

## PGME Update May 10th, 2020

Dear Residents and Fellows,

There is very little change since my last update so apologies ahead of time for potentially repeating what you may already know. Just our way in PGME to keep in touch with all of you.

### Hospital Updates:

#### **1. Redeployment:**

Number of admitted COVID cases in our Hamilton, Kitchener and Niagara hospitals continue to be stable ( SJH: 6; HHS: 13) Redeployment continues to be on hold and given the stability over weeks, it appears less and less likely that redeployment will be necessary over the next couple of months. At this time, I do want to acknowledge and sincerely thank all of you for your support, unwavering commitment to patient care and our communities, and your patience. All of us recognize that we would not have been able to mount an appropriate response to this pandemic without you.

I also want to acknowledge those of you that have been internally re-deployed within your programs and working at the frontlines. Many of you have also been involved in clinical activities outside the teaching hospitals to provide help and support to our communities. A sincere thank-you.

#### **2. Infection Control**

As you are all aware, hospitals have moved to universal masking in all clinical and non-clinical areas. The psychiatry program leadership sent out an email to their learners regarding good infection control practices which I thought I would share with all of you. Many of the recent outbreaks in the hospitals have been related to staff-staff interaction, highlighting that masks and social distancing is as important for our interactions with our colleagues as well as patients.

- Put on your mask as soon as you go in the door of the hospital / clinic.
- Masks should be worn throughout the day, in clinical AND non-clinical areas, consistently, including in staff-staff interactions.
- Masks protect everyone from asymptomatic carriers who may be shedding an infectious organism before they become symptomatic.
- Only take your mask off when you are alone in a room and have a safe way of storing it. We recommend hanging it in a Tupperware container by the ear loops.
- If you are able, you should be eating alone when at work, recognizing that appropriate spaces may not be available in certain areas.
- Hand-wash before and after you touch a common high-touch item including door handles, computer mouse, keyboards, and phones.
- Please consider wiping down computer keyboards and phones before you use them (squeeze out excess fluid from wipes first).
- Use hands-free on phones whenever possible and appropriate to do so. If you must hold the phone, do not put it right next to your face.
- Avoid touching your face always.
- Maintain physical distancing of 2 metres/6 feet as much as possible, in all patient and staff interactions.

### 3. Re-introduction of clinical services

HHS and SJH, through provincial directives, are actively developing plans that will gradually introduce clinical services such as electives surgeries and outpatient clinics. We do not have specific information yet about the specific plans for re-introduction, but hospitals must also maintain capacity for potential COVID19 outbreaks over the next few weeks. Your Program Director will have more specific information about any changes that will ramp up educational opportunities for residents and fellows.

#### PGME Updates:

##### 1. Accommodations

PGME has actively been working with McMaster's housing office to facilitate accommodation for residents and fellows who require alternate housing arrangements. We are happy to announce that housing services at McMaster is able to offer our Learners (who require accommodation for either self-isolation due to COVID-19 exposure or learners who are in high-risk rotations and live with vulnerable family members) a room in Les Prince Hall on the McMaster campus. The cost per night is \$32 with a commitment of a 5-night stay. Learners cannot arrange accommodations for less than 5 nights. Each room is equipped with a private washroom and a small bar fridge. In the event Learners are COVID + and or have been exposed to COVID-19 and cannot leave their room, housing services is able to offer a meal plan (3 meals a day, delivered to your room) for an additional \$22/day.

The registration process will be a two-tiered process (a PGME form plus a housing form). Begin the process by accessing the [PGME Accommodation Intake Form](#) or by visiting the PGME webpage - [McMaster Accommodations Housing for Learners](#). Please be sure to follow the instructions provided.

Alternatively, as mentioned in previous communication, Learners who require accommodation (who have not been exposed nor tested positive for COVID19) can access a reduced per night stay [at Staybridge Suites](#).

##### 2. Electives

Postgraduate electives within Canada can start as of July 1st. However, there are regional variations in terms of COVID19 cases and need for self-isolation. Please refer to this summary list for [provincial guidelines](#) for self-isolation.

Health Care Workers Exempt (14-day isolation)	No restrictions for domestic travelers	Self-monitoring for domestic travelers	Must self-isolate for 14 days
Newfoundland	Ontario	Saskatchewan	Nunavut (requires letter to travel into territory)
Prince Edward Island	Alberta	Northwest Territories (contact territorial government and complete risk assessment)	
Nova Scotia	British Columbia		
New Brunswick			
Manitoba			
Quebec			
Yukon			

Even if there is no requirement for self-isolation for a province, there may be hospital requirements. If you have an elective booked in the next three months, please contact the electives coordinator at the university's PGME office to ensure that the elective is still happening and if there are any precautions that need to be taken. Electives that require self-isolation for 14 days prior to clinical activity must be discussed with your Program Director. The 14

days will be treated as an unpaid Leave of Absence, unless taken as vacation days, and requires approval by your Program Director. International electives will not be possible at this time due to the international bans.

**3. Medicine/ Pediatrics and Family Medicine-Enhanced Skills CaRMS matches**

These will be proceeding as outlined in the CaRMS website with no changes to dates. All interviews across Canada will be conducted virtually.

**4. Certificates for completion of training**

These will be available when the PGME office opens. For those of you who require a certificate for jobs or fellowship, please contact the PGME office and we will provide a letter confirming completion of training.