



MEMO

Date: March 12, 2020

To: Family Practice and Enhanced Skills Residents
Site Directors, Family Practice Postgrad
Portfolio Directors, Family Practice Postgrad
Administrators, Family Practice and Enhanced Skills

CC: Dr. Rob Petrella, Head, Department of Family Practice
Dr. Tina Webber, Program Director, Enhanced Skills
Dr. Ravi Sidhu, Associate Dean, PGME
Dr. Sonia Butterworth, Assistant Dean, PGME
Melanie Pedersen, Director, Administration, PGME
Rob Brackenbury, Senior Manager, PGME
Toby Achtman, Executive Director, BC College of Family Physicians

From: Mark MacKenzie, Director, Family Practice, Postgraduate Programs

Re: COVID-19 Outbreak

Dear Residents and Program Stakeholders,

The Covid-19 outbreak is evolving quickly and there is need for some clarity around program and resident activities within this context. The situation is fluid and updates may be necessary in the days and weeks to come. As such, updates will be posted on the [UBC PGME](#) website and our own [UBC Family Practice Residency Program](#) website for updates.

PGME and our program are relying on BCCDC, Health Authorities, and the Public Health Agency of Canada for guidance in this matter moving forward.

Dr. Ravi Sidhu, Post Graduate Dean, has released a FAQ memo (found on their website) which addresses resident concerns regarding:

- Residents working with COVID-19 cases
- Certification Examinations
- Residents' travel
- Meetings, academic sessions and half days
- Covering call / services
- Residents with symptoms
- Residents returning from COVID-19 affected regions
- Residents concerned about exposure
- Do I attend work if I have concerns?
- Working from home

This program specific memo is intended to act as a supplement to the PGME information and provide some program specific context and direction while staying consistent with the directives as provided by PGME.

What is happening to the CFPC and MCC exams?

Memos have been received from both the CFPC and the MCC. The exams are going ahead as planned. If you are unable to attend due to health, quarantine, or travel restriction, accommodations will be made and every effort will be made to avoid delay of graduation and /or licensure.

There will be no financial penalty in the event of health, quarantine or travel restriction exam deferral.

What if I am apprehensive about attending work because of my personal or medical status?

These are stressful times for patients, families, and all those involved in the health care system.

We are all navigating new territory personally and professionally and this experience provides urgent opportunity to listen to each other and find ways to support each other as individuals and colleagues, while still fulfilling our vocational and contractual obligations.

As Residents, you are HEABC employees and as such are required to attend work as long as you are medically fit. There are currently no exemptions for special populations such as pregnant residents, residents with young children at home, or residents caring for older family members.

The health authority is required to provide a safe work environment for all employees and this includes the provision of clear guidelines relating to care of patients who have respiratory illness, concerning travel history, travel history plus illness, or confirmed Covid-19 positivity. These guidelines should be clear wherever and whenever you are working in a hospital or health authority facility.

All of you spend time in non-hospital clinic and ambulatory care settings. All clinics have been provided guidelines provided by the health authorities relating to the care and assessment of at risk patients.

If you have cause to believe that you are unsafe in either the hospital or clinic setting you should inform your immediate supervisor and site director and remove yourself from the work environment until the issue has been addressed. This is in keeping with the UBC PGME Safety Policy.

Currently BCCDC is recommending personal protective equipment (PPE) including surgical mask and face shield for any swab procedure and for interacting with patients with flu-like symptoms.

BCCDC is currently advising N95 masks only for aerosol producing procedures but there may be site specific variances to this recommendation.

Will my training be extended if I am on self-isolation?

Every effort will be made to avoid prolongation of training in the event of self-isolation advised by the Medical Health Officer.

What about Program activities?

The principles of social distancing should be applied when planning program events. Essentially this means following standard flu season precautions, minimizing unnecessary gatherings of people, avoiding mass gatherings of people, and maintaining physical distance of 1m from each other when meetings do occur.

The Public Health Agency of Canada has clear guidelines that support decision making around event cancellation.

Academic days will be able to continue as per usual but some large sites may elect to provide the option of attending academic day virtually.

Similarly, practice SOO exams and practice OSCE sessions may need to be adjusted to allow for appropriate physical distancing of participants. If this cannot be accommodated then the events may need to be modified, rescheduled or in the worst case scenario, cancelled.

For the next six weeks program retreats should be re-scheduled or convened virtually.

Our PGEC is booked for May 1, 2020 and it is currently going forward as planned. We will update next week.

Please contact me or the program office if you have any other questions or concerns.

Thank you,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Mark MacKenzie', written in a cursive style.

Mark MacKenzie, MD, CCFP(EM)
Program Director, Postgraduate Programs