

## **I EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

The Specialist Resident Bursary Program was established to provide an incentive for physicians graduating from a specialty program to practice medicine in Saskatchewan.

### Background

Since the mid-1990s, Saskatchewan has had difficulty attracting and retaining Saskatchewan-trained specialists.

In 1998, the Saskatchewan Medical Association and Saskatchewan Health, through the Committee on Rural & Regional Practice developed a bursary program for residents attending the University of Saskatchewan. Bursaries were available to specialist residents in one of eight “core” specialties. Return-in-service commitments were to regional Saskatchewan.

In 2000, the Saskatchewan Medical Association negotiated a fund targeted to the recruitment and retention of specialists in Saskatchewan. As such, the Specialist Recruitment & Retention Committee was established to develop programs and initiatives that would facilitate the recruitment & retention of specialists to Saskatchewan.

This program, created in 2001, was the first program launched by the Specialist Recruitment & Retention Committee. It began as a pilot project and was only available to residents training in specialty program at the University of Saskatchewan. Return-in-service commitments were to any Saskatchewan centre.

In 2002, this program was expanded to include specialty residents who completed their undergraduate medical training at the University of Saskatchewan, and are now pursuing residency training at other Canadian universities.

## **II PROGRAM DESCRIPTION**

### 1. Purpose

The Specialist Resident Bursary Program provides funding to medical specialty residents enrolled at the College of Medicine, University of Saskatchewan, or for medical specialty residents at other Canadian universities who completed their undergraduate medical training at the University of Saskatchewan.

In return, recipients are required to live and practice full-time in Saskatchewan for a fixed period of time following completion of their training.

### 2. Eligibility

Residents are eligible to apply if they are:

- Enrolled in a Specialty Residency Program at the College of Medicine, University of Saskatchewan; OR

- Enrolled in a Specialty Residency Program at a College of Medicine at a Canadian university outside of Saskatchewan **IF** they have completed their undergraduate medical training at the University of Saskatchewan.

Preference will be given to residents training in Saskatchewan or residents training in programs that are not available in Saskatchewan. Preference will also be given to specialties identified as being “in need” for the province of Saskatchewan.

### 3. Funding

The total bursary is \$25,000/year payable in one lump sum.

Each successful applicant will be eligible for up to 3 years of bursary funding (at \$25,000/year) to a maximum of \$75,000. Bursary funding is only available while the recipient is pursuing their Royal College Fellowship Training Program.

Funding will only be provided while a resident is in training. Should they take a leave from their program (e.g. medical leave or parental leave) their bursary payments will be suspended until their return.

Up to 15 bursaries will be offered each year. Bursary income is considered taxable income by Revenue Canada.

### 4. Application Process

Applications for bursary assistance must include the following:

- a) a completed application form; and
- b) a resume of work, academic and community experience; and
- c) an outline of studies including special courses or training.

Application forms may be obtained through the Saskatchewan Medical Association office or Saskatchewan Health and upon completion may be returned to either organization. (See page 6 for contact information.)

### 5. Selection Process and Screening Criteria

The application deadline is September 30.

Interviews will be conducted in October through the University of Saskatchewan or by teleconference for those residents training at other Canadian universities. Applicants will be interviewed by a Bursary Selection Committee composed of members or designates of the SMA's Specialist Recruitment & Retention Committee.

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

Following selection, Saskatchewan Health will contact successful applicants by mail or phone. Saskatchewan Health will then distribute four copies of the bursary agreement to successful applicants. These must be signed and returned to Saskatchewan Health before the first payment can be made. A signed copy will be returned to the bursary recipient for his/her records.

Once selected, bursary recipients need not reapply, as their bursary agreement will be in effect for three years (or remainder of their Royal College Fellowship Training, whichever comes first).

If a bursary recipient chooses to opt out of a second or third year of bursary support, the recipient is responsible to promptly advise Saskatchewan Health of this decision in writing. An amendment to the bursary agreement will then be prepared by Saskatchewan Health and forwarded to the recipient for signature.

#### 7. Return-in-service Commitment

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

- a) One year of service in Saskatchewan for one year of funding.
- b) Part-time arrangements will be considered on a case-by-case basis at the discretion of the Specialist Recruitment & Retention Committee. In instances where service is provided on a part-time basis, the return-in-service commitment will be prorated accordingly.

Upon completion of residency training, recipients must notify Saskatchewan Health of their practice location and date on which they intend to commence practice. This will enable accurate detailing of credit for the return-in-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 a Saskatchewan centre of their choice.

#### 8. Provincial Commitment for Employment

While each bursary recipient has primary responsibility for obtaining a suitable practice opportunity for his/her return-in-service commitment, there are a number of supports available, including the following:

- A list of physician positions in Saskatchewan can be located at: [www.sasknetwork.ca](http://www.sasknetwork.ca) and [http://www.health.gov.sk.ca/hhrp\\_employment.html](http://www.health.gov.sk.ca/hhrp_employment.html)
- Some Regional Health Authorities have dedicated staff to the recruitment and retention of physicians. Contact information can be obtained from either the Saskatchewan Medical Association or Saskatchewan Health.
- The contract permits Saskatchewan Health to provide relevant information on the bursary recipient to Regional Health Authority CEOs, physician practices and others in the province who might be interested in the medical services of the bursary recipient.

#### 9. Deferments

If a bursary recipient wishes to seek permission to defer his/her service commitment, a request must be submitted in writing to the Saskatchewan Medical Association, providing full details, at least 6 months prior to the commencement of the proposed deferment. Need for additional training, serious family illness, death or maternity leave

are examples of situations where deferments would be considered. Requests for deferrals in emergency situations will be dealt with in a timely and efficient manner.

All requests for deferrals will be adjudicated by the Specialist Recruitment & Retention Committee and these decisions will be communicated in writing to bursary recipients.

#### 10. 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 Specialist Recruitment & Retention Committee, the physician may apply to the Specialist Recruitment & Retention Committee to be released from their service and repayment commitments.

#### 11. Default Provisions

Physicians who fail to complete their service commitment will be required to repay all bursary funds with accumulated interest. This amount is calculated by Saskatchewan Finance and Saskatchewan Health and the amount will be specified in the recipient's promissory note (included with contract).

Failure to live up to the terms of this agreement, by either fulfilling their return-in-service commitment or by repaying all bursary funds with accumulated interest, will result in a request to the College of Physicians and Surgeons not to issue a certificate of good standing.

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

#### 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 Medical Services and Health Registration Branch of Saskatchewan Health and the Saskatchewan Medical Association.

#### 12. Relocation Appeals Mechanism

Physicians wishing to move to a new community during the period of their return-in-service contract may write to the Specialist Recruitment & Retention Committee indicating their desire to move. Approvals will be made at the discretion of the Specialist Recruitment & Retention Committee.

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

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