

March 20th, 2020

McMaster PGME Update

Dear Residents and Fellows,

Another week has gone by since my last communication to you. There has been a significant amount of activity this last week with changes in hospitals, work from home modelling in many areas, and ongoing changes in clinical activity, much of which has affected your residency programs.

I will highlight some of the key developments in this update. As always, please feel free to [email me](#) any questions as it helps us know what concerns you have so we can help to address them. I have added some of these questions posed by residents in this update.

Let me take this opportunity to thank- you and remind you how proud we all are of our residents and fellows who have all stepped up in these unprecedented times of stress and uncertainty. I recognize that along with concerns of personal safety and that of loved ones, our PG Learners also have the stress of losing educational time, stress over applications to subspecialty programs/ fellowships and the certification exams. None of us underestimate the added worries on our Learners in addition to those experienced by all healthcare workers. Even if perhaps we do not always have the answers or cannot change things, we are here to support you.

All of the information received from hospitals, PARO etc. is housed on our [PGME Website](#). We also have [a FAQ](#) which we are actively developing and adding to based on your questions.

PGME Work from Home

As of Wednesday March 18th, the Postgraduate Medical Education Office adapted a work-from-home model. During this time, our staff will continue to have access to their phone voicemails, and we will be fully committed to checking them multiple times a day. We will also be available via email during our normal working hours, 800- 1600. Our goal is to respond to all emails and voicemails in a timely matter and have a response rate that matches that of our current response time. If you have an urgent matter, please tag your email with high importance. Please review our list of contacts on our [contact us page](#). We continue to be dedicated to support you and respond to your inquiries.

I am happy to meet with you individually at any time if you feel that would be helpful. Just let me know.

In the event of a lost or damaged ID badge, you can attain a new ID badge at the security office of MUMC- for HHS sites (1280 Main Street West) during the hours **0700 to 1500 hours, Mon-Fri.** or the St. Joe's security office for SJHH access badge (50 Charlton Avenue East, Mary Grace G1103) during the hours of **0830 to noon and 1300 to 1500 hours, Mon-Fri.** If a new badge is issued, **you must [email the PGME office](#)** with the new badge number – this is the first 5 digits found on the back of the card. This information is required to arrange Scrubex access for the new badge and MedSIS must be updated with the new number.

Self-Quarantine after International Travel

This has certainly been a moving target over the last 10 days. HHS has recently released a memo that any travel March 5th and onwards is subject to a 14-day isolation period with Day 1 being the day of travel home. We had originally asked residents and fellows to self-isolate after travel on March 13th onwards. PGME has adapted the HHS policy and those affected will already have been notified by their program director. Please note that the 14 self-isolation period applies regardless of what hospital in which you are working. We have experienced that PG Learners have been receiving different instructions by EHS – PGME is following the March 5th travel date. Both HHS and SJH have aligned for all current returning travellers.

COVID-19

- I encourage you to review this [FAQ](#) created by our Infectious Disease physicians, Dr. Eva Piessens, which I hope will help with some questions arising about illness during this time. Please let me know if there are questions not answered and we can add to it.
- **EHS:** I know there have been issues of access to Employee Health Services and response time. At HHS, EHS have increased their hours of yesterday, All COVID-19 related cases going to EHS have moved to email and phone systems – they have ramped up their personnel and have extended hours of operation from 600-1600 for email and phone calls (ext. 42200) for reporting any respiratory symptoms, risk factors. We have established weekly calls with EHS to ensure that communication from PGME and EHS at HHS and SJH is consistent for our PG Learners.
- Learners who require EHS for regular services (TB testing, needle stick injuries, etc.) are able to access the office in person as per normal process.
- **PPE:** All of you are aware of potential shortages of PPE. In ER and on many floors, it has been stored in designated areas and you may have to ask nursing managers. If you are unclear whether or what PPE needs to be used, please discuss with your supervisor. At all times, we want you to feel safe while providing care to patients and if there is any situation in which you feel unsafe, please discuss with your supervisor prior to assessing the patient.
- **[HHS info of the donning and doffing of PPE \(with N95\):](#)** As you recall, aside for Aerosol generating procedures (intubation, BiPaP, etc.) patients with respiratory illness even suspected COVID19, droplet contact has been implemented, which means surgical mask, and eye protection, yellow gown and gloves.
- Please review [Types of Precautions](#) power point presentation.

Certification Exams:

There have been multiple discussions at many levels with CFPC and the Royal College. CFPC sent a communication on March 19th to all eligible candidates that the exam will be held in October 2020, provided of-course that pandemic conditions have resolved. The Royal College has just released a letter to all residents that the written examination will now be considered for September 2020. I realise this conflicts with the earlier letter sent by the Royal College but as outlined in the most recent letter, it was felt in this time of uncertainty, this was the most responsible action. I know this has been a major stress for our final-year residents with so many months of preparation but I do want to reassure you that a

great deal of thought and discussion with all major stakeholders, including RDoC took place prior to this decision.

Provisional Licensing

The regulatory bodies (CPSO) has committed to exploring options to grant provisional licenses to those who have been deemed to have fulfilled training/competency requirements and are waiting to sit the certification examinations and in some cases, the MCCQE2. More details will become available in the next 4 weeks.

Changes to Residency programs:

The specific information will obviously come from your program director. All programs with your help are trying to find solutions to common scenarios. I do want to highlight:

Virtual care – we look upon this not only for patient care and decreasing exposure risk but also as an educational opportunity for all of us, and our Learners. You may find these two resources on virtual care of interest: [A Virtual Care Discussion](#) and a [Report on Virtual Care](#) - both are very long but would direct you to page 35 on the taskforce guidelines on virtual care in medical education.

We are working on principles for redeployment strategies as they affect residents and fellows. We do want to reassure that wherever possible; program directors are having residents complete educational experiences that count toward credentialing and they are being as creative as possible to develop competencies that can be assessed in other areas. We will use the waiver process of both Colleges with the goal of having residents complete on time, if possible. At this time, this is extremely difficult to guarantee (dependent on how long this continues) as we also need to ensure that you are appropriately prepared for independent practice- however periods of times such as 2 weeks of isolation will not affect graduation time (question being asked by many residents).

Resident Affairs: Message from Dr. John Miller and Lisa Giles

The Resident Affairs team is thinking of you during this challenging time, particularly given the crucial role of residents and fellows as front-line health care providers. We know that this situation is and will not be easy in the coming weeks. The Resident Affairs office remains available for remote phone/video appointments. Please continue to schedule counselling appointments with Lisa Giles via our [booking website](#) or by email (lisa.giles@medportal.ca) and with Resident Affairs director John Miller directly by email (jmiller@mcmaster.ca). For community and self-help resources, please visit the [Learners in Distress resource page](#).

Resident Affairs has set up two open discussion forums where residents and fellows can join the conversation via zoom. This provides Learners with an opportunity to learn more about coping strategies, resources to support you, and to discuss a variety of topics and questions with other Learners who find themselves experiencing similar challenges. We invite you to join us.

Tuesday March 24, 12pm-1pm:

<https://zoom.us/j/708516798?pwd=d2p2cVN5aUx0UIMxZE9oZlBBSy9GUT09>

Meeting ID: 708 516 798

Password: 016198

Thursday, March 26, 12pm-1pm:

<https://zoom.us/j/497612264?pwd=ckdpTnBENVR2cIF0UmIVV1Z6MW1sUT09>

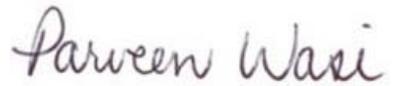
Meeting ID: 497 612 264

Password: 014775

We wish you all health and courage in this stressful time. Please do not hesitate to reach out to us if you can use our support.

Thank-you everyone and take of yourself and each other.

Parveen

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Parveen Wasi".

Parveen Wasi, M.D., F.R.C.P.C.
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