



May 26, 2020

Dr. Michele Ramien
Pediatric Dermatologist, Clinical Associate Professor
University of Calgary
Calgary, AB

Dear Dr. Ramien:

RE: 2019-2020 PARA Clinical Teaching Award – University of Calgary

Congratulations on being selected as the 2019-2020 recipient of the *PARA Clinical Teaching Award* for the University of Calgary. This award recognizes physician preceptors who have shown excellence in resident physician education.

This is what your nominators had to say about your commitment to medical education:

“Dr. Ramien is known for her excellent, comprehensive care. Due to her clinical expertise in paediatric dermatology, she regularly receives consults from other experienced dermatologists, rheumatologists, immunologists, etc. for second and even third opinions. She works through these challenging and complex cases – ones that are often dismissed by other practitioners – to ensure that patients have accurate diagnosis and appropriate treatment plans. She also models a multidisciplinary approach through these cases. For example, we encountered a complex inpatient while on call. While some ignored the patient’s symptoms, Dr. Ramien listened to the family and the patient, leading her to suspect an underlying condition. She advocated to surgical services for a biopsy. In the outpatient setting, Dr. Ramien followed-up with patient and has worked with Paediatric Immunology and Rheumatology to initiate a complex auto-inflammatory workup and ongoing immunosuppressive therapy.

Dr. Ramien has a natural ability with patient care. She always creates a calm and inviting environment, and she listens to her patients and their families with kindness and empathy – no ailment, no complaint is beneath her care. She invests patience, time and effort to explain complex diagnoses and complicated treatment plans in easy terms first to the patient and then to the parents. By doing so, she helps her paediatric and adolescent patients become stakeholders in their own care.

She also views her patients within their contexts: she pays special attention to a family’s social situation and the impact of disease on a patient’s quality of life. She regularly asks how eczema affects a child’s ability to perform in school or considers how a lack of access to clean water impacts their ability to prevent secondary skin infections. She picks up on subtle cues, which are sometimes missed by others, to recognize if a family needs extra supports, and then she connects them with the right resources.

Dr. Ramien also displays investment in understanding and demonstrating principles of cultural sensitivity as observed in her care for Indigenous and vulnerable populations. Dr. Alexandra Kuzyk, a PGY3 dermatology resident and co-nominator, shared the following:

“We had a patient from a remote area of Alberta who was weary of healthcare providers. His condition required time-sensitive administration of a biologic medication in his community. Dr. Ramien spent many hours working with his family, community and funding organizations to arrange for a trusted individual to administer this medication.”

Dr. Ramien integrates innovative ways to provide patient-centered care in dermatology. She recognized that families can often be overwhelmed with complex treatment plans for eczema. To combat this, she designed and validated an eczema action plan (EAP) in conjunction with patients and a multidisciplinary team. The EAP is an easy-to-follow guide with pictures which can be customized for a patient. Its purpose is to improve quality of life for patients by reducing frequency and length of visits, improving clinical outcomes and improving patients’ understanding of their diseases.

Dr. Ramien provides excellent clinical teaching to all levels of training. In her clinics, she oversees medical students, dermatology residents, paediatric residents and sometimes even internal medicine residents and rheumatology fellows – this is a wide range of trainees to teach on a regularly basis! Dr. Ramien reviews the clinic schedule ahead of a rotation and thoughtfully assigns learners to clinics based on level of training and specialty; this is an extra step by Dr. Ramien which impacts learners even before their arrival to clinic. She always ensures that each trainee learns what is relevant to his/her level and specialty while nudging him/her to grow. For example, she practices morphology (the language of dermatology) with medical students while she highlights pearls of autoimmune diseases for rheumatology fellows.

Dr. Raisa Kanji, a PGY-4 paediatrics resident in Calgary, recently rotated with Dr. Ramien, and she shared the following for this nomination:

“Dr. Ramien was very approachable and willingly arranged for me to do a two-week elective with her. She went over and above to teach around every case we saw and make it applicable to what I would need to know as a general pediatrician. In addition, she took time out of her busy schedule to prepare and teach the PGY-4 pediatric residents an approach to dermatology for our Royal College exam.”

Dr. Ramien tailors her teaching approach to the learner and the patient encounter. Sometimes she quizzes us, sometimes she shares a relevant educational article and other times, she models patient care while we observe. No matter her choice of approach, the environment is always welcoming and growth-oriented. She also accounts for resident needs. Dr. TetayanaKhlabatyn (tetyanakhlabatyn@gmail.com), a PGY-3 dermatology resident in Calgary and co-nominator, shared the following:

“At a Resident Planning Committee, the residents requested a focus on therapeutics. We felt this was an area in which we needed more didactic teaching. Dr. Ramien immediately championed this and hosted academic half day sessions focused on therapeutics.”

During the era of COVID19, Dr. Ramien has continued clinical teaching in innovative ways. She was the first attending in the Dermatology Division to include residents in virtual clinics via phone and approved video modalities. Prior to the clinic, she sent me an article that outlined ways to optimize teledermatology visits for resident education. We used these methods which yielded engaging patient experiences and learning opportunities. She also provided feedback on my approach with patients in the setting of teledermatology. Despite having a number of clinics cancelled, my education as a dermatology resident had continued due to Dr. Ramien's efforts. The article has been circulated to other attendings in the hopes that more residents can be included in teledermatology clinics.

Dr. Ramien treats her residents as humans first. She takes the time to learn about us as individuals, who we are, what are our hobbies, etc. while also sharing about adventures with her family. We recently worked on a research paper together, and it was an intense period of multiple revisions and tight deadlines. Through the process, she shared photograph updates of her family's latest cooking project or outdoor adventures during our breaks. Through these light-hearted interactions, I have come to appreciate that a work-life balance is achievable through a career in medicine. She also listens to our concerns with an empathetic ear, and provides advice on how to navigate through personal and professional challenges.

She also encourages our growth outside of the hospital. At the Annual Canadian Dermatology Meeting in June 2019, Dr. Ramien was a panellist on the first-ever Royal College Examination preparation session. She openly shared her struggles with balance during her final year of residency. Through this, she encouraged residents to maintain hobbies and social connections through residency, especially in our final year. This was an important message that needed to be shared and heard. It was powerful, and it helped to change resident perspectives which are a vital step in creating a culture that supports resident wellness.

She supports and enhances resident wellness through tangible efforts. As co-chair for the Dermatology Resident Innovation and Vision in Education (DRIVE; see below), she advocated to the Canadian Dermatology Association president to offer a one-year Headspace (a guided meditation app) membership for 50 dermatology PGY5 residents across the country. More recently, the recent changes to the Royal College examination during the COVID19 pandemic have caused significant stress for final-year trainees. Dr. Ramien recognized this and is working hard to develop and implement support plans for the PGY5 dermatology residents. She is also currently championing national "wellness in crisis" sessions for the dermatology PGY5 residents. Dr. Ramien's commitment to the education process is reflected in her extra endeavours.

Dr. Ramien recently co-organized the Alberta Children's Hospital Genodermatoses Symposium for both dermatology residents and genetic residents. She recruited an internationally-renowned speaker to deliver lectures that tied basic science and clinical presentation of inherited bullous diseases. This is a difficult topic to master and this symposium solidified residents' understanding of these complex concepts. To further learning, residents presented unique or rare genetic cases to the group. Dr. Ramien supported all of the dermatology resident presenters through the process of acquiring cases to present, researching rare genetic conditions and delivering robust presentations.

Her education efforts extend to research: she creates meaningful research opportunities for interested trainees, and often without any recognition. For example, a visiting medical student expressed a desire pursue a research project during her elective. Dr. Ramien immediately

connected her with a senior dermatologist in Calgary (i.e. Dr. Ramien was not an author) and even suggested a publication topic. This medical student published a case in the Visual Images section of the New England Journal of Medicine!

Dr. Ramien and I recently worked around-the-clock to publish an approach for cutaneous manifestations of COVID19. Through this, she taught me how to apply dermatology principles to create a meaningful and clinically-relevant resource for non- dermatologist health practitioners. She also took the time to share important tips on research-related communications with co-authors and journal editors.

Dr. Ramien is a mentor to many residents and her mentorship spans the country. Dr. Amin Bahubeshi, a PGY5 dermatology resident in Ottawa, shared the following for this nomination:

“There are few people who have taken as much interest in my career development as Dr. Ramien. Since I was a senior medical student, she has taken the time to nurture my interests and help me maximize my potential. Her guiding hand has led to incredible opportunities in leadership and research, leading to my own CDA presentation and teaching awards in 2018 and 2019 respectively. Furthermore, when I expressed an interest in dermatology in skin of colour, she utilized her relationships in a way that led fulfilling learning experiences in Canada and the USA. Most people can point to one or two mentors who played defining roles in their own personal and professional development; Dr. Ramien is undoubtedly one of mine.”

Dr. Danny Mansour, a PGY-2 dermatology resident in Vancouver, is a research mentee of Dr. Ramien. He shared the following for this nomination:

“Dr. Ramien has been a research supervisor of mine for the last 4 years. She has taught me about research methods and how to write abstracts and give presentations. Her commitment to academic medicine as an exceptional educator has inspired me to pursue a career in academic medicine. Beyond that, Dr. Ramien is incredibly kind, supportive, dedicated, and approachable. She is an exemplary model for who I aspire to be when I am a clinician in practice.”

Dr. Ramien’s commitment to education is also demonstrated on a national level: she is the co-chair of Dermatology Resident Innovation and Vision in Education (DRIVE). In this role, she organizes national preparation sessions for 50 final-years residents writing the Royal College Examination, as well as an in-person mock examination. This initiative also supports residents to build confidence to overcome test anxiety and to create a national network among their peers. Dr. Sabrina Nurmohamed, a PGY-5 dermatology resident in Calgary, shared the following for this nomination:

“The DRIVE program is an invaluable part of the final year Dermatology resident experience in Canada. Among other projects, the DRIVE committee administers an annual bilingual mock oral and written examination for 50 residents, largely considered a benchmark for Royal College exam success. Here, Dr. Ramien’s skills as an educator go beyond the act of teaching. I remember her leading a children’s song in a sing-a-long as an icebreaker at this year’s exam orientation, which transformed a group of anxious and weary residents into a room full of goofy laughter. The impact of the DRIVE program is

more than the exam prep it offers, and it has served to invigorate a whole community of recent dermatology graduates.”

Dr. Ramien’s philosophy of education is centered around excellence, inclusion and improvement. She sets a high bar for residents by modelling excellent patient care, outstanding trainee education and collaboration with other healthcare providers and research teams. Dr. Ramien provides support and tools to trainees to achieve this standard and she encourages us to surpass it. She invests in the success of trainees as if it was her own success, and that is powerful! Through all aspects of education, she includes and treats residents as colleagues. This approach is refreshing. This was most evident through our recent research endeavour. At every single juncture, Dr. Ramien asked my opinion and perspective. I was able to openly share my thoughts and perspective, and she made me an equal partner in decisions.

Dr. Ramien continuously strives for improvement in education delivery in residency and she solicits trainee feedback in the process. Her latest endeavour encompasses this passion: she is in the final stages of developing a comprehensive survey for feedback on all aspects of the program, ranging from preceptor teaching to supports for research to resident wellness. The survey will be distributed to both current residents and former residents who are now in practice, and the data from this will guide program changes and departmental policies. This is an extra behind-the-scenes initiative by Dr. Ramien – it will not lead to a publication and nor will it be included on her C.V. But she is doing it because she believes there is always room to do more and to do it, better. I admire her constant push to improve resident education and programming.

In sum, Dr. Ramien is an excellent educator who has had a tremendous impact on clinical education and mentorship in Calgary and across the country. She is most deserving of the PARA Clinical Teaching Award.”

In honour of this recognition, you will receive a commemorative plaque and a \$750 donation will be made in your name to the charity of your choice. Please advise of your charity selection and confirm the following information that will appear on your plaque:

Dr. Michele Ramien
Pediatric Dermatologist, Clinical Associate Professor, University of Calgary

Your hard work and dedication will also be featured in *PARAscope*, our monthly member e-newsletter and PARA’s Annual Report. To facilitate this, please provide us with a photo of yourself (JPG) to include in the feature. Your photo and accompanying information (confirmation of plaque details and charity of choice) can be forwarded to us at ravneet.saran@para-ab.ca.

Again, congratulations on receiving the *2019-2020 PARA Clinical Teaching Award* and please accept our sincere thanks for your ongoing commitment to resident physician education.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'F. Rizzuti'.

Dr. Francesco Rizzuti
PARA President

cc: *Dr. Jon Meddings, Dean, Cummings School of Medicine*
Dr. Lisa Welikovitich, Associate Dean, Postgraduate Medical Education Office