the student works with the Director of Financial Aid for disbursement of funds

**RENEWAL**

The \$500.00 award may be renewed with documentation from the student's external mental health care provider. In order for the award to be renewed, the student must meet with one of the SOM CAPS Counselors and provide the CAPS Counselor documentation from their external mental health provider that the student has been under the provider's care, the provider has received at least \$500.00 from the student for that care, and there is a need for continuing mental health care.