



Dear colleagues,

Hospitalizations due to COVID-19 are rising. We are all experiencing added stresses, fears and uncertainty over what is to come. No matter what the future holds, the PARIM team will stand by you. We have and will continue to diligently advocate for your safety and wellbeing.

Many have shared their significant concerns about the proposed redeployment plans, and I assure you that we hear those concerns. We had the opportunity to meet with both Shared Health and PGME this past week, and I'd like to share with you the most current updates on our advocacy work.

Resident Safety

- Safety is, and must be, our highest priority. A key safety concern many have identified is that the current PPE standards for COVID-19 wards do not automatically include the use of N95 masks. It is our firm position that if a resident requests the use of an N95 mask based on their own risk assessment (based on both clinical AND personal factors), they must NOT be refused one. This is non-negotiable. We have made this clear in our discussions with PGME and Shared Health, both of whom agree in principle.
- PGME has indicated that residents must receive appropriate training/education prior to working with COVID-19 patients. We will work to determine what education requirements PGME anticipates/expects.
- We are working to have safety guarantees in writing. We are following evolving evidence around COVID-19 transmission and will modify our recommendations accordingly. We will also work to develop guidance and advice for residents who work with COVID-19 patients, which includes seeking assurances that residents at higher personal risk will not be put into potentially dangerous environments.

Equitable and Transparent Processes/Plans

- We have, on multiple occasions now, asked for a written copy of the resident redeployment plan for Internal Medicine. It appears that this plan has only been shared verbally. We will continue to advocate for the distribution of a written plan.
- We have shared with both PGME and Shared Health our expectation that a) volunteers are requested prior to mandating redeployment and b) qualified residents from other programs will also be asked to volunteer. At time of writing, both PGME and Shared Health are supportive of this in principle, and further discussion is ongoing.

· The Dean's office has indicated that attending physicians are part of the overall staffing plans, noting that volunteer attendings have already been recruited and are working in these settings. We have requested details on those plans, and remain firm that redeployments should only be used if other options are exhausted.

· Some of you may have attended the Shared Health Town Hall on Thursday evening, discussing overall system plans. There remains a great deal of uncertainty about what the overall plan is for acute care capacity/staffing. We will keep residents updated if we learn of more details.

Resident Wellness

· PARIM has worked hard to advocate for those residents who need or wish to travel out of province for non-essential reasons (including visiting family). While Shared Health is not able to remove the 14-day post-travel isolation period at this time, PGME has agreed to support a 14-day work from home plan if/when residents travel out of province to visit family and must isolate on return. PGME will be asking ALL programs to come up with strategies to support this, which will likely require pre-planning on a case-by-case basis.

· We have asked Shared Health to prepare a document outlining specific rules for residents related to travel, isolation, use of sick time vs. leave of absence time. They have offered to prepare and distribute this information.

· Residents are able to access the new Bannatyne Campus Student Health Clinic, as well as the various existing support programs through Doctors Manitoba and the University of Manitoba. We are working to ensure that these programs/services remain accessible and relevant to the needs of residents.

The above items represent only a portion of the myriad concerns we are working to address. It is my prediction and hope that further progress can be made through careful advocacy and negotiation with all affected parties. However, I want to be clear that we are prepared to use all necessary means to protect residents and advocate for your wellbeing. We will continue to provide you with regular updates, and I encourage you to reach out if you have any questions, comments or concerns. We are in this together.

Stay well,



Dr. Joshu Aquin
President, PARIM