

COVID-19 Update

Postgraduate Medical Education

June 2020



Background

The arrival of new residents on July 1, 2020 and the plan to re-establish resident electives as of July 2020 will necessitate careful coordination to balance learners' educational needs with public health safety measures. Queen's Postgraduate Medical Education (PGME) would like to establish a guidance document for Residents, Residency Programs, Program Directors and Healthcare Facilities providing educational and work-related experiences for residents and fellows to manage the risks associated with moving between rotations in various locations as part of their training.

Residents, while still learners, are paid healthcare providers and play important roles and responsibilities in the healthcare system. Some jurisdictions and hospitals have imposed 14-day self-quarantine rules for medical personnel moving within Canada. This has not been mandated by either the Federal or Ontario

Government, but is considered best practice by public health officials. Exceptions to 14-day self-quarantine have been made for essential workers including Physicians and Resident Doctors. This had been made possible by offering "workplace isolation" ([Public Health Ontario: How to self-isolate while working](#))

Queen's PGME has consulted with stakeholders in the development of these recommendations, including Dr. Kieran Moore (Medical Officer of Health), Dr. Gerald Evans (Medical Director of Infection Prevention & Control), and Kingston Health Science Centre (KHSC) Infection Prevention & Control (IPAC) and Occupational Health & Safety (OHS). The document will also be shared with our regional educational leaders for review and endorsement to safely manage the movement of postgraduate learners within the healthcare system.

Guidelines

Recommendations may be updated in response to changing epidemiology. This version is current as of June 23, 2020.

Recommendations for trainees arriving from outside of Canada

- Residents and fellows MUST self-quarantine for 14-days upon arrival to Kingston if they are arriving from outside of Canada, or if they have traveled outside of Canada. This is in line with the Federal Quarantine Act.
- Your residency appointment begins on July 1, 2020 and you must be in your Queen's host city (Kingston, Belleville, Peterborough, or Oshawa) by that date order to begin your training on time. We are encouraging all incoming residents to arrive in their host city at least two weeks in advance of July 1. This is not mandated but strongly encouraged.
- For those residents beginning their programs in Kingston, you should be aware that KHSC can assist in finding temporary accommodation should your permanent housing not be available in the two weeks before July 1, 2020.
- Please rest assured that your contract will begin on July 1 and your programs, the PGME Office, and Kingston Health Sciences Centre (KHSC) are working diligently to ensure you will be able to start as soon as possible.
- [KHSC short-term accommodation information](#)
- [PARO: Self-isolation prior to employment start](#)

Recommendations for trainees arriving from within Canada

- Queen's PGME is currently is not mandating a 14-day self-quarantine for all new residents and fellows starting July 2020 unless they meet the aforementioned criteria.
- For trainees travelling from within Canada, it is preferred and strongly advised that they arrive in Kingston 14-days before their official start date. This is not mandated. Recently hospital and health care facilities in Ontario were required to screen for travel outside of Ontario. Traveling outside of Ontario required physicians and other health care workers to undertake "workplace isolation" and wear a mask at all times while in the hospital. This situation has recently changed after the Chief Medical Officer of Health for Ontario imposed mandatory mask wearing for everyone working in hospitals and health care facilities. Therefore the current screening questions reverted to screening for travel outside of Canada and not out of province travel.
- Residents should stay apprised to updates from Queen's PGME and KHSC as decisions and procedures may change.
- For those residents beginning their programs in Kingston, you should be aware that KHSC can assist in finding temporary accommodation should your permanent housing not be available in the two weeks before July 1, 2020.
- [KHSC short-term accommodation information](#)
- [PARO: Self-isolation prior to employment start](#)

Recommendations during training

- All trainees will be screened on arrival at their clinical learning facilities on their first and every subsequent day. If they screen positive for potential symptoms of COVID, or have had close contact with a confirmed COVID patient without proper Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) or a sick traveller or member of their household who is suspected or confirmed to have COVID-19, within the past 14 days, or have travelled outside of Canada within the past 14 days, they will not be allowed into the healthcare facility and will be referred to their hospital Occupational Health & Safety (OHS).
- All healthcare professionals should be aware of, and compliant with, the relevant screening questions at our facilities and requirements for physical distancing ([KHSC Screening Questions](#)) and that these questions can change frequently.
- All Residents must follow physical distancing rules when out in public and when this is not possible, they should wear a mask.
- All Residents must adhere to universal masking requirements that are currently in place at KHSC and PCH for clinical areas; when outside of a clinical area, Residents should wear a mask where physical distancing cannot be maintained.
- A risk assessment must be completed for trainees returning from a hospital or long-term care facility in outbreak (including roles, PPE, exposure, symptoms and monitoring).
- A trainee returning from a placement in a hospital or long-term-care facility in outbreak may be required to undertake self-quarantine for 14 days depending on the risk assessment by Occupational Health and Safety (OHS).

Recommendations for rotations outside of Kingston

- Many Queen's residents complete mandatory rotations outside of Kingston (e.g. Lakeridge, Humber, Belleville, Peterborough, etc.). The PGME Office will reach out to each of these sites to confirm their screening processes and share any unique or different practices and procedures. We understand that any requirement for self-quarantine would be very disruptive to scheduling and have a significant negative impact on clinical experiences. Our goal is to minimize the need for periods of self-quarantine for residents while still protecting our patients and other healthcare workers, through the application of [work isolation](#) where deemed appropriate
- In planning out-of-town electives, trainees must explore the potential need for self-quarantine at their desired locations. Elective sites requiring self-quarantine should not be considered. Trainees cannot afford to lose two weeks of a four-week elective block on self-quarantine. In exceptional circumstances, some consideration could be given to beginning the self-quarantine at the end of one block and the beginning of the next block to ensure an adequate experience.

Recommendations for visiting elective trainees

- Program Directors who approve elective trainees coming to Queen's from other programs must ensure that the visiting trainees know the local screening protocols for COVID-19 exposure. If they screen positive, they could be denied access to the local healthcare facilities or required to undertake workplace isolation. Queen's PGME does not intend to impose a 14-day self-quarantine for visiting elective trainees who travel from another Canadian location and pass the screening criteria, at this time.