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**FELLOWSHIP EDUCATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE**  
**Minutes of Meeting - January 11, 2023**  
**8:00 AM to 9:30 AM – Via Zoom**

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**Present:**

Caroline Abrahams, Dr. Ahmed Al-Awamer, Olivia Beasley, Samantha Chin, Dr. Rhandi Christensen, Savannah Clancy, Dr. Meredith Giuliani, Dr. Kevin Higgins, Valerie Hilderal, Dr. Mojgan Hodaie, Dr. Cheryl Jaigobin, Dr. Ebru Kaya (guest), Sarah Lowry (guest), Dr. Tushar Malavade (guest), Maureen Morris, Dr. Daniel Muller, Laura-Leigh Murgaski, Kendra Naidoo (guest), Dr. Jia Ng, Dr. Nav Nijhawan, Paula Nixon, Rafal Ramzi, Dr. Richard Pittini, Dr. Azra Shivji, Dr. Giovanna Sirianni, Violetta Sochka, Shannon Spencer, Dr. Doreen Yee

**1. Welcome and Minutes**

The meeting was brought to order by the Chair, Dr. Cheryl Jaigobin. The minutes from the last meeting of October 20, 2022, were pre-circulated and these were accepted without changes.

**2. Introductions**

Dr. Jaigobin asked for introductions as there were a number of new members to the Committee.

**3. Clinical Fellow in Difficulty Pathway Updates**

After last meeting the Clinical Fellow in Difficulty Pathway was presented to PGMEAC and accepted. The Clinical Fellow in Difficulty Pathway now appears on the website and a final document was circulated to the Committee prior to the meeting. Communication is now being drafted at PGME for dissemination.

Current initial contact for the Clinical Fellow in Difficulty Pathway is Shannon Spencer.

**4. Remuneration Guideline for Clinical Fellows, Cost of Living review**

Background was provided for the adaptation of remuneration standards. PGME acts as the employer for the work permit process and Immigration, Refugee, and Citizenship Canada (IRCC) requires PGME to attest for fellows that the foreign national is being paid at a rate commensurate to a Canadian performing the same duties in the same location.

In 2011, remuneration of fellows recommended to be at a rate of a PGY 1. This rate was reached due to variations of fellowships, in training backgrounds and constraints in securing funding. Considerations for the cost of living in Toronto were advised to be taken into account.

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Dr. Giuliani noted a PGY 1 rate was adopted as this was the first time a “floor” was being placed across programs for funding.

Estimated cost of Living

Year	Single Adult	Family of 4
2018	\$49,082	\$93,376
2022	\$54,550	\$114,933

Dr. Giuliani recommended simplifying the discussion by tying remuneration to PARO scale.

There was a discussion around fellows utilizing call stipends to offset income, but Dr. Rhandi Christensen pointed out that not all Clinical Fellows do calls as some are heavily research based. It was emphasized that remuneration should be focused on and to keep the call stipends separate.

Vote to occur next meeting to allow members to speak with Vice Chairs first. Consensus was to vote to raise the base salary from a **PGY 1 salary to a PGY 3 salary**.

#### 5. Offer Letter Issue – Kendra Naidoo & Sarah Lowry

PGME has guidelines for educational responsibilities in Clinical Fellowship has a comprehensive list of provisions that needs to be included in fellowship contracts, which are critical for establishing the correct form of legal relationship between the University and the fellow. These guidelines establish an educational relationship and not employment, while informing the fellows of the parameters of their fellowship.

Issues often arise after the Offer Letter has been signed and is sent to PGME for approval, but they are not able to. At that point the opportunity to make corrections has already passed as a legally binding relationship has been entered into with the fellow. For example, funding was listed as OHIP billing for a foreign national, which is not allowed under the type of work permit needed from IRCC (i.e.- Canadian public funds). Other sources of unacceptable funding are:

- Personal funds/self-funding
- Canadian Public Funds (OHIP Billing)
- Piecing together external funds as it can be difficult verify (i.e.- hospital from home country, not a sponsored country, etc.)

A practice presented for consideration is for the external funds to be placed in a Canadian account so that the appropriate taxes can be deducted and insurance the correct remuneration is being met.

Templates project underway to review and standardize them, to be able to provide as simple a package as possible. This is to avoid issues of key provisions being missing or are not what PGME can approve. It is to



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encourage programs not to doctor the template. If modifications are needed, please consult the University's legal counsel.

Ideally, legal council would like for Offer Letters to come to PGME in draft form to ensure the terms can be met by PGME.

Dr. Giuliani recommends that members take the information back to their departments and stakeholders for further discussions. Please reach out to Shannon Spencer who can connect with Kendra Naidoo and Sarah Lowry.

#### **6. Transitioning Program for International Fellows – Dr. Ahmed Al-Awamer, Dr. Ebru Kaya and Dr. Tushar Malavade**

Dr. Ahmed Al-Awamer and team presented a new transitioning program complimentary to orientation by each program for IMGs in the Palliative Care program. New trainees learn about the Canadian system and provide networking opportunities as well. This program has also been piloted for international fellows in nephrology, radiation oncology and geriatrics. The program is eight (8) weeks in duration and consists of asynchronous online modules (5 hours) and synchronous live sessions (1-2 hour live sessions) before arrival in Canada.

Types of modules:

- 1) Settlement in Canada
- 2) Canadian Health Care System and Palliative Care Delivery in Canada
- 3) Patient-Physician Communication
- 4) Advanced Care Planning
- 5) Working in a team-based environment
- 6) Bioethics and patient safety
- 7) Social determinants of health
- 8) Clinical documentation prescribing in Canada (live session)

Contact Dr. Ahmed Al-Awamer ([ahmed.al-awamer@uhn.ca](mailto:ahmed.al-awamer@uhn.ca))

Dr. Doreen Yee also pointed out that a good supplemental resource is the Orientation Booklet for New Residents and Fellows published by PGME.

#### **7. Additional Business**

Dr. Giuliani drew to the attention of the committee that two (2) faculty lead positions at PGME are being posted in the near future. Other faculty positions are being created at PGME.

Maureen Morris raised that a new Project Manager for Fellowships will be hired at PGME to help with the needs of FEAC, amongst other duties.

Next meeting convened for **Wednesday, March 22, 2023.**