



1. **PARA - Know Your Contract:**
  - Taxi Reimbursement Benefit: why PARA supports it
  - Exam Leave
2. **PARA Negotiations Update**
3. **Work-shift limits divide doctors in post-grad training; fatigue and mental errors cited as reasons to lower limits for residents, says study**
4. **5<sup>th</sup> Annual PARA Residents in the Legislature: Monday, May 10<sup>th</sup> – volunteers needed**
5. **PARA-Sponsored Residents to Attend Canadian Conference on Medical Education**
6. **Upcoming Events – PARA Board Meeting & Socials**
7. **PARA Employment Survey Draw Winners**
8. **PARA's Spot the Stethoscope March Winners**
9. **PARA's March 2010 Resident of the Month**

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## 1. **PARA - Know Your Contract:**

### ○ Taxi Reimbursement Benefit: why **PARA** supports it

The **PARA** Taxi Reimbursement Program was negotiated by your residents' association to contribute to resident physician and community safety and as an opportunity for **PARA** to exemplify resident well-being as one of our valued priorities. This benefit was championed by **PARA** based on research that illustrates resident physicians and members of the community are particularly at risk from motor vehicle collisions caused by fatigue. Based on this rationale, the benefit was established as a preventative health measure.

The Taxi Reimbursement Program exists to ensure resident physicians make it home safely when too tired to drive. We are all responsible for making sure that, when we need it, the benefit is available for those of us who are at the greatest risk from a motor vehicle collision.

The sustainability of Taxi Reimbursement Program is dependant upon the collective prudence (good sense) of its users. **PARA** encourages all of its members to reflect on the spirit in which this benefit was created, **which was to guard the safety of our membership and our community**. Resident physicians who access this benefit should self-assess for fatigue prior to accessing the benefit.

**PARA's** Pull Over to Page Campaign was initiated in this same spirit as the Taxi Reimbursement Program – as a preventative health campaign that improves the safety of resident physicians and members of our communities.

For more information on the risks associated with driving tired, visit the **PARA** website at <http://www.para-ab.ca/agreement/benefits/taxi-reimbursement>.

For more information on the risks of driving distracted, visit the **PARA** website at <http://www.para-ab.ca/about/media/coalition-for-cellphone-free-driving>.

## o Exam Leave

Article 10.03:

Outside of those Programs modified to accommodate preparation for Canadian qualifying and licensing examinations through recommendation of their Residency Program Committee, each Resident shall be entitled to up to five (5) working days without loss of pay to prepare and write Canadian qualifying and licensing examinations, which includes those of the Medical Council of Canada, the College of Family Physicians of Canada, and the Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada.

A Resident shall be granted unpaid leave up to five (5) working days for the purpose of taking American professional certification examinations.

Under their working contract, resident physicians are entitled to five days for exam leave for each exam that meets the criteria above (Canadian qualifying and licensing exams for the Medical Council of Canada, the College of Family Physicians of Canada, and the Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada). These days include the actual writing of the exam, any necessary travel days, and preparation time. While travel and writing days are dictated by the date(s) of the exam, preparation time is not. Exam leave does not have to fall immediately prior to the exam, in the same rotation as the exam, or on consecutive days. As there is usually more than one resident writing these exams, it is wise to book your time off early. If you book early, you may also be able to take advantage of any remaining flex or float days.

For more contract tips, visit the **PARA** website at <http://www.para-ab.ca/agreement/know-your-contract>.

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## 2. PARA Negotiations Update

The Letter of Intent to Bargain was sent to Alberta Health Services (AHS) in March. **PARA** expects to meet with AHS in May and June. In anticipation of these talks, the Negotiation Committee has been keeping a close eye on the negotiation between AHS and the United Nurses of Alberta (UNA). UNA's contract expired March 31, 2010.

Based on past negotiations, **PARA** tentatively expects to engage in face-to-face meetings over the course of May and June. **PARA's** Negotiation Committee members have selected the Negotiation Team that will represent resident physicians at the negotiation table. This team will seek endorsement from your PARA Board of Directors.

For an update on Resident Physician Contract negotiations in British Columbia, see the article below.

For past negotiation updates, visit the **PARA** website at <http://www.para-ab.ca/news/news-and-events/negotiations-update>

## 3. Work-shift limits divide doctors in post-grad training; Fatigue and mental errors cited as reasons to lower limits for residents, says study

Vancouver Sun

Mon Mar 29 2010

Page: A4

Section: Westcoast News

Byline: Pamela Fayerman

Source: Vancouver Sun

Doctors in postgraduate training are divided on the issue of work-shift limits to prevent fatigue and medical errors, a survey of University of B.C. medical residents has found.

Residents -- so-called because they often sleep in hospitals -- are medical school graduates who are often the first doctors hospital patients see. Thirty hour shifts and 80-hour work weeks are not unheard of.

The survey, published in the B.C. Medical Journal (BCMJ), shows surgery residents who want to get plenty of time in operating rooms are more averse to restrictions on their work hours than non-surgical residents.

Sleep-deprived doctors can compromise patient safety, studies done around the world have shown, and in some countries -- not including Canada -- concern about the effect of fatigue among medical residents has led to hard limits on work hours.

In B.C., a soon-to-expire contract between residents and health employers contains fairly loose language that gives doctors the option of refusing work beyond a 24-hour shift.

But Dr. May Tee, president of the Professional Association of Residents of B.C. (PAR-BC), said many residents worry they'll raise eyebrows if they turn down work after 24 hours, because of a culture of martyrdom.

"The older doctors say, 'Come on, can't you cut it? We worked way longer and you should too.'

"The culture hasn't caught up with the evolving evidence that we need to balance medical education with patient safety," Tee said. "There comes a point when you are so tired you could make a mistake that compromises patient care.

"On the other hand, surgeons argue that they need a critical volume of cases and patients to gain experience and competence. Or they stay an extra four hours because they know there is going to be a really cool case that they will only see a handful of times," she said.

In the BCMJ article, researchers Steven Green and Gary Poole reported they surveyed residents in internal medicine, general surgery and orthopedics about recommended work week and hour limits. The surgical residents thought 82 hours a week was a good limit, while non-surgical residents thought it should be 67.15 hours. That's about what each group reported they were already working per week.

There are about 1,100 medical residents in B.C. and PAR-BC is negotiating with government and health employers on a contract renewal that will address the work shifts issue. Tee, who is in the second year of a six-year general surgery residency, acknowledges members aren't unanimous on the issue.

"It's a huge challenge. We're an inherently diverse group of hard-working individuals," she said.

Tee wouldn't divulge specifics since they are the subject of negotiations, but she said she's personally in favour of keeping the 24-hour shift restriction while making it more enforceable.

"We will somehow find a resolution that puts patients first. There is enough evidence to show that sleep deprivation caused by working long, consecutive shifts puts patients at risk."

Residents work anywhere from 40 to 100 hours a week, Tee said. First-year residents make about \$48,000 and the salary goes up each year, to about \$70,000 by the seventh year.

In 2007, the BCMJ published an article about medical residents' work hours and fatigue showing that first-year residents worked, on average, 65.4 hours per week. But residents doing surgical training sometimes exceeded 80 hours a week.

"With no weekly duty hour limits in the collective agreement for residents in B.C., trainees (especially those in surgical specialties) may be at risk for harm to themselves and patients because of fatigue and sleep deprivation," it stated.

In another article in 2005, Dr. Richard Eddy wrote: "Instead of bragging about 100-hour work weeks, we should condemn them as dangerous to patients as well as physically and emotionally unhealthy to ourselves as practitioners."

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#### 4. 5<sup>th</sup> Annual PARA Residents in the Legislature: Monday, May 10<sup>th</sup> – volunteers needed

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**All reasonable costs incurred while attending Residents in the Legislature will be reimbursed. Please RSVP your attendance to the PARA office [para-ab@shawbiz.ca](mailto:para-ab@shawbiz.ca) by Monday, April 26, 2010.**

##### **PURPOSE OF RIL:**

Residents in the Legislature (RIL) is an annual event where resident physicians in Alberta invest in building relationships with their elected officials and senior bureaucrats. RIL is a non-partisan event that focuses on issues primarily relevant to the Ministries of Advanced Education and Technology and Health and Wellness. The event provides an opportunity for resident physicians to have significant impact on health policy. PARA will provide a letter of intent to the programs of resident physicians who are interested in attending. For a copy of this letter, visit the **PARA** website at: <http://www.para-ab.ca/upload/files/docs/News/Release%20from%20duty%20for%20RIL%20day2010%20%28Program%20Director%29.pdf>.

##### **GOAL:**

- **Raise the awareness** of Alberta's elected officials on issues important to resident physicians and the care of patients in Alberta.
- **Build relationships** between future health-care providers and elected officials.
- Provide resident physicians with training and experience in **effective advocacy**.

##### **MESSAGE:**

*Employment opportunities for Alberta's graduating resident physicians; training, recruiting, and retaining a long-term physician workforce for Alberta's patients.*

##### **EVENT:**

Unity in messaging from all attendees is paramount. A training session will take place the Sunday before RIL. The goal of the training session will be to help residents communicate with the Alberta Government in a cohesive, effective, and informed manner.

##### **Training Session:**

Date: Sunday, May 9<sup>th</sup>, 2010

Time: 2:00 p.m. – 6:00 p.m. (Dinner to follow at 6:30p.m.)

Location: Matrix Hotel, 10001 107 Street, Edmonton, Alberta.

Transportation from Calgary:

- ❖ Transportation will be provided pending interest from attendees.
- ❖ **Pick up in Calgary: 11:00 a.m. at Foothills Hospital** - outside the Tom Baker/Special Services building. Lunch will be made available on the bus.
  - Report time: 10:45 a.m.
  - Departure time: 11:00 a.m.
- ❖ **Drop off in Edmonton: 2:00 p.m. at Matrix Hotel: 10001 - 107 Street, Edmonton, Alberta**

##### **Residents in the Legislature:**

Date: Monday, May 10<sup>th</sup>, 2010

Time: 7:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.

Location: Alberta Legislature Buildings

- ❖ **7:00 a.m. – 8:00 a.m.: Breakfast - Matrix Hotel, 10001 - 107 Street, Edmonton, Alberta.**
- ❖ Parking: There is an Impark north of the Matrix Hotel; keep your parking receipts, **PARA** will reimburse costs.
- ❖ **Morning:** Scheduled meetings with MLAs and ministry bureaucrats
- ❖ **Lunch:** Lunch with the Minister of Health and Wellness – tentative
- ❖ **Afternoon:** Tour of the Legislature Building (packed lunch provided by Upper Crust)
- ❖ **4:00 p.m. – Home time** (Bus returns to Calgary)

## 5. **PARA - Sponsored Residents to Attend Canadian Conference on Medical Education**

Each year, **PARA** sponsors several resident physicians to attend two conferences. This year, these two conferences included the Canadian Conference on Physician Health in Vancouver (October 2009) and the upcoming Canadian Conference on Medical Education (CCME) in St. John's in May. Last month, interested **PARA** members were asked to submit applications to attend the CCME—the premier medical education conference in Canada. From the respondents, the following resident physician attendees have been selected:

- Dr. Rabiya Jalil, Family Medicine, University of Calgary
  - Dr. Shavaun MacDonald, FRCPC Emergency Medicine, University of Alberta
- Congratulations to these two lucky residents!

## 6. **Upcoming Events – PARA Board Meeting and Socials**

### • **PARA Board Meeting**

Date: Monday, May 31st, 2010  
Location: Calgary: Quality Inn University (2359 Banff Trail NW)  
Meeting: 1200 Noon – 1630 Hrs (Lunch will be provided at 1130 Hrs)

- **RSVP** to [para-ab@shawbiz.ca](mailto:para-ab@shawbiz.ca) by Thursday, May 6<sup>th</sup>

### • **PARA Yoga Night**

Date: Saturday, April 24, 2010  
Time: 6:00 p.m.  
Location: Yoga Shala, 1509/1511 – 19 Street NW  
**RSVP** to [para-ab@shawbiz.ca](mailto:para-ab@shawbiz.ca) on or before April 23.  
For more information, please visit <http://www.para-ab.ca/news/events>

### • **Mothers' Day Walk/Run**

Date: Sunday, May 9, 2010  
Time: 9:00 a.m.  
**RSVP** to [para-ab@shawbiz.ca](mailto:para-ab@shawbiz.ca) by April 16.

- PARA will sponsor the first twelve (12) residents who respond to run in the Mother's Day Run/ Walk.
- The Mother's Day Run raises money for the Calgary Health Trust.
- For more information, please visit <http://www.para-ab.ca/news/events>

For more information on upcoming events, visit **PARA's** Events Calendar online at <http://www.para-ab.ca/calendar.aspx>.

**PARA** is also trialing a new facebook page to allow residents to RSVP for **PARA** events. You can find our page at <http://www.facebook.com/group.php?gid=185755111347>. Feedback on the new site is welcome.

## 7. **PARA Employment Survey Draw winners**

**PARA** gave away a \$100 Best Buy gift certificate to five randomly-selected resident physicians who completed the PARA Employment & Transition to Practice Survey. Congratulations to the winners and thank you to everyone who responded to the survey.

## 8. **PARA's Spot the Stethoscope March winners**

Spot the Stethoscope is done for another year. Check back in September for more chances to win! Remember, the first 14 residents who correctly reply by email detailing where on the PARA website the stethoscope is hidden will win.\* Thank you for playing!



**First Prize** - two tickets to a March NHL game

Drs. Jordan Raugust, Christine Chang, and Kerri Johannson – University of Calgary  
Drs. Chris Gee and Wei Shao – University of Alberta

**Second Prize Winners:** two tickets to the movies

Dr. Angel Chu

Dr. Barbara Zhao

Dr. Chieh Jack Chiu

Dr. James Yeung

Dr. Luba Kazatchenko

Dr. Mei Loke

Dr. Nick Etches

Dr. Scott Jarvis

Dr. Simon Ko

Dr. Stephanie Mullin

\* Residents cannot win two months in a row.

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## 9. **PARA's** March 2010 Resident of the Month

Dr. Kristen Johnson  
Pediatrics PGY 4  
University of Alberta

A fellow resident had this to say about Dr. Johnson:

*"Dr. Johnson is a very helpful and friendly resident physician. She has an excellent knowledge base and technical skills. Her bedside manner and professional manner are impeccable. She is always available to teach medical students and junior residents and encourages others to learn from her experiences. Both the staff physicians and allied health professionals enjoy her presence in the unit."*

For this month's Resident of the Month announcement, visit **PARA** online at <http://www.para-ab.ca/news/news-and-events/awards>.

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Happy Easter Weekend from,  
Your **P**rofessional **A**ssociation of **R**esidents of **A**lberta