Very exciting: the start of clerkship draws ever closer!
Updates on a couple of issues around electives, which are of course a very important part of your clerkship.

**Visiting Electives**
The national groups of UME Deans meets regularly to discuss issues that are relevant to our students and our MD programs. Every school in the country is represented. As you are aware, there was a previous decision that there would be no visiting electives for the class of 2022 before July 2021.

We spent over an hour this morning talking about reopening visiting electives. The bottom line is that what was clearly decided was that we will not be opening visiting electives on July 1. Quite honestly, as much as anything, this is a practical consideration: when most schools are certain that they will not be accepting visiting clerks over July and August, any philosophical or other discussion becomes moot. We are going to revisit the decision about later electives (beginning in the fall) over the next two to three months.

My greatest concern is that if visiting electives open in the fall, then there would be inequities among our students in the weeks available for visiting electives. There would also be inequities across schools and even from student to student (cost, safety, etc). In any event, at this point, this is where the group has landed for the time being.

I will repeat something I have said before: I remain firm in my belief that it is a very real possibility that visiting electives will NOT open in the fall. Of course I don't know that for sure, but it is a very real possibility.

What this means is that students who have elective blocks through July and August should plan to book those electives locally. As you know, the booking period opens on Friday Feb 5 at 1300h and is first come, first served as before. We have reminded elective booking coordinators about this date/time so that they are aware that it will be a busy day on email. Students with later elective blocks can also book these locally. If a decision is made to open visiting electives in the fall, we will still have plenty of lead time to cancel local electives without the inconvenience of late cancellations.

**Local Elective Limits**
The Clerkship Committee met yesterday and decided that we would remove our local limits on the number of electives that can be done in any one specialty. In a normal year, students are only allowed one two-elective in a discipline locally; for the class of 2021 it was raised to two two-week electives (with the potential to do more, where felt to be justified, educationally). For the class of 2022, we aren't going to impose any specific limits on this.

This doesn’t obviate the need for all clerks to follow the national electives diversification policy (the ‘eight week cap’) — https://www.afmc.ca/priorities/elective-diversification. This is still in effect and student electives are monitored locally to make sure that everyone complies with the rules.

Also important to keep in mind that in some clinical areas, the capacity for electives will serve as a sort of local cap: if 100 clerks want to do eight weeks of electives in neurology in Calgary, they can’t all be accommodated.

I know that starting clerkship, at the best of times, can produce some anxiety. Changing to a completely different type of day-to-day activity is challenging! Remember that there are lots of supports around: SAW, UME, the PFSP of the AMA and your family doctor are all great places to start. This year, with ongoing change being the norm, its even more difficult. We all know that and are here to support you.

Take care

KB
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