Appendix 2. Template of Letter Notifying Resident of Program of Remediation

Dear Dr. ______,

As you are aware, serious concerns about your performance in this residency program have been raised over the course of your training. We have engaged in a regular, ongoing dialogue with you since [DATE] regarding the specific nature of these concerns. We have attempted to provide you with a supportive network and resources to allow you to rise to the level expected of a senior resident in this program. However, despite these interventions and despite an obvious effort on your part to address these shortcomings, little improvement in your performance is apparent and ongoing complaints about your behavioral interactions with staff members have been noted. As a result, we are now compelled to put into place a formal program of remediation, and you shall be placed on probationary status in the residency, effective immediately.

We are committed to helping you with this process of remediation, and we want nothing more than for you to succeed in this program and in your future career. However, you must invest the effort necessary to meet the required goals in order for us to act in good faith and allow you to graduate as an obstetrician-gynecologist who is capable of functioning independently and safely in the community.

The primary deficiencies that have been identified with your performance are:
1. An inadequate fund of knowledge with regard to fundamental concepts in [AREA OF CONCERN].
2. An inability to use sound judgment to independently assess clinical situations and formulate appropriate, comprehensive management plans.
3. Substandard surgical skills.
4. An inability to adequately train and teach junior residents and medical students.
5. An inability to consistently demonstrate respectful and appropriate interpersonal behavior with all members of the health care team.

The plan of correction to be instituted shall include the following elements:
To address the concerns regarding your fund of knowledge and level of clinical competence you must complete the following:

1. A program of weekly instruction in [AREA OF CONCERN] including attendance at the [TYPE OF CONFERENCE] every week. Dr. ___ will then meet with you following the conference for one hour. We have designed a curriculum that will address fundamental concepts in [AREA(s) OF CONCERN], including chapter reviews, discussion of ACOG practice bulletins and/or relevant literature, and review of case scenarios.

2. A similar program of weekly instruction in [AREA OF CONCERN]. Dr. ____ will meet with you for one hour every week. We have designed a curriculum that will address the basic concepts in [AREA OF CONCERN], again including chapter reviews, discussion of ACOG practice bulletins and/or relevant literature, and case scenarios.

3. You will spend some time operating with an attending physician in an effort to improve your surgical skills. This schedule will be arranged by Dr. ___ on an ad hoc basis and you will receive prior notification of when


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this will occur. You will be excused from your clinical duties to attend the above sessions and coverage arrangements will be made for these times so that you may remain in compliance with duty hour requirements.

4. A reading program will obviously be a requirement of this plan for remediation. This self-study is to be done on your own time and should not be considered part of your duty hours.

5. You must remain in compliance with your administrative duties as scheduled each block, i.e. documentation of duty hours, recording operative and ambulatory case logs, evaluations, etc.

6. You will be allowed to continue with the rotational schedule already planned for your PGY ___ year of residency. However, you must discuss ALL patient care decisions and management plans with an attending physician on the service. If it appears at any time that patient safety is being compromised under your care, you may be removed from active clinical duties.

7. Henceforth, you may not operate on any patient unless an attending physician is scrubbed with you on the case. The attending physicians will offer assistance to you in instructing junior residents. If it appears at any time that patient safety is being compromised under your care, either due to excessively long operative time or technical errors, or if the education of junior trainees appears to be jeopardized, the attending physician may take over as the primary surgeon.

To address the concerns regarding your interpersonal behavioral issues you must complete the following:

8. Medical clearance from [NAME OF INSTITUTION] - Dr. _____ in Occupational Health will facilitate a comprehensive consultation, including a medical and psychiatric evaluation and/or psychometric testing if deemed necessary to ensure that there is no organic basis for these behavioral issues. You will be excused from your clinical duties for the remainder of the day.

9. A two-day course on “Improving Your People Skills” is given at [NAME OF INSTITUTION]. This course will be held on [DATE]. The tuition costs will be paid by the department. You will be excused from your clinical duties during this time and coverage will be arranged for you. Your attendance is mandatory.

10. If another serious complaint is lodged against you by a member of the health care team or by a patient, this will be referred to the chair of the department for immediate review and shall constitute possible grounds for dismissal from the program. In addition to the above components of the program, you will continue to meet regularly with Dr. _____ regarding your senior research project, which is also a requirement for graduation. Dr. _____ has agreed to continue to serve as your mentor during this time and may be present at any future meetings, should you choose.

The period of probation shall last for four months. During this time, the residency program directors will meet with you every two weeks to give you direct feedback on your ongoing progress. We encourage you to meet with your mentor on a regular basis during this time as well. A formal evaluation will be held at the end of two months. If at that point no improvement in your performance is noted, the program of remediation will not be continued, and we will have no alternative but to proceed with formal disciplinary action which could result in the termination of your employment. If your progress is deemed adequate after two months, the plan of correction will be continued, and a final evaluation will be held at the completion of the four month period. At Online appendix to Ratan RB, Pica AG, Berkowitz RL. A model for instituting a comprehensive program of remediation for at-risk residents. Obstet Gynecol 2008;112:1155–9.

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that time a decision will be made regarding whether or not your performance has met the standard required for graduation.

We truly hope that this program will offer you the necessary tools to successfully complete your residency and become a competent, caring obstetrician-gynecologist. We are asking you to find the strength within yourself to rise up and fulfill the outstanding promise and talent you showed as a medical student. We remain your advocates, and our doors are always open if we can be of any assistance to you.

Sincerely,

Program Directors