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## 1. **PARA - Know Your Contract:** Realities of Scheduling Vacation

The Holidays will be here before you know it, and each resident physician is entitled to five consecutive days off. As you plan for the upcoming holiday season, or any other scheduled vacation, please consider PARA's advice on how to successfully negotiate time away:

- **Respect the Rules**
- **Holiday Season:**
  - Consecutive days encompass either December 23 - 27 or December 29 - January 2. All resident physicians are required to be available for service on December 28th, where required by their program.
  - Resident physicians are entitled to receive a day in lieu if they are scheduled to work Christmas Day, Boxing Day, or New Year's Day; programs are encouraged to avoid scheduling resident physicians for on-call service the day before their holiday starts.
  - Call requirements are not recalculated based on the 5 days off service. Resident physicians can still be required to service maximum call expectations in order to allow all resident physicians to have at least five consecutive days of within one rotation (7 in-house or 9 home call).
  - Scheduling vacation during this period can be tricky. The contract holds resident physicians to timelines with regard to requesting vacation; even if you do submit your requests on time, you may need to be flexible about how you take it as service requirements may influence the number of resident physicians who are able to take vacation on any given block.
- **Yearly vacation:**
  - Application for vacation shall be made in writing to the Program Director a minimum of eight (8) weeks in advance in order that Resident Physician substitution may be arranged. The Program Director shall make a reasonable effort to accommodate the

Resident Physician's request for vacation time. When a Resident Physician submits a request for vacation, the Program Director shall confirm approval or disapproval of the request in writing within two (2) weeks.

- Don't book your vacation before you receive authorized confirmation that you have the time off.

- **Respect the Roles**

Administrators have a job to do. It is their responsibility to make sure the service and scheduling allows for safe patient care. This role can often be difficult as many administrators must ensure proper care provision and coverage while numerous resident physicians come and go from their service – all with different scheduling requests. Sometimes in order to meet these service requirements, it is not possible to give every resident physician their first choice of vacation times.

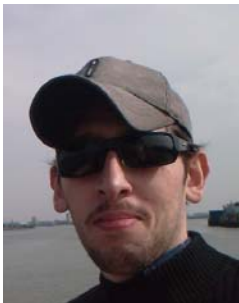
- **Respect the Relationships**

Considerate communication is key. How you make scheduling requests and how you respond to follow up on scheduling requests can impact relationships with the program and colleagues. Your interactions influence not just how others engage with you, but can also influence how they reflect on and engage with resident physicians in general.

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

## 2. Wellness Tip:

- **Surviving Long Hours**



By Sadek Al Shouli

Residency life is known to be physically, emotionally, and intellectually demanding; however, it is an essential part of medical education. It is the responsibility of the resident physicians to remain alert and fit while on duty. Research shows that long working hours can lead to the development of job-related stress; common symptoms and early warning signs of job stress and burnout include apathy, anxiety, frustration, fatigue, depression, anger, irritability, and physical problems like headaches and stomach problems.

Here are some tips on how to cope with long working hours and to avoid job stress:

- (i) Get a good night's sleep. Put aside all thoughts of work and other stresses, if possible.
- (ii) Eat a good breakfast. Breakfast provides energy to get through a stressful and long day, so you should not skip this meal.
- (iii) Take breaks every few hours; you need to get away from your work area every now and then.
- (iv) Make a list of what you need to do; place the most important tasks at the top. This list will keep you on track and focused at work.
- (v) Keep energized to remain productive throughout the day. Drink caffeine in moderation and stay hydrated. Eat a healthy lunch.
- (vi) Relax after work, briefly. Take some time to read, watch television, or engage in your hobbies after each day to create a separation between your work day and your personal life.
- (vii) Take care of your health. Exercise at least a few times a week and get regular check ups with your family physician.
- (viii) Try to maintain a strong sense of life outside of work. Find time to do the things you enjoy or else your work will simply become your life.

## ▪ Flex Spending Account: RRSP Reminder

If you allocated credits to the RRSP Account, you will have received a User ID and PIN by mail from Standard Life. Using this User ID and PIN, you have until **October 28, 2011** to register your plan selections with Standard Life at <https://viproom.standardlife.ca/pin/Login.jsp>. You will be required to select your choice of RRSP funds and investment mixes.



If you have not received your User ID and PIN, contact Standard Life at 1 (800) 242-1704, ex. 4000. If you miss this 60-day window, your RRSP allocation will revert to your health spending account.

Once you have registered with Standard Life, your RRSP allocation will be automatically be invested into your Group RRSP account administered by Standard Life.

### 3. Resident Physician Duty Hour Discussions at the ICRE

The Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada hosted the International Conference on Residency Education from October 18 – 20, 2011. The focus of this conference was transitions in residency education. The conference took special interest in work hours by hosting a special symposium titled “Duty Hours: Solutions Across Borders.” This session was presented by Dr. Thomas Maniatis from McGill University in Montreal, Dr. Adrian Park from Dalhousie University in Halifax, Dr. Darcy Reed from the Mayo Clinic College of Medicine in the United States, and Dr. Fiona Moss from the London Deanery. The session included details on international resident duty hours; strategies to adapt residency training to thrive in the context of duty hour restrictions; and, reflections on the impact of changes to resident duty hours on our teachers and strategies to mitigate this impact. PARA sent a small delegation to this conference and the take-aways focused on a number of themes:

1. **Change is possible!** Medical education programs across the country are making innovative work-hour reforms through night float and alternate call coverage systems.
2. **Care, training, and wellness all matter!** The goals of work-hours reform should optimize quality patient care and medical training and prioritize resident physician and educator wellness.
3. **Fostering productive relationships is key!** Fostering positive educator/trainee relationships through change must be a priority.

#### Relevant and interesting links:

- ICRE blog post re: Duty Hours Symposium:  
<http://icreblog.royalcollege.ca/2011/09/20/download-opening-slides-for-friday%e2%80%99s-duty-hours-solutions-across-borders-symposium/#respond>
- Blog comments re: Duty Hours Symposium:  
<http://icreblog.royalcollege.ca/comments/feed/>
- ICRE Q and A re: How Medical Education Can Respond to Duty Hours Reform:  
<http://icreblog.royalcollege.ca/2011/05/11/how-can-medical-education-respond-to-duty-hours-reform/>
- Paper Session Submission on Resident Physician Duty Hours:
  - Does the shift work? A pre/post study to assess the impact of a new senior resident rotation bundle on senior residents' wellness quality of health care delivery and medical education experience: G. Fabreau, M. Elliot, E. Minty, S. Khanna, A. Bharwani, J. Wallace, J. DeGrood, A. Lewin, G. Brown, J. Gilmour, J. Lemaire, University of Calgary, Calgary (#47)
  - Feasibility and barriers to the implementation of a night float system: S. Doshi, A. Vandermorris, A. Atkinson, Hospital for Sick Children, Toronto (#49)

<http://www.openmedicine.ca/article/view/504/425>

- Effect of the ACGME Duty Hours Restrictions on Surgical Residents and Faculty: A Systematic Review; Academic Medicine, Vol 86, No. 1/ January, 2011

[http://journals.lww.com/academicmedicine/Abstract/2011/01000/Effect\\_of\\_the\\_ACGME\\_Duty\\_Hours\\_Restrictions\\_on.18.aspx](http://journals.lww.com/academicmedicine/Abstract/2011/01000/Effect_of_the_ACGME_Duty_Hours_Restrictions_on.18.aspx)

#### 4. Foothills Hospital - Resident Physician Lounge Focus Group: call for volunteers

The medical site office at the Foothills Hospital is looking to proactively engage resident physicians in Calgary on meeting and lounge space opportunities at the Foothills Hospital. Any one who has set foot in the Foothills Hospital understands that space is at a premium. A portion of that premium space is dedicated to lounge space for physicians and resident physicians alike. A focus group will be organized to distill how resident physicians feel about the current space provided: is it being used?; does it successfully meet your needs?; etc. Further, resident physicians interested in participating will get a chance to work with PARA and FHH site medical staff by contributing their thoughts on what an ideal lounge space could look like.

If you have any questions or would like to participate and share your thoughts, please contact the PARA office at [para-ab@shawbiz.ca](mailto:para-ab@shawbiz.ca).

#### 5. AMA Website Resident Physician Website Focus Group Opportunity: call for volunteers



ALBERTA  
MEDICAL  
ASSOCIATION

The Alberta Medical Association is launching a new website in February 2012 and needs your help to make sure that we get it right.

Can you give us 20 minutes of your time to test the resident physicians' section on the new site? We'll be testing the website in Calgary and/or Edmonton over the next few months.

If you have any questions or would like to participate, please contact:

Kathy Garnsworthy

Manager, Website

Alberta Medical Association

Telephone: 780.482.0675

Email: [kathy.garnsworthy@albertadoctors.org](mailto:kathy.garnsworthy@albertadoctors.org) <<mailto:kathy.garnsworthy@albertadoctors.org>>

#### 6. Upcoming Events

##### ▪ **October PARAlyzer**



Date: Friday, October 28

Time: 9:00 – 10:30 pm (No Cover Charge)

Location: Hudson's Tap House Downtown, 1201-5 Avenue SW, Calgary

Hospital ID required.

RSVP to [para-ab@shawbiz.ca](mailto:para-ab@shawbiz.ca) by **Wednesday, October 26.**

##### ▪ **PARA Board of Directors & Annual General Meeting**

Date: Monday, November 7, 2011

Location: Hotel Alma, 169 University Gate NW, Calgary (Tel. (403) 220-3203)

Time: 12:00 – 5:00 PM

- Lunch will be available starting at 11:30 AM.
- **RSVP** to [para-ab@shawbiz.ca](mailto:para-ab@shawbiz.ca) by **Thursday, October 20.**

## ▪ **Sixth Annual PARA Leadership Conference**

**PARA** is excited to announce our Sixth Annual Leadership Conference, presented by the Schumacher Research and Leadership Group.

Date: Saturday, November 26 (8 AM – 5 PM) with a networking reception that evening  
Sunday, November 27 (8 AM – 3 PM)

Location: Gowling Lafleur Henderson LLP  
Barristers & Solicitors  
1400 Scotia Centre  
700 – 2<sup>nd</sup> Street SW  
Calgary, Alberta

Details: Shared accommodation will be arranged and accommodation and travel expenses will be reimbursed. Let us know about any special dietary needs you may have (eg. Celiac, vegetarian, etc.)

### **Focus of Conference:**

- Leadership
- Grassroots & government advocacy
- Crucial conversations & confrontations that every leader must have
- Crisis management
- Being effective in meetings
- Public speaking

To view the conference agenda, visit <http://www.para-ab.ca/news/events/para-workshops-and-seminars>.

PARA resident physicians (that's you!) are welcome to attend. There are a limited number of spaces available; to qualify for one of the spots, please send a one-page submission detailing both your past leadership experience and your interest in the opportunity to [para-ab@shawbiz.ca](mailto:para-ab@shawbiz.ca) before **Friday, November 4.**

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

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

## 7. **PARA's Spot the Stethoscope Contest**

Check out the **PARA** website at <http://www.para-ab.ca> and win. Each month until March 2012, a stethoscope will be hidden somewhere on **PARA's** website. The first 14 resident physicians who correctly reply by email detailing where on the **PARA** website the stethoscope is hidden will win!!!\*

The Spot the Stethoscope Contest was established to encourage **PARA's** resident physician members to get familiar with the **PARA** website and the resources available there. Since its overhaul over the summer of 2009, [www.para-ab.ca](http://www.para-ab.ca) has had more than 60,000 visitors!



**First Prize** – The first two resident physicians from both the University of Alberta and the University of Calgary to email **PARA** with the URL of the stethoscope will win a pair of tickets to a December NHL game.

**Second Prize Winners:** The next five resident physicians from each university to email **PARA** with the URL of the stethoscope will win a pair of tickets to the movies.

**\* Resident physicians are eligible to win hockey tickets only once per academic year; runners-up prizes will not be awarded to any resident physician two months in a row.**

## 8. **PARA's September 2011 Resident Physician of the Month**

**Dr. Dennis Lefebvre, RCPSC Emergency Medicine PGY 5, University of Alberta**



Fellow resident physicians had this to say about Dr. Dennis Lefebvre:

“Dennis is an exceptional resident physician. During his off-service rotations, he managed to impress staff physicians, mentor junior residents and inspire medical students. He is an excellent teacher explaining complex concepts in a fun and exciting learning environment. His caring nature and excellent bedside manner make him appreciated by his patients and other allied health professionals. While his knowledge, attitude and work ethic are all accomplishments by themselves, he has also managed to work extensively on behalf of resident physicians promoting wellness through his role on the University of Alberta Resident Well-Being Committee. He designed, implemented, and found funding for a resident-run wellness program which he called "Captain Wellness" for Emergency Medicine residents. Through this program he has organized a monthly music program, social events, an annual Christmas drive for the Bissell Centre and a hydration station for the residents' room. His work both inside the hospital and outside the hospital truly makes Dennis an excellent role model for all resident physicians.”

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

Regards from,  
Your **P**rofessional **A**ssociation of **R**esident Physicians of **A**lberta

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[www.para-ab.ca](http://www.para-ab.ca)

References (Surviving Long Hours)

1. "Joint Commission Journal on Quality and Patient Safety": Effects of Health Care Provider Work Hours and Sleep Deprivation on Safety and Performance; Lockley et al: November 2007
2. How to Work Long Hours eHow.com [http://www.ehow.com/how\\_7553257\\_work-long-hours.html#ixzz1YXP7Hags](http://www.ehow.com/how_7553257_work-long-hours.html#ixzz1YXP7Hags)
3. The Long Work Hours Culture: Causes, Consequences and Choices by [Ronald J. Burke](#), [Cary L. Cooper](#) (Hardcover- Sep 11 2008)

4. 25 Natural Ways to Manage Stress and Avoid Burnout: A Mind-Body Approach to Well-Being by James Scala (Paperback - Dec 1 2000)