

April 3, 2020

Subject:

Dear colleague,

On March 13, 2020, the CRMCC and the CMFC announced that exams scheduled for the spring of 2020 would be postponed due to the public health crisis caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. We were asked to weigh in on this decision, individually and as a collective. Now we would like to share the thoughts of the four vice deans of postdoctoral medicine of Québec's faculties of medicine with you.

We can assure you that all the comments we received on this subject were taken into consideration with the greatest attention. We recognize that the exceptional circumstances that have struck the entire globe are anxiety provoking and paralyzing. Every individual and group, including the medical community, must marshal themselves for the sake of the common good, with the understanding that we will all have to make some sacrifices.

As you know, the decision to postpone exams was not made by the faculties of medicine, but by the accrediting bodies that administer them. Besides consulting amongst themselves, these organizations judiciously consulted with their main partners, the federal and provincial Ministers of Health, universities, faculties of medicine and faculty members as well as the groups that represent medical residents (FMRQ and RDoC).

These discussions addressed a number of issues: the necessity and value of certification exams; the short and long term repercussions of postponing them; the safety of assessors and candidates; equity among different groups of candidates; the availability of faculty members, physical and material resources; and patients' health. Technological issues were also considered.

Ultimately, everyone, including the faculties of medicine, had to acknowledge that the current health crisis would make it impossible to administer exams. However, every stakeholder has set out and implemented measures to mitigate the repercussions of this situation: the Collège des Médecins du Québec has agreed to provide restrictive permits that will allow residents who would normally be graduating this year to practice with much greater autonomy. You are probably aware that the FMRQ and the Minister of Health and Social Services of Québec are discussing the creation of compensation measures for implicated residents. In turn, accrediting bodies are reviewing the logistics of administering exams. In short, serious efforts have been and are being made.

The unprecedented situation we are facing demands extraordinary measures. As vice deans, we can assure you that we are doing everything possible to minimize its negative impacts and help all of Québec's residents get through this difficult time.

Sincere regards,

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