

Recipients of Dr. Chirag Shah International Resident Award

2024

Postgraduate Medical Education is pleased to announce the winners of the Dr. Chirag Shah International Resident award. The \$2,000 award was established in 2012 by Dr. Shah to assist international medical graduates who are adjusting to life in Canada and to inspire them to give back to their community and contribute to making Canada a better place.



Dr. Dalya Elsanadidy
PGY1 Family Medicine

My journey to family medicine residency was not an easy ride. I moved to Canada with my husband and my 4-year-old daughter in August 2010; shortly after, I gave birth to my son (November 2010). It was not easy for us to adjust as a family to our new home country. We first lived in Ottawa for a year, then moved to Hamilton, Ontario, for my husband to start his graduate studies. In Hamilton, after my son started to go to daycare, I started working as a pharmacy assistant; during that time, I learned about the Canadian healthcare system and medications while doing my licencing Canadian exams. I then had the opportunity to apply for a clinical assistant position at Royal Alexandra Hospital, Edmonton, Alberta, where I had to leave my husband and my kids behind in Ontario for two years to start my new job. I worked in the hospital medicine and internal medicine

departments. Due to my passion for learning and medicine, I moved to Calgary. I accepted a new position with new challenges in the Oncology department at Tom Baker Cancer Centre, where I learned about different malignancies and its chemo and radiotherapy management protocols. Throughout my journey, I have been applying for residency every year, I have been through hard times where I felt it might be easier to give up and consider a second career. My dedication, passion and with the great support of my husband, I was able to continue with my goals and dreams. I was fortunate to start my family medicine residency at the University of Calgary in 2023. My journey was not easy, but it was rewarding and inspiring to my colleagues and fellow international medical graduates (IMG).

I had the opportunity to contribute to the community in Calgary through volunteering in multiple events organized by MD International (MDI), a group of physicians who provide numerous community services. Along with other MDI members, I volunteered to increase public awareness about the management of chronic conditions such as diabetes and hypertension. I was honoured to receive the gold certificate for volunteering as I continue to serve the community and mobilize our resources to give our population better access to healthcare knowledge. As an internationally trained emergency physician and a future family doctor, I have felt the desperate need for physicians to help serve population in rural areas. As I enhance my training during residency, I am planning to practise in rural areas to help underserved

population and meet their medical needs. Dr. Chirag Shah International Resident Award will allow me to pursue more training in rural areas. I have two remaining electives and two main blocks in R2 for rural practise. I am passionate about going to farther places like Yukon, explore the life there and get extensive training. I can imagine myself being the only resident there managing different presentations, practising all sorts of procedures, helping underserved population.

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Like many International Medical Graduates (IMGs), I have had an unusual journey to residency here at the University of Calgary (UoC). Originally from England, I completed medical school and



Dr. Sarah Cook
PGY2 Internal Medicine

commenced residency training, first in Internal Medicine and then Clinical Oncology, at University College London. To gain additional clinical and research experience, I completed a one-year fellowship at BC Cancer Vancouver, Canada with a specialist interest in gynecological malignancies. Although my plan had originally been to return to England and complete residency, my partner and I had such a fantastic experience living and working in Canada, we decided to permanently relocate. Keen to continue a career in medicine, I thus re-entered residency training, albeit as an IMG. I successfully matched to Internal Medicine at UoC in 2020, and then again to Medical Oncology in 2022 through the sub-specialty CaRMS match.

My journey to residency as an IMG here in Calgary has been eye opening and I have come to appreciate first-hand the barriers this community faces both in entering residency training and succeeding thereafter. This has inspired me to help the IMG community in Calgary. Through the Alberta International Medical Graduate Association, I have helped IMGs challenging the NAC-OSCE exam (a pre-requisite to apply for residency training), having successfully been through the process myself. I designed an education program, that ran weekly over 2 months, producing my own materials in line with competencies the NAC-OSCE examines. It was a popular course, and I was invited back to deliver it again. I have also helped IMG residents training here in Alberta. In 2021-2022, I served as a Member at Large, representing IMGs at the Professional Association of Resident Physicians of Alberta (PARA), providing this group with an important voice. During my tenure, I also co-chaired the Equity, Diversity, and Inclusivity group. I have continued to play an active role within PARA and am the current Vice President in Leadership and Education. I am also a member of UoC's Anti-Racism Taskforce. Our taskforce is focused on combating racism within postgraduate medical education as it relates to embedded systems, policies, and cultures. From a research perspective, I successfully applied to UoC's Resident Education Scholarship Program (RESP). Through this, I am mentored by an experienced medical education researcher. We are completing a research project on facilitators and barriers for success as an IMG in residency here in Alberta. Data collection is now complete. I will be using grant funds through RESP for analysis and hope to publish results next year. Regarding future goals, I am currently completing a 2-year part-time Master in Health Professions Education through Maastricht University. I was inspired to do so, as I have always had a passion for medical education, not only teaching delivery, but also educational design and leadership. My goal



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is to complete a research thesis that will further my work on the facilitators and barriers IMG residents across Canada face. Focusing on Family Medicine and Internal Medicine (the 2 programs with the most IMG positions), I am specifically interested in evaluating training outcomes including success at certification examinations, matching through CaRMS for additional specialty training post core residency and employment status/ location upon completion of residency. Scarce literature to date suggests performance disparities when compared to Canadian Medical Graduates.