

**SPECIALTY TRAINING BURSARY PROGRAM**  
**Policies and Guidelines**  
**Revised June 2009**

**PROGRAM DESCRIPTION**

**1. Purpose**

The Specialty Training Bursary Program will provide funding to medical specialty residents enrolled in a Canadian Specialty Training program. In return, recipients are required to live and practice full-time in a Rural Subsidiary Agreement (RSA) defined rural community in British Columbia following completion of their specialist residency training.<sup>1</sup>

**2. Eligibility**

Residents are eligible to apply if they:

- are enrolled in a Canadian Speciality Residency program and are entering their final two years of residency;
- have been accepted to a position by a specialty department of a hospital included in the RSA once they have completed their residency program.

Preference will be given to specialties identified as being "in need" in rural communities of BC.

**3. Funding**

The total bursary is \$25,000.00 per annum.

Each successful applicant will be eligible for up to 2 years of bursary funding (at \$25,000/annum) to a maximum of \$50,000. Bursary funding is only available while the recipient is pursuing a Specialty Residency Program.

Two (2) bursaries will be offered in each fiscal year. (Canada Customs and Revenue consider bursary funds taxable income.)

**4. Application Process**

Applications for bursary assistance must include the following:

- a) a completed application form and letter of support from the applicants current department head
- b) a resume of work, academic and community experience;
- c) an outline of studies including special courses or training; and
- d) a letter of acceptance, endorsed by the Health Authority, to a position in a specialty department of a hospital included in the RSA.
- e) each years' funding is contingent on successful completion of the academic year and a letter of satisfactory progress from the program head.

Application forms may be obtained through the UBC Faculty of Medicine, the British Columbia Medical Association (BCMA) or British Columbia Ministry of Health (MoH). Applications must be returned to the Rural Education Action Plan (REAP), 300-5950 University Boulevard, Vancouver BC V6T 1Z3.

**5. Selection Process and Screening Criteria**

The BCMA/MoH Rural Joint Standing Committee (JSC) will select the successful candidates.

**6. Notification Process and Requirements of Selected Recipients**

Following selection, successful applicants will be notified by email or telephone. Upon direction of the JSC, the REAP office will distribute four copies of the bursary agreement to successful applicants. These must be signed and returned to the REAP office before the first payment can be made. A signed copy will be returned to the bursary recipient for his/her records.

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<sup>1</sup> Full time is defined as practicing a minimum of nine months of the year and billing greater than \$50,000 per year (fee-for-service and alternate payments).

## **7. Return-of-Service Commitment**

Upon completion of the medical training as specified in the bursary agreement, physicians are required to provide a specified period of service in rural British Columbia as stipulated in their bursary agreement. Total return-of-service time is calculated based on the following:

- One year (12 months) of service in a RSA designated rural community for each year of funding.

Upon completion of residency training, recipients must notify the REAP program office of their practice location and the date they intend to commence Practice. This will enable accurate detailing of credit for the return-of-service commitment.

Upon completing the necessary requirements to practice in their area of specialty, physicians will be provided a six-month period in which to establish medical practice and full-time residency in the RSA community in which they have a position.

## **8. Deferments**

If a bursary recipient wishes to seek permission to defer his/her service commitment, a request must be submitted in writing to the Rural JSC, providing full details, at least 6 months prior to the commencement of the proposed deferment. Deferments would be considered for issues such as the need for additional training, serious family illness, death or maternity.

All requests for deferrals will be adjudicated by the JSC and these decisions will be communicated in writing to bursary recipients.

## **9. Inability to Establish Practice**

In the event that the physician is, through no fault of his/her own, unable to establish practice arrangements as required by the bursary agreement, but has demonstrated due diligence in attempting to do so to the satisfaction of the JSC, the physician may apply in writing to the JSC to be released from their service and repayment commitments.

## **10. Default Provisions**

Physicians, who fail to complete their service commitment mid-term, will be required to repay a proportionate percentage of their bursary funds to the time remaining. For example, if the service commitment ends following one year of service, the resident must repay one year or \$25,000. The terms will be specified in the recipient's promissory note (included with the contract).

Failure to complete the residency program for academic reasons will necessitate repayment of all bursary funds.

## **11. Monitoring and Verification of Service**

Once a physician has set up practice in an approved community, a quarterly follow-up will be made. This follow-up procedure is made through the REAP office.

## **12. Relocation Appeals Mechanism**

Physicians wishing to move to another RSA community during the period of their return-of-service contract may write to the JSC indicating their desire to move. Approvals will be made at the discretion of the JSC.

*For further information on any part of this program, please contact:*

Rural Education Action Plan  
300-5950 University Boulevard  
Vancouver BC V6T 1Z3  
Phone: 604-827-4188  
Fax: 604-822-6950  
Email: [reap@familymed.ubc.ca](mailto:reap@familymed.ubc.ca)