



Postgraduate Medical Education
Covid-19 Update
Nov 29, 2020

Site Specific Updates:

I am aware of some difficulty on the part of both learners and programs in accessing information regarding the changing status of “outbreak” and “watch” units at our various teaching sites. I am now receiving timely updates from the majority of sites and will pass these along to you via this list-serve. This will mean an increase in the volume of emails each of you will receive but I believe it is important to make the data available to all.

Attached to this email is the most recent Covid-19 information I have available for the FHH, RGH, ACH and SHC sites.

Redeployment:

As Covid-19 case numbers continue to rise, new requests have been submitted for redeployment of resident physicians to assist in the delivery of clinical care. At the moment, these requests are primarily for assistance with the surge developing in critical care units across the Calgary zone.

The potential impact on education and learner well-being is recognized. It must be emphasized that the redeployment process is proceeding on the same principles that were used earlier in the spring: reassignment is voluntary and is initiated only after consultation with the resident and discussion with the Program Director. Once readiness to redeploy is confirmed the resident will be contacted by the receiving program.

Many thanks to those residents who have already volunteered for redeployment. There is still a need for additional volunteers, particularly for Block 7 in ICU. Programs are asked to contact Crystal Boisselle crystal.boisselle@ucalgary.ca with the names of any residents who are willing to be redeployed.

Temporary Redeployment to Emergency Register

In the spring of 2020, arrangements were put in place to allow final year trainees to secure Emergency Registration with CPSA in order to function as “independent practitioners”. I received notification from AHS that this process will now be reinstated as part of the response to the surge in Covid patient volumes. I want to emphasize the following points:

- This is also meant to be a voluntary process
- Implications for completion of training, preparation for certification examinations, resident wellness, and overall impact on a training program need to be considered by both the trainee and the program
- Approval of the Program Director and PGME is required.
- There is also an approval process at the level of ZEOC and/or the Zone Medical Director

My understanding is that residents who are interested, and for whom approvals are in place. will be contacted directly by CPSA. Similar to arrangements in the spring, employment will continue uninterrupted so that benefits and membership in PARA is maintained. Specific questions regarding financial remuneration and CMPA implications should be directed to AHS.

Resident Extender Shifts:

Following discussions at PGME committee in the spring, it was decided that resident extender bookings would be suspended during times of redeployment. Program directors were supportive of this decision in order to preserve resident availability for redeployment and to promote financial equity among residents. This request was again made in anticipation of the need for redeployment in block 7.

The current situation is unfolding somewhat differently from the spring: clinics and ORs remain operational. Internal departmental redeployments, emergency registration of senior residents and increasing resident absences due to COVID exposures are creating scheduling pressures. We have heard from some units that the current circumstances will increase the need to access resident extenders. In response to these concerns, and in an effort to support clinical services, suspension of resident extenders will be relaxed. The usual requirements for resident participation in extender work remain unchanged.

As you are aware, this is a fluid situation and it may be necessary to reassess this situation as the pandemic evolves.

Alternate Housing:

A reminder that support for alternate housing is available for learners who are concerned about the possibility of transmission of Covid-19 to household contacts. Details with regard to this subsidy program are attached to this email.

Where can I Find Additional Covid-19 Information?

Please consult the Covid-19 section of the PGME website where you will find an updated FAQ, communications from the Joint Consultation Committee, a document outlining “Principles for Trainee Redeployment, and all PGME memos starting in March 2020.

<https://cumming.ucalgary.ca/programs/pgme/covid19/resources/information>

Physician Well-Being

This is a time of unprecedented challenge for health care workers. A great deal has transpired since the spring and I appreciate the multiple stressors with which residents and fellows are having to cope. The situation is made especially difficult by the “disconnect” we all feel as a result of social distancing and working remotely.

Please don't hesitate to access resources, including your program Ombudsman, Office of Resident Affairs and Physician Wellness, and AMA Physician Family Support Services. The counsellors at the wellness office offer flexible hours to accommodate your schedules so please reach out. I am providing relevant links, including a list of current residency program Ombuds.

<https://cumming.ucalgary.ca/pgme/wellness/residents>

residentwellness@ucalgary.ca T: 403-210-6525

<https://www.albertadoctors.org/services/pfsp>

<https://cumming.ucalgary.ca/pgme/contacts/residency-program-directory/residency-program-ombuds>

I would like to recognize the tremendous efforts of Program Directors, Program Administrators, and PGME staff as we navigate this pandemic together, as a community.

Many thanks to our outstanding residents and fellows for your patience, hard work, and tireless commitment to patient care during this very stressful time.



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