



Postgraduate Medical Education Covid – 19 Update April 25, 2021

Incoming & Outgoing Electives:

As you are already aware, patient volumes and acuity continue to rise during this 3rd wave of the Covid-19 pandemic. Public health measures are regularly updated and restrictions vary between individual hospitals and provincial jurisdictions. There is currently a stay-at-home order in effect in Ontario, and restrictions to travel have been introduced both within and between provinces in British Columbia, Ontario, New Brunswick and the entire maritime region.

Electives undoubtedly play an important role in postgraduate medical education. In developing a PGME-wide approach, the implications of interrupting these experiences was balanced with provincial public health directives and travel restrictions and the imperative to ensure the health and safety of learners. Recognizing that there is no uniformity of opinion on this issue, and after consultation with residents and program directors, I have determined that the following restrictions will come into effect:

- ❖ All incoming and outgoing electives within the province of Alberta will continue as scheduled
- ❖ All incoming and outgoing interprovincial electives will be suspended for Blocks 12 and 13
- ❖ Trainees on elective outside Alberta will be permitted to complete the current elective but no new elective experiences may be initiated.
- ❖ Exceptions to interprovincial electives will be similar to previous and include:
 - educational experiences that are mandated as a part of a formal interuniversity agreement and that cannot be rescheduled
 - learners completing an elective in Block 13 with a plan to remain in the receiving province to begin either a new training program or start of practice (i.e. there is no plan to return to the originating province)

PGME will notify all incoming residents and home programs. I will also make the PG Deans at all universities aware of this decision. The suspension will be re-evaluated at the beginning of Block 13 based on the status of the pandemic both here and across the country.

I appreciate that many residents have electives planned for Blocks 1 and 2. I do not see a need to cancel these at the moment since it is too early to predict the impact of Covid-19 at that point. As previously emphasized, please ensure there is a back-up plan in place in the event that these electives cannot proceed.

I understand that late cancellation of electives will have financial implications. My understanding is that the majority of medical regulatory authorities have agreed to reimburse trainees for any costs associated with a

cancelled experience due to Covid. PGME may be able to assist with the cost of travel and accommodations in cases where the vendor is unwilling/unable to provide a refund and appropriate documentation can be made available. Please bring these to the attention of your program director who can communicate directly with the business group at PGME.

I fully appreciate the impact of this decision on residents both here and in other centers. Thank you for your patience and understanding during these very challenging times.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Lisa Welikovich". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "L" and "W".

Lisa Welikovich MD FRCP
Associate Dean, PGME