

MEMORANDUM

To: Postgraduate Deans and Deans of Faculties of Medicine
Postgraduate Managers
Royal College Specialty Committee Chairs
Royal College Area of Focused Competence (AFC) Committees
and Working Groups
Collège des médecins du Québec (CMQ)
The College of Family Physicians of Canada (CFPC)
Fédération des médecins résidents du Québec (FMRQ)
Resident Doctors of Canada (RDoC)
Federation of Medical Regulatory Authorities of
Canada (FMRAC)
National Specialty Societies
Provincial and Territorial Medical Associations
Applicants for new discipline recognition

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Subject: Conclusion of 2023 AFC operational review and anticipated impact on Royal
College discipline recognition

Date: May 6, 2024

You are receiving this memo as a partner in the system of specialty medicine in Canada and because you have contributed to or are invested in new discipline recognition and the ongoing health of existing Royal College disciplines in the system.

Temporary pause on Royal College new discipline recognition

Following an operational review of the areas of focused competence (AFC) category conducted by the Royal College in 2023, and in the spirit of transparency and open communication, the Royal College is issuing this memo to announce and provide advance notice of our intention to redesign our discipline recognition and review processes over the coming years. The changes being considered will apply to all categories of disciplines in the system of specialty medicine (i.e., specialties, subspecialty, AFC, etc.).

To facilitate this important work, the Committee on Specialties (COS) and the Committee on Specialty Education (CSE) were asked to consider, and endorsed, a recommendation at their recent meetings to institute a temporary pause on new discipline recognition effective April 18, 2024, for AFC disciplines and effective September 1, 2024, for all other disciplines in the system (specialties,



subspecialties, fundamentals). The recommendation will proceed forward for consideration by the Royal College Council in June. If endorsed by the Council, the length of the pause will be decided later this fall, following additional analysis of the changes being considered and work to operationalize.

Anticipated changes

While the AFC operational review was extensive and identified fourteen opportunities for improvements and efficiencies, our first priorities are the discipline recognition and review process. Including all categories of Royal College disciplines (i.e., specialties, subspecialties, AFC) in this proposal reflects a systematic approach to thinking about Royal College recognized disciplines. We plan to work with the COS and others to revisit and update the criteria and process for discipline recognition, definitions of discipline categories, and the COS regular review process for all Royal College recognized disciplines/ categories – all with the aim of supporting the ongoing evolution of the system of specialty medicine.

Impact

If the recommendation of a temporary pause is accepted by Council, please be assured that all Royal College recognized disciplines will continue to be supported as usual. Those already in the process of being considered by COS will continue to be supported, potentially in a modified fashion. Any groups in the process of applying to become recognized that could be impacted by a pause will be contacted shortly.

More information about the changes

While we await a decision on the recommended pause, we will continue early work on planning for the redesign. We look forward to being able to share more detail about the opportunities identified by the operational review at a virtual event in early 2025. More information about the virtual session will be part of our next communication following the decision by Council.

In the meantime, if you have any other questions or concerns, we invite you to contact Damon and/ or Cynthia by email at systemofspecialties@royalcollege.ca.