



Updated 2020.08.17

COVID-19

Frequently Asked Questions

<https://www.albertahealthservices.ca/assets/info/ppih/if-ppih-ncov-2019-staff-faq.pdf>

Effective June 21, 2020, trainees coming to Manitoba directly from BC, Alberta, Saskatchewan and Northwestern Ontario do not have to self-isolate.

1. Who should I contact within PGME to ask a COVID related question?

If your question is not answered below, please contact the PGME Assistant Dean and Directors through the following dedicated email: pgmecovid19@ucalgary.ca

2. What should a resident do if they develop symptoms of illness?

- If you feel symptoms COMING ON or are ill, stay home and notify your supervisor.
- If at work, notify your supervisor and go home to self-isolate. **Do this first.**
- Notify your program director.
- Complete the AHS online tool **FOR HEALTHCARE WORKERS** at:
<https://myhealth.alberta.ca/Journey/COVID-19/Pages/HWAssessLanding.aspx>

If your responses indicate you may require a swab, you will be asked to input your name, phone number, and health care number, and you will be able to book a test online. There is no longer a requirement to contact the 811 Physician's Line, nor Workplace Health and Safety, but you may do so if you have questions.

3. I am a new resident from outside of Alberta, and do not yet have an Alberta Personal Health Number. How do I book a test?

You can still use the online form above, but should leave the PHN field blank. This will trigger a phone call from Public Health to arrange testing, and to assign you a unique identifier, since you will not be able to independently book a test using the online form. Please be patient – it may take a few days to receive a call back from Public Health.

4. How soon can I return to work?

The timing of your return is dependent on your circumstances. The AHS document linked below provides guidance for AHS Healthcare Workers, and considers numerous scenarios. **Please discuss directly with your Program Director and Supervisor prior to returning to work.**

NB: The AHS FAQ has been updated as of 2020.06.18 to reflect numerous questions about this topic. Please refer to the most up-to-date version here:

<https://www.albertahealthservices.ca/assets/info/ppih/if-ppih-covid-19-return-to-work-guide-ahs-healthcare-worker.pdf>

PGME has received explicit clarification directly from WHS and now reflected in the FAQ as of 2020.04.04 that if a provider has **NOT** been travelling, and has **NOT** had an exposure to COVID-19 (see question below), **AND** has had a negative swab, **AND** is now completely asymptomatic, that provider may return to work **BEFORE** the 10d isolation period is concluded.

If your scenario is not included, please contact WHS at 1-855-450-3619

5. **Where can I get my COVID-19 results?**

All individuals in Alberta can access their personal health records, including COVID-19 results through MyHealth Records at myhealth.alberberta.ca/myhealthrecords. This is the fastest way to access results.

Individuals will be offered notification of negative results through an automated telephone system. Those with positive results will be contacted directly by Public Health with additional instructions.

Please do not contact 811 for your results as they do not have access to Netcare.

You must not use Netcare to look up your own results, nor ask a colleague, resident, or supervisor to do so on your behalf.

6. **I have had a COVID-19 exposure, or I have returned from outside the country recently. My service is asking me to return to duty now. May I return to work sooner than the 14-day self-isolation period?**

An [Expedited Return to Work Process](#) (AHS Internal link, requires sign-in) is now available to shorten the self-isolation period.

The Expedited Return to Work Process **ONLY** applies to providers who meet specific criteria, and only in **EXCEPTIONAL CIRCUMSTANCES**.

The Resident's Program Director may apply for Expedited Return, in consideration of

- The Resident's individual situation
- An **exceptional** need of the Resident's presence to provide an **essential service** that would otherwise be unavailable
- The workforce needs of the service
- Guidance provided by their Department Head

Program Directors must complete the [necessary forms](#), and forward to their Department Head, who must seek approval at ZEOC and with the Zone Medical Director prior to the Resident's return to work. This return is contingent upon [strict requirements](#), which must be followed.



Program Directors are asked to advise the Associate Dean, PGME, of all applications and their outcomes, so that these may be tracked.

7. ***I am arriving in Canada to start Residency/Fellowship. What guidance do I need to follow on arrival?***

The Government of Canada has explicit instructions regarding self-isolation requirements on arrival. Please be sure to consult their website here:

<https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/diseases/2019-novel-coronavirus-infection/latest-travel-health-advice.html>

8. ***What should a resident do if they are unable to work because they have no childcare?***

Residents unable to attend work due to childcare issues should work with their supervisor to determine if there are other options, such as switching shifts or flexible hours. Otherwise, missed time should be reported to your home program. A waiver related to rotation completion may be applicable. See Waiver question below.

Childcare centres are now reopened, but should circumstances change, some sites may be authorized to reopen to accommodate essential service providers. Additional information was previously shared on [InSite here](#) (sign-in required):
<https://insite.albertahealthservices.ca/tools/Page24518.aspx>

The Chief Medical Officer of Health has suggested partnering with a “cohort” family. A link to her statement is below:
<https://www.alberta.ca/release.cfm?xID=69922CA376E18-FAB7-C321-6A81A5A9BEFEAB5E>

At this time, day-homes with fewer than 7 children remain open using enhanced protocols.

9. ***What do I do if someone in my home is sick, or has to self-isolate?***

The previously listed AHS FAQ provides a number of scenarios that describe what to do when cohabitants and close contacts are self-isolating due to symptoms or exposures (taken from June 18, 2020 version):

<https://www.albertahealthservices.ca/assets/info/ppih/if-ppih-covid-19-return-to-work-guide-ahs-healthcare-worker.pdf>

- If a self-isolating or symptomatic cohabitant or close contact hasn't travelled outside Canada in the last 2 weeks and has not had any known exposure to COVID-19, then you don't need to self-isolate and you can work like normal unless you develop symptoms. If you develop symptoms, then you must self-isolate and take the online COVID-19 self-assessment.

- If a cohabitant or close contact developed symptoms within 14 days of returning from travel outside Canada, then you **also** need to self-isolate for 14 days starting from the last time you had close contact with them.
- If a cohabitant or close contact **developed symptoms** within 14 days of being in close contact with someone with laboratory confirmed COVID-19, then you need to self-isolate too, because your cohabitant/close contact would be considered a probable case. You should self-isolate for 14 days, starting from the last time you had close contact with them.
- If a cohabitant or close contact who is self-isolating doesn't have any symptoms and you don't either, then you don't need to self-isolate. You can go to work like normal *unless* you've travelled outside Canada within the past 2 weeks or you've had another possible COVID-19 exposure.

10. ***How can residents caring for COVID 19 patients protect their loved ones at home?***

Residents should adhere to all AHS IP&C guidelines, and familiarize themselves with the correct donning and doffing procedures for contact/droplet precautions. Learning resources are available on the AHS Covid-19 website. Additional information is available on the PGME website here: <https://cumming.ucalgary.ca/programs/pgme/covid19/resources/information>

Residents who anticipate the possibility of being present for Aerosol Generating Procedures should ensure they are up to date with their N95 fitting.

11. ***I am unable to complete N95 mask fit testing due to a religious exemption. What should I do?***

Residents without N95 fit testing due to religious accommodations are not able to work in environments where exposure to aerosol generating medical procedures may occur. It may not be possible to exclude individual residents from these environments while maintaining the educational integrity of the rotation. Please discuss immediately with your Program Director, anticipating any upcoming rotations that may be impacted. Alternate forms of PPE are being investigated presently.

12. ***What should a resident do if they have a medical condition that places them at high risk for severe COVID 19 illness?***

The health and safety of trainees remains of highest priority. Residents who are pregnant, immunocompromised, or have chronic cardiopulmonary conditions should be removed from clinical care of patients with presumed or confirmed cases of COVID 19. This is consistent with other jurisdictions in Canada. Any such resident who is currently scheduled for rotations in Intensive Care or Emergency environments in the coming months should be re-assigned by the home Program Director in consultation with the receiving program.



13. ***How are electives affected by COVID 19 for University of Calgary Residents?***

The Postgraduate Deans across the country continue to refine an approach to electives for Residents.

- a) Out of Country electives – cancelled indefinitely
- b) Out of Province (within Canada) electives – will be considered on a case-by-case basis by individual programs
- c) Electives at the University of Alberta – will be considered on a case-by-case basis by individual programs
- d) Rural electives within Alberta – will be considered on a case-by-case basis by individual programs
- e) Rural mandatory rotations within Alberta – Continue for FM and PHPM. Royal College Programs to be addressed on a case-by-case basis
- f) Rotations at other Canadian institutions under and inter-institutional agreement - may continue if deemed appropriate by home and receiving program
- g) Within Calgary elective rotations – may continue if deemed appropriate by home and receiving program.

FINANCIAL COMPENSATION FOR CANCELLATION OF ELECTIVES (for U of C residents):
PGME cannot address this issue immediately but will create a process to review this situation when urgent matters are settled related to COVID-19. For the moment, please retain copies of all invoices or other documents related to expenses incurred.

14. ***I have upcoming travel plans. What should I do?***

Non-essential travel outside of Canada is strongly discouraged. Commercial flights are already significantly limited, and repatriation may not be possible. Travel within Canada must be considered carefully as some provinces have already instituted rules around self-isolation. Should this occur, your availability to continue training and provide service will be significantly impacted.

15. ***I have vacation time to take, what should I do?***

Rest and wellness are important factors in staying healthy. Although vacation time may be different during this time with travel restrictions and isolation requirements, there is value to spending time away from work on personal wellness. Granting vacation based on service and work force needs is still at the discretion of the Program Director.

Important considerations:

- a) Residents must abide by travel restrictions
- b) Residents must abide by physical distance and group gathering restrictions

NB: Vacation requests cannot be granted for redeployed residents.

16. ***My examination has been postponed/cancelled. Will I receive any funding to return to sit my exam after I have completed training?***

Travel funding for returning to sit an examination is restricted to current Residents, covered as part of the PARA collective agreement. Upon graduation, there is no mechanism to provide for reimbursement, and this is therefore not possible.

17. ***I was scheduled to attend a conference that has been cancelled:***

a) Will I be reimbursed?

Alberta Health (AH) has approved reimbursing any expenses for events funded by the Education Enhancement allocation that were cancelled due to COVID-19, provided an attempt has been made to obtain a refund. If a flight was non-refundable, it would be reimbursed. If the airline provides a travel credit, there is no reimbursement.

b) Can the program carry over the conference funds to next academic year?

Any funding through the Education Enhancement allocation cannot be carried over into the next fiscal year. It is at the program's discretion to allow a resident who could not attend a conference in the 2019-20 year due to COVID-19, to attend another conference in the 2020-21 year. This expense would then come out of the program's 2020-21 allocation.

If the resident was awarded a travel grant (through the research or leadership grant application) to attend a conference and it was subsequently cancelled and rescheduled, the resident may be able to carry the award forward.

c) Can I use conference funds to do online or virtual learning?

It is at the program's discretion whether to allow residents to use funding earmarked for conferences for virtual/online options.

18. ***Do I still have to complete 75% of a rotation or are there exceptions when rotations are disrupted due to COVID-19?***

Residents impacted by COVID -19 may not be able to fulfill the existing requirement for completion of 75% of any single rotation. PGME provides the following principles to guide decision-making for residents and Program Directors:

a) vacation requests will be respected recognizing that residents are strongly advised not to travel outside Canada in the near future. Any resident who chooses to travel outside Canada will need to self-isolate upon return. In this instance the 75% rule will be maintained.

b) for residents who attended at least 50% of the rotation, exceptions to the 75% attendance requirement may be considered on a case-by-case basis. Consideration will be given for issues including (but not limited to):

- The need to self-isolate as a consequence of having just returned from outside Canada, or as a consequence of an exposure
- The inability to work a portion of the rotation due to childcare constraints
- The inability to complete a rotation due to the host program cancelling the rotation part way through



For Royal College CBD residents, the competence committee will determine if sufficient evidence of competence exists for the learnings that were targeted for that rotation. If so, they will recommend that the RPC makes a formal request to PGME for a waiver.

For Royal College traditional stream residents the RPC will determine if sufficient evidence of attainment of the rotation goals and objectives has been met. If so, they will make a formal request to PGME for a waiver.

Family Medicine residents will have their situations reviewed on a case-by-case basis by their Division or Site Directors, along with the Program Director. Where issues of competency arise, discussion at Resident Progress Subcommittee will take place per usual practices.

Decisions at the competence committee, RPC, RPS, or PGME level with respect to this waiver will NOT be subject to appeal.

19. ***What should a resident do if their rotation is cancelled?***

A number of services have removed some residents in consideration of learner safety. Other rotations may become unavailable as service disruptions unfold. It is understood that these decisions are appropriate and in the best interest of both resident and patient safety. Residents must consult their Program Director for reassignment when any of the following occurs:

- Removal of a resident from a rotation by the hosting program
- Cancellation of an elective
- Cancellation of a rotation

The home Program Director will determine whether the resident(s) can be appropriately assigned to another rotation or educational experience. Program directors should notify Dr. Welikovitich if there is a change of assignment for a resident cohort (not for individual residents).

20. ***Can a resident be redeployed?***

Programs will adhere to the guidelines within the document: [*Principles for Redeployment of Resident Physicians and Fellows in Times of Exceptional Health System Need*](#). This document can be found in the COVID 19 section of the PGME website. The document articulates principles for reassignment of Postgraduate Trainees to areas of greatest need. Both Alberta Universities, Alberta Health Services and PARA developed the document collaboratively to address the current pandemic situation.

Plans for reassignment WITHIN a program's department and across usual experiences can happen internally, in accordance with the principles of the above document.

For Programs with residents willing and able to be redeployed to experiences OUTSIDE of their Department, please notify [Crystal Boisselle](mailto:crystal.boisselle@ucalgary.ca) (crystal.boisselle@ucalgary.ca) of their expected availability and areas of comfort.

For services with a clinical need for residents, please have your Department work with ZEOC to communicate needs to PGME.

21. ***What are the expectations of programs with respect to delivery of the academic portion of their programming?***

Programs should endeavor to maintain academic programming, but it is understandable that some interruptions may occur due to staff availability and extraordinary clinical demands on service. In-person academics are currently suspended in accordance with University guidance. The University has made Zoom and Microsoft Teams available for programs to deliver academic half days. Please adhere to the available [guidance documents](#) around information security and appropriate use.

For teaching that occurs as part of clinical service, all necessary adjustments must be made to maintain physical distancing, require continuous masking, and to limit group sizes in accordance with current guidelines from the Chief Medical Officer of Health, and AHS WHS guidelines.

22. ***I am feeling overwhelmed. Where can I go for help?***

If you are experiencing a mental health emergency, or are unable to keep yourself safe, please present to the Emergency department or call 9-1-1. You may also use any of the following emergency community resources:

- **Calgary 24-hour Distress Centre**
Crisis Line – 403.266.HELP (4357)
This service is free and is offered in over 200 languages.
Hearing Impaired – 403.543.1967

Online Crisis Chat

Chat is available from 3pm – 10:00pm weekdays and from noon-10:00pm on weekends.
<https://www.distresscentre.com/need-help/>

If you need to be seen urgently:

- Please contact Resident Wellness Psychologist, Nora MacQuarrie by email and she will do her best to accommodate you.: nora.macquarrie1@ucalgary.ca
- Alberta Medical Association Physician and Family Support Program (PFSP)
CONFIDENTIAL 24 hours a day/7 days a week/365 days a year is also to all Residents and Fellows:
 - 1.877.SOS.4MDS (767.4637)
 - International: 403.930.0529 (you may call collect)
 - CONFIDENTIAL 24 hours a day/7 days a week/365 days a year
 - <https://www.albertadoctors.org/services/pfsp/i-need-help-now>



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The PGME Resident Wellness Office Psychologist is available for remote phone/zoom counselling appointments. Please schedule appointments by contacting:

Roxanne, Administrative Assistant

residentwellness@ucalgary.ca

403-210-6525

Nora, Psychologist

Nora.macquarrie1@ucalgary.ca

403-210-9299

Dr. Jaelene Mannerfeldt, Director

jaelene.mannerfeldt@ucalgary.ca

For self-help resources, please refer to the following page from the Resident Affairs & Wellness website:

<https://cumming.ucalgary.ca/pgme/wellness/residents/resources>