



Creating a Successful Residency Schedule

Using Automated Scheduling Software to Build Better Resident Schedules



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Successful Residency Scheduling

Residency is a challenging yet vital period in a medical career, often characterized by long hours, heavy workloads, continuous learning, and significant responsibility. To ensure the learning experience for residents is as focused as possible, it's essential to establish a well-structured and efficient residency schedule.

The problem? Creating such a schedule can be tedious for program managers when they do it by hand, and it's often very difficult to avoid making errors. More often than not, the process involves multiple revisions, several instances of human error, and unintentional shift imbalances. An automated scheduling solution offers a much more effective way to incorporate key residency scheduling components while reducing these administrative burdens.

Four Scheduling Hurdles for Resident Program Managers and Schedulers

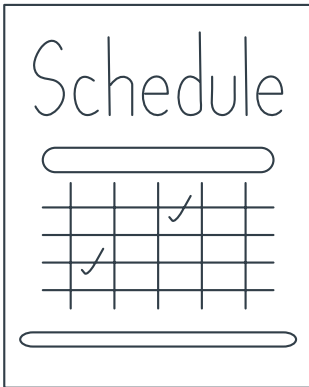
Residency Program Requirements and Restrictions

The sheer number of requirements and other considerations complicates residency schedules and makes building them a frustrating task for program administrators. For example:

Independent Program Requirements	Specific Constraints and Rules	Other Considerations
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Rotation hours• On-call schedules• Continuity of care• Scheduling residents with specific attendings	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Vacation time• Duty hour restrictions• Shift maximums• Scheduling blocks	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Resident and attending pairings across shifts• The ACGME sets a requirement that a resident cannot work more than 80 hours per week

Accounting for requirements like these can be done by hand, but this inevitably leads to schedule gaps, errors, or imbalance across residents and shifts. Any corrections that need to be applied result in multiple iterations of a schedule being created, provider confusion, and increasing frustration on the way to a final schedule. Moreover, if errors aren't caught and fixed, it can lead to residents either exceeding or failing to meet their schedule requirements.

Balancing Workloads and Schedule Equity



Residents and program managers already have a lot on their plates. Adding more frustration in the form of schedule builds that take hours upon hours and often lead to unbalanced schedules should be avoided at all costs. As just one example of problems that can arise, unequal shift distribution can be a major drain on satisfaction for residents. Despite the fact that schedulers have the best of intentions, consistent unfair schedules can easily be misconstrued as favoritism.

Creating schedules manually makes it almost impossible to ensure that shifts, on-call duties, and patient load are spread evenly among all residents at any given time. People are only human, after all!

Engaging Residents in the Scheduling Process

Effective communication and engaged residents are key to optimized scheduling. By giving residents the ability to proactively communicate about their scheduling preferences, program managers can ensure that these preferences—such as time-off requests—are accounted for well in advance.

When building a schedule by hand, trying to balance a multitude of vacation requests, individual schedule preferences, and last-minute changes in real time can lead to intense levels of frustration with a repetitive process that feels more like trial and error than building a precise clinical schedule.



Managing Resident Supply and Demand

When it comes to care delivery, smooth shift transitions are vital for effective handovers and positive patient experiences. An automated scheduling solution can accurately staff the appropriate number of providers for each shift based on demand and will alert schedulers when any preset rule is broken. For example, if a resident is scheduled beyond their hour limits or they aren't scheduled with the appropriate attending, a scheduler would be notified.

Manual schedule creation is prone to human error and can even jeopardize care delivery. Technology can auto-generate schedules well in advance, enabling both schedulers and providers to have peace of mind knowing that even challenging shift changes, such as transitions and handovers, will have sufficient staff to manage patient workload effectively.

How You Can Leverage Resident Scheduling Software for Efficiency

Using Residency Scheduling Software

It won't surprise you to learn that [resident scheduling software](#) automates the creation of residency schedules. But trust us—it's a big deal! Hand-built schedules come with a variety of stressors, they're hard to create without making errors, and they just take too much time. Residency programs can make use of optimized scheduling technology to streamline this process significantly.

Lightning Bolt can enhance any residency program by optimizing the resident schedule, automating shift changes and time-off requests, and accounting for unique rules like residency hour maximums and shift blocks. Lightning Bolt can also ensure that on-call and shift schedules are fair and equitable and gives residents full schedule transparency, meaning they can access the schedule anywhere, any time with a mobile or desktop app. For one health system, Lightning Bolt helped to [reduce the time spent creating schedules by 82%](#).



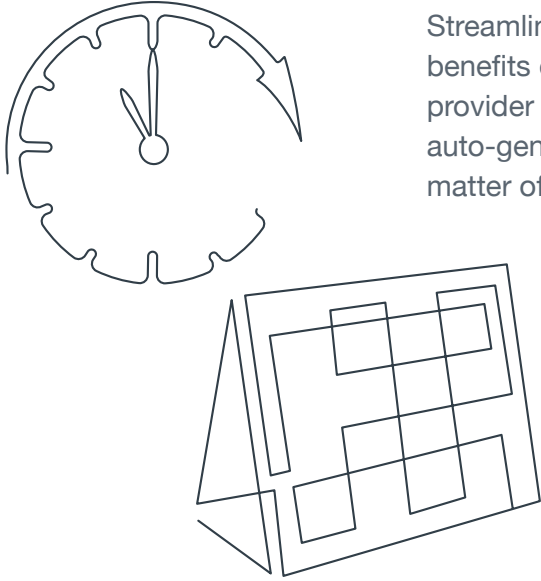
“Lightning Bolt has been a huge help to the Department in managing faculty leave and clinic scheduling management. In addition, we were able to computerize the resident block assignments and tie it in with the attending’s schedule. We transitioned from an old and slow custom-built program, and the difference is night and day.”



– **Benson Won**

**Chief Administrative Officer
Department of Dermatology,
UC Davis**

Streamline Scheduling Tasks



Streamlining the schedule creation process is one of the major benefits of an automated scheduling solution. After entering provider preferences and creating unique rules, a scheduler can auto-generate an optimized and balanced resident schedule in a matter of minutes that avoids the hurdles of manual scheduling.

Some features specific to Lightning Bolt include drag-and-drop scheduling, which allows for easy edits and real-time adjustments; automated shift allocation, which automatically assigns shifts to the right resident; and schedule conflict resolution. The latter allows Lightning Bolt to build schedules without breaking any rules or preferences put in place by a scheduler. However, in the event that a rule must be broken, the customizable nature of rule priority within the Lightning Bolt system means that it will break the lowest-priority rule first. When a rule is broken, the schedule administrator is always notified, and they can decide whether to accept or reject the change.

Improve Resident Satisfaction

Resident scheduling software should facilitate seamless communication and collaboration among program managers, schedulers, and residents. With Lightning Bolt, resident preferences can be entered and managed in real time, so when a schedule is built, their time-off requests, shift preferences, and other details are automatically accounted for. This means keeping track of resident preferences is no longer a game of guesswork that necessitates heavy use of sticky notes.

Other capabilities, such as real-time schedule change notifications and schedule sharing, make communication easier and clearer throughout the entire residency team. When any changes are made to the schedule, all who are affected are instantly notified. Schedule sharing creates a single source of truth for all providers, meaning that one real-time schedule exists and can be accessed at any time from any device.



Optimize Schedule Compliance



Adhering to resident shift requirements and constraints is crucial to producing a fair and accurate schedule for residents. Duty hour regulations are put in place to ensure shift fairness and promote resident wellness. With an automated scheduling solution, these rules can be applied automatically, ensuring resident shift hours are always in compliance with prevailing regulations.

Lightning Bolt does this with features like automatic tracking of work hours, violation alerts when a resident is over-scheduled, and access to rich analytics. Data from analytics can be tracked, measured, and actioned to apply shifts fairly and analyze when a resident may be at risk of burnout.

Powerful Resident Scheduling Integrations

The capabilities of resident scheduling software can be enhanced even further with key integrations. Here are a few [integrations](#) to consider:

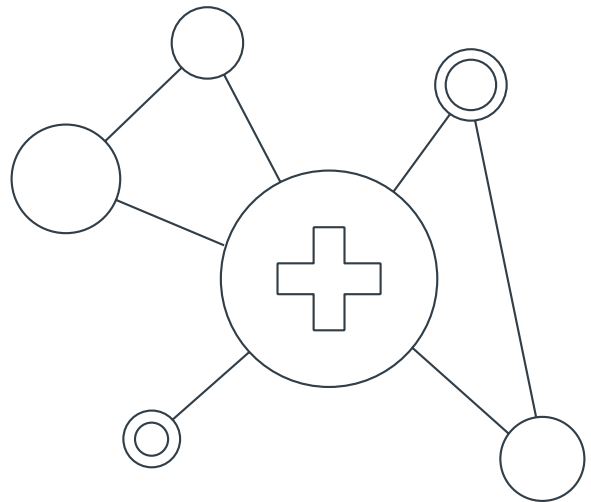
New Innovations

Block Scheduling	Duty Hours
Lightning Bolt integrates with New Innovations' block scheduling to track and manage resident blocks, which are vital for graduation. It provides detailed information on completed and outstanding blocks, ensuring all prerequisites are met before graduation. Additionally, rules can be set to automatically schedule required blocks, ensuring residents fulfill all requirements.	Similar to block scheduling management, resident duty hours must be tracked and managed for graduation purposes. With Lightning Bolt, each shift worked throughout the day (on-call, in clinic, etc.) will show up in the daily calendar within New Innovations.

MyEvaluations

Lightning Bolt seamlessly integrates with MyEvaluations, a comprehensive residency management service. Through this integration, health systems can automate:

- Evaluation assignments that are specific to the rotation and training level of each resident
- Curriculum notifications with integrated objectives, procedures, and patient log requirements
- Rotation compliance reporting that monitors teaching and learning
- Clinic hour management with data pre-population, processing, and verification
- RIS/STAR reports and data exporting and institutional invoicing



Other Key Clinical Platforms

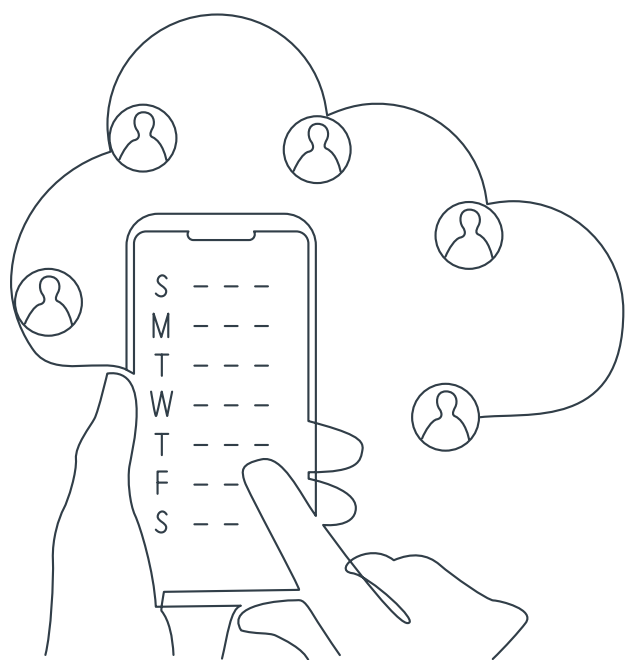
Lightning Bolt supports [more than 200 integrations with other clinical systems](#), which means your clinical communication platform, call center software, demographics, EHR, payroll system, patient scheduling platform, and more can all be tightly integrated with an accurate, up-to-date schedule. These customizable integrations facilitate advanced workflows and care team coordination across your organization.



Limiting Scheduling Complexity with Lightning Bolt

Creating a fair and compliant residency schedule by hand is often an exercise in futility for program managers and shift schedulers. The downstream impacts of an inadequate schedule are varied, but for residents in particular, it can create excess stress during an especially difficult time in their careers, and it can even prevent them from meeting residency requirements. With persistent staffing shortages and elevated levels of burnout across the healthcare industry, residents need as much support as possible to keep engagement high and maintain their passion for working in the medical field.

Embracing automated scheduling software like Lightning Bolt helps maintain shift balance, fulfill all residency requirements, and enhance satisfaction for residents, program managers, and schedulers alike.



“Lightning Bolt enabled us to coordinate our numerous variables within an academic physician model into a condensed schedule. The technical support has been exceptional in responding and customizing our requirements.”



– **Maureen Conlon**

**Provincial Health Services
Authority, Vancouver, BC, Canada**



About Lightning Bolt

Lightning Bolt is the healthcare industry's most advanced physician workforce management solution. In any given month, Lightning Bolt manages more than three million shift hours by auto-generating complete, accurate, and equitable schedules that improve both provider satisfaction and patient access while reducing the administrative workload associated with manual schedule builds.

With more than 20 years of experience, the Lightning Bolt team has developed deep domain expertise in the areas of physician workflow, hospital operations, artificial intelligence, and professional balance. Lightning Bolt is part of PerfectServe's solution portfolio, which accelerates speed to care by improving communication and collaboration throughout the care continuum.

To learn more or reserve a demo with an innovative scheduling partner, please contact us:

1.866.202.4323 Ext. 4

connect@lightning-bolt.com

lightning-bolt.com