



Residency Training Program
Internal Medicine
Faculty of Health Sciences
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Memo from the Director, Internal Medicine Residency Program

December 24, 2020

Effective immediately, with exemptions as listed below, the Internal Medicine residency program is suspending incoming and outgoing electives for the core Internal Medicine residents for Blocks 8 to 10 inclusive. This decision was made by the Internal Medicine residency program with the endorsement of the Postgraduate Dean, Dr. Parveen Wasi and the Chair of Medicine, Dr. Mark Crowther. Many factors were considered, including the inequity created for all Canadian residents who are seeking out of town experiences within the setting of more than half of Internal Medicine programs across the country already being closed to electives.

Exemptions allowing residents to complete the usual number of pre-MSM electives are recommended:

- for residents applying to subspecialties where training programs are not available at their home university
- for residents competing for subspecialties with multiple entry routes (specifically - Clinical Pharmacology and Toxicology, Critical Care Medicine, Pain Medicine, Palliative Medicine or Medical Biochemistry)
- if an elective falls as part of an Inter-Institution Affiliation agreement
- for electives scheduled at the end of training for an "off-cycle" Internal Medicine PGY3 who is using elective time to move permanently to a new home institution.

This temporary ban of electives applies to core Internal Medicine residents from McMaster and from other university sites who are seeking out of town electives. Physical Medicine and Rehab have also decided to close to external electives under the same directive as Internal Medicine. Other McMaster non-IM training programs, whose affiliation is with a division within the Department of Medicine (Emergency Medicine, Critical Care, Neurology), are not included in this directive and remain open to electives at this time. Electives for other postgraduate training programs also remain open.

This decision was made with the best interests of our internal medicine residents in mind. I appreciate the news is disappointing to both the residents and the medicine subspecialties who host visiting residents. We will work together to accommodate our residents by offering local elective experiences until the ban is lifted. I am optimistic the situation will improve when the curve flattens and once residents and other front line health care workers have been vaccinated.

Yours Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "L. N. Whitehead".

Lori N. Whitehead, MD, FRCPC
Director, Internal Medicine Residency Program
Professor, Department of Medicine
McMaster University