



18 March 2020

Dear Colleagues,

On Tuesday, the Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada distributed an Update to candidates scheduled to sit their examinations. In discussions with the College of Family Physicians of Canada this morning, we understand that they intend to communicate with candidates on Thursday.

We have worked extensively with both of these examining bodies since last Thursday when it was becoming increasingly clear to the medical leadership in Canada that our country was bracing for significant policy changes designed to limit the spread of COVID-19. We know from our discussions with them, how difficult it was for the MCC, the CFPC and the RCPSC to make the decision to postpone the exams. It is hard to remember that last Thursday, the idea of cancelling these exams seemed like a tough call.

However, by Friday evening, provincial governments were strongly suggesting that Canadians not leave the country for spring break and by Monday we were all waking up to urgent messages that all non-essential workers should stay home and work remotely. National travel restrictions have been announced, with the suggestion that tighter controls are still to come. If the number of Canadians becoming ill increases, we know that many of you will become vital members of the front-line delivery of health care in our country. In the past 48 hours we have heard from many of you that your thoughts are rapidly shifting from the medical educational impact of COVID-19 to the magnitude of the potential clinical impact of this pandemic on patients, colleagues, family and friends.

Following the recent announcement from the Royal College we have heard from many of you. Understandably, many of you are happy with the Royal College's recent announcement and many of you are not. Some of you are concerned that the Royal College's plans to reschedule the written exams in April and May will not be feasible if we are in the midst of a major pandemic. Please rest assured that we are continuing to actively advocate for contingency plans and alternatives that ensure you receive your certification.

Thank you to the hundreds of residents who emailed [covid19@residentdoctors.ca](mailto:covid19@residentdoctors.ca) to offer solutions, ask questions, vent their frustrations, express their anxiety, and explain the personal and professional impact of the exam postponement. RDoC has read and responded to every email, closely followed social media, and familiarized ourselves with on-line petitions.

We recognize that the updates so far from the national examination organizations do not provide all of the definitive answers, but that is understandable – there remains a lot of uncertainty related to the impact of this pandemic. What is certain, however, is that there is currently a concerted effort to ensure that you can obtain your certification with as little disruption as is feasible and that whatever disruption ensues, your ability to be licensed to practice while you await certification is not jeopardized. We have confirmation that every medical regulatory authority in Canada will provide some form of provisional license. We are now reaching out to the

Regulatory Authorities to encourage them to communicate this information either on their respective website or by email.

We have asked the national examination bodies to be clear in what they know and what they don't when communicating with you. We appreciate that they are developing plans for the examinations to resume at the end of April, but appreciate even more that they have been clear, that if the COVID-19 situation worsens, public health or government policies may dictate that they have to make further changes. We have asked for ample time for residents to prepare for new examination dates in the event of more changes to schedules.

Many residents also contacted us to encourage the Royal College to use Twitter as a way to augment their messages, **after** emails have been delivered. We believe that in times of uncertainty, you need to be certain about who to listen to, and certain about what you are being told - even if the message is that things aren't certain. For our part, RDoC is committed to having your back and working hard to represent over 10,000 residents' best interests. We are committed to making sure that the information you receive from us is accurate and helpful.

As we continue to work with the national examining bodies to hammer out some of the ongoing details related to the exams, we are also ramping up our efforts to help support and coordinate the incredible work being done to manage the clinical impact of COVID-19 by the resident leadership and professional staff at your Provincial Housestaff Organization, be it RDBC, PARA, RDoS, PARIM, PARO, MarDocs or PARNL. Drawing on the experience of the provinces that dealt with SARS, we are helping to ensure the questions you will have about working through a pandemic are answered.

Thank you to those who have reached out with words of encouragement and support but more importantly, thank you again to everyone that has expressed their commitment to care for our fellow Canadians as we work together through the coming days.

Warm regards,

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