All

I’m going to start with some good news, as that does seem to be in short supply these days. My heart is warmed by the fact that within 11 minutes last night, we had our 20 volunteers to start training and working as contact tracers with Public Health today. I am also further overjoyed to note that as of right now, I have over 100 more volunteers for training and service in contact tracing. You are all awesome. I have bragged about you to the rest of the UME offices in the country.

I would also like to acknowledge that I know that there are many reasons why some of you may not be able to volunteer to help out with this! We shouldn’t hold anything against our colleagues who aren’t on that list.

I will be communicating further with the first 60 people on the waitlist later today about how to access the online training session that will be taking place tomorrow. For everyone who I don’t email today, I will likely be in touch in the next day or two with the next training session or other opportunity to help.

Even if you aren’t available for contact tracing, there should be some other opportunities coming down the pipe. Dr. Naugler is continuing to try and find a way for our students to help out with Health Link. There are some other great student ideas percolating to do important support work and there will be further communications coming soon.

As of this afternoon, Western, Toronto, Laval, UBC, Ottawa, Sherbrooke have also paused their clerkships. We are setting up a teleconference this week with all of the Canadian schools to brainstorm ideas for both activities for suspended clerks and how to try to move towards getting clerks back into some kind of modified clinical rotations.

We will start this week to look at all students with upcoming exams and remedial/make up clinical time. That has to be done student by student and we’ll communicate with students directly in each case. Part of this decision depends on whether the university will allow us to have students come in to the school (very widely spaced out, of course) to write exams on site. If that can’t happen, we’ll have to reevaluate things.

I have been told that there is a rumour circulating that the second round of the CaRMS match has been cancelled. This is not true. CaRMS has posted on their website that the second round of the match will proceed as scheduled. All interviews will be conducted virtually, and the programs will identify students about this directly. Please don’t forget about your colleagues who are going through this.

I acknowledge the worry from the Limpkins about how this is going to affect the year and your match. As I have said to a few students, you need to know that the only people who may be as worried about that you are is all of us in UME. I don’t have the answer about how we will make it work but it is something that we will address.
For the Boops Boops, thanks for those of you who let me know that the MCC exam sittings have been postponed. We’ll provide some sort of MCC review course virtually at some point — just need to think about when the right time will be. Fortunately, we do have good podcast recordings from prior years that will serve as a starting point.

I will close by saying thank you. I have had direct communications with dozens of you over the past 48 hours about a myriad of topics related to the decision to pull clerks. Virtually every one of those has been respectful and thoughtful, recognizing that there is a much bigger picture here.

I will also say thank you for the fact that many of the emails from students have included a recognition of the fact that this is hard for us too. There’s no ‘UME dean school’ and we don’t have a playbook for ‘global pandemic interrupts medical school’. All I can promise you is that everyone in our office cares about you, your health and your education. We’ll try our best and use every resource at our disposal to try to make good decisions.

Remember to access SAW as you need it. PFSP is always there for you too: https://www.albertadoctors.org/services/pfsp.

I’m proud to be working with all of you.

KB
Kevin Busche MD BSc FRCPC
Assistant Professor
Department of Clinical Neurosciences
Assistant Dean
Undergraduate Medical Education
Cumming School of Medicine
University of Calgary

UME: 403 210 3841 | RGH: 403 943 3214
kdbusche@ucalgary.ca