**Conference Attendance Policy and Procedure**

The Social Service Department requires all staff to enhance their knowledge and skills through on-going continuing education. Significant opportunities are available on the MGH Campus, and staff is also encouraged to seek relevant opportunities outside the MGH. The objective of this policy is to support staff at relevant professional seminars, conferences and meetings while promoting the highest and best use of limited travel funds.

**Conference Attendance Policy:**

* Approval must be obtained from the Leadership Team and is granted on a case-by-case basis considering certain criteria:
  + Relevance to work assignment
  + Program content[[1]](#footnote-1)
  + Fund availability
  + Coverage for absence
* There is no set number of days or hours allotted for conference time.
* Staff must be willing to share experience with colleagues.
* All staff must follow the department Conference Request Procedure even in cases where funds are obtained from other sources.
* Conference attendance requests are required for any time that will take you outside of the hospital for a minimum of **four hours or more**.
* Requests must be submitted for conference time whether or not there is a cost to attend the conference. Requests are reviewed on Tuesday mornings at Leadership Team meeting.
* No request is required to attend a free in-hospital conference/training; however, you need to discuss it with your Clinical Director/Manager and Team so that coverage can be scheduled.

**Conference Request Procedure:**

1. **Review conference details** **and obtain initial approval** from your Clinical Director/Manager and coverage prior to submitting application to the Leadership Team.
2. **Fill out** [**Request for Conference Time**](http://healthcare.partners.org/ss/ssframebottom/staffresources/forms/Conference%20Request.doc) form completely and accurately.

For registration fees we will reimburse early bird, member or regular rates. We will not pay late registration fees or non-member fees. Check “Time Only” box for requests without reimbursement.

1. **Include supporting documentation** (i.e. brochure/flyer) with Conference Request.
2. **For all paper or poster presentations** **you must discuss the submission of the abstract** with your Clinical Director/Manager prior to requesting conference time. This includes both local and out of town presentations.
3. **Travel arrangements** are to be made through [**www.egencia.com**](http://www.egencia.com). Travel information can be found on the [**Partners Intranet Travel webpage**](http://is.partners.org/finance/travelcentral.html)**.**
4. [**Other Travel Expenses**](http://library.partners.org/PROGRAMS/TROVEIIS.DLL?/IS=1040824458/LI=Partners+Production+Library/ID=40/DI=1027/PA=223/HL=2/PS=429/RW=1024/RH=768/CD=32/VD=PartProd/WV=7/ST=ae/AC=BB/FI=5/HU=http:++is.partners.org+finance+travelcentral.html&)should be noted separately on Conference Request Form in “Other Estimated Expenses”. The Partners Travel webpage lists all reimbursable expenses including specific dollar amounts – please review list prior to departure.
5. **Maximum allowable roundtrip airfare is $500**

1. **Send Conference Request** and supporting documents **at least three (3) weeks prior to the registration deadline** to Maria Pereira, Social Service, WAC 037 by departmental mail.
2. Conference requests are reviewed during the Tuesday Leadership Team Meeting. **You will be notified within two (2) days after application has been reviewed** whether or not the Leadership Team has approved it. If your application has been approved you will be given information on how to obtain payment/reimbursement for registration and travel expenses. Approval may be made for all or part of requested expense.
3. **After the conference (within 30 days**) you must submit your expense report with original receipts to Maria Pereira for reimbursement. Receipts must be original and dated.
4. **If you are seeking departmental reimbursement**:
   1. Please do not pay for the conference until you have received an approval from the Leadership Team.
   2. Please contact Maria Pereira regarding the electronic submission for reimbursement.

If you have any questions regarding this process, please call Susan Morrissey, Director of Business Operations at 726-2651.

1. Program content includes criteria such as presenters’ credentials and reputation of sponsoring organization. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)