

MEMORANDUM

To: The Federation of Medical Regulatory Authorities of Canada (FMRAC)
Provincial and Territorial Ministries of Health
Provincial and Territorial Medical Associations
Royal College Specialty Committee Chairs
National Specialty Societies
Postgraduate Deans and Deans of Faculties of Medicine
Postgraduate Managers
Royal College committees (Assessment Committee, Accreditation Committee, Credentials Committee, Committee on Specialties)
Resident Doctors of Canada (RDoC)
Fédération des médecins résidents du Québec (FMRQ)
Le Collège des médecins du Québec (CMQ)
The College of Family Physicians of Canada (CFPC)
Medical Council of Canada (MCC)
Canadian Resident Matching Service (CaRMS)
HealthCareCAN

From: Jason R. Frank, Director, Specialty Education, Strategy and Standards, Office of Specialty Education

Subject: Application for the recognition of **Advanced Heart Failure and Cardiac Transplantation** as AFC (diploma) discipline: national consultation results and Education Committee decision

Date: May 25, 2015

Recognizing the importance of communications with our stakeholders and transparency in committee decision making, the Royal College is issuing this memo to provide an update about the status of the application for an Areas of Focused Competence (diploma) in Advanced Heart Failure and Cardiac Transplantation. This update includes the results of the national consultation of stakeholders conducted during the winter of 2015, and the resulting decision made by the Committee on Specialties (COS) and the Education Committee (EdC) at their recent spring 2015 meetings.

Background

The application approval process for an AFC (diploma) application consists of a two-part review by the COS. Part I consists of the review of the application, in principle, against the criteria for recognition. Part II considers the results of the national consultation and any clarifications stemming from Part I review, in preparation for making a final recommendation to the EdC, which has the final authority for recognizing AFC (diplomas).

An application for the recognition of Advanced Heart Failure and Cardiac Transplantation as an AFC (diploma) discipline was received by the Office of Specialty Education in 2014, for Part I consideration by the COS at their November 2014 meeting. At the meeting, the application was approved to proceed to Part II, pending clarification from the applicants and the results of a national consultation, to be completed over the winter of 2015.

Part II Clarifications

The consultation request received in early 2015 detailed several clarifications requested by the committee which were pending at the time of the consultation. After the COS fall 2014 meeting,

and as requested by the committee, the applicant clarified aspects of the proposal. In particular, the applicants elaborated on the distinct set of added competencies envisioned for this AFC-diploma discipline. In addition, they have also removed references to time-based training from the preface of the CTR documents accompanying their application.

As part of their revised application, the applicant clarified that the general Cardiology residency training program does not intend to address the competencies necessary to manage the highly complex advanced heart failure patient, the patient on mechanical circulatory support (MCS), or the intricacies of post-heart transplant care. As such, and according to the applicants, the objectives outlined in the CTR for this AFC significantly expand and elaborate upon the Objectives of Training (OTR) for both adult and pediatric Cardiology. Extended focused training, they argued, will expose trainees to a higher volume and spectrum of heart failure, MCS, and heart transplant patients, and enhance their skills to function as a specialist in their field. The proposed AFC (diploma), they argued, will address this knowledge gap, enhance trainee knowledge, competence, and expertise in this field, and consolidate the exposure they would have received during general Cardiology training, in order to ensure they are competent in the management of these particular patient care needs.

Finally, the applicants stated that the delivery of advanced heart failure care is a collaborative, team based approach. As per the competencies associated with this AFC (diploma) proposal, trainees will learn skills intended to allow them to provide streamlined, multidisciplinary care to this special population and be well positioned to identify and promote areas of uncertainty that require further research.

National Consultation

The national consultation was conducted between January and February 2015. Stakeholders included in this consultation phase include all of those listed above as recipients of this memo, in addition to any others requested by the applicants. The quantitative and qualitative results of the consultation, summarized below, were provided to the COS at their spring 2015 meeting; the Part II decision of the COS is also summarized below.

1. Overall Statistics:

- 1.1. Total number of stakeholders contacted: 122
 - Total number of respondents: 20
- 1.2. Total response rate: 16.4%

2. Detailed Statistics on Question 4

"Are you in favour of this proposal? (Yes/No/Neutral/Uncertain)"

Stakeholders	% responses rates by group	# of responses to Q4	% in favour	% Not in favour	% of neutral	% of uncertain
1. Medical Regulatory Authorities	23.1%	3	0%	66.7%	33.3%	0%
2. Provincial/Territorial Medical Associations	0%	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
3. Regional Advisory Committee Chairs	20%	1	0%	0%	0%	100%
4. Ministries of Health	23.1%	3	0%	33.3%	66.7%	0%
5. Residents' Associations (FMRQ, CAIR)	50%	1	100%	0%	0%	0%
6. Sister Colleges/National	20%	1	0%	0	100%	0%

Organizations (CMQ, CFPC, ACAHO, Medical Council of Canada, CaRMS)						
7. Faculties (Deans)	5.9%	1	100%	0%	0%	0%
8. Faculties (PG Deans)	11.8%	2	0%	50%	50%	0%
9. Specialty Committee Chairs	63.6%	7	57.1%	14.3%	14.3%	14.3%
10. National Specialty Societies	0%	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
11. Other	50%	1	100%	0%	0%	0%
12. Overall Summary	16.4%	20	35%	25%	30%	10%

3. Summary of Themes:

Those consulted identified the following advantages for the proposal:

- Training would be structured and comprehensive as a result.
- Would support enhancement of the "heart team" concept and add expertise on chronic heart failure management.
- Would enable recognition of advanced competency in an area of growing clinical importance.
- Increased coherence across Canada for all heart failure training programs.
- Would ensure that complex technologies and treatments are used by individuals highly proficient in their area of practice.
- Could add value to provision of quality patient-centered and team-based care.
- Would create a community of experts to serve as a resource for clinical care, education, knowledge translation, research and innovation.
- May lead to improved treatment for a small subset of patients with heart failure which may improve quality of life and reduce hospitalizations.
- That the proposal may assist in the development of local/regional policy for treatment of heart failure.

Those consulted identified the following potential challenges for the proposal:

- That the patient care services described in the submission would require specialized patient care infrastructure and services generally only available in tertiary care referral centers, meaning that once these centers have full physician complements, it would become difficult for graduates to find appropriate positions.
- Creating more and more invasive and complex treatments is expensive for the healthcare system.
- A potentially small patient population and potential for confusion as to who is best suited to look after patients with heart failure in different contexts.
- Competencies noted in the proposed AFC should continue to be in scope for all cardiologists.
- The risk of potential overlap of training objectives with Cardiology.
- The inclusion of both adult and pediatric patients under the same AFC-diploma umbrella, as on many levels, these two fields are very different with respect, but not limited to, the issues of medical expert, ethical and communication competencies.

COS Part II Decision and EdC Approval – March and April 2015

At their meeting on March 30-31, 2015, the COS considered the application submitted for Part I, the results of the national consultation, and the clarifications made to the application for Part II consideration.

Overall, the COS was satisfied with the results of the national consultation and the additional documentation and information provided by the applicants; however they raised some minor clarifications regarding the assessment tools noted as well as a suggestion regarding a small modification to the name given the current focus of the discipline without the Cardiac Surgery stream.

As a result of their discussion, the COS approved Part II of the application for Advanced Heart Failure and Cardiac Transplantation as an AFC (diploma) discipline at their spring 2015 meeting, and passed the following motion:

***THAT,** the Committee on Specialties recommend to the Education Committee the approval of the application to recognize Advanced Heart Failure and Cardiac Transplantation as an AFC (diploma) discipline, pending minor clarification.*

The recommendation from the COS, along with the results of the national consultation was presented to the EdC shortly thereafter, at their April 24, 2015 meeting. The EdC agreed that Advanced Heart Failure and Cardiac Transplantation represented a significant societal health need, and that formal recognition would allow for future growth and collaboration among disciplines. Following a discussion, the committee adopted the following motion:

***THAT,** the Education Committee approve the application to recognize advanced heart failure and cardiac transplantation as an AFC (diploma) discipline.*

Next Steps

The first step toward operationalization involves the organization of a working group to oversee the initial stages of implementation prior to the appointment of an AFC (diploma) committee. The working group will be responsible for finalizing the standards documents, including the summative portfolio, and the appointment of the AFC (diploma) committee to oversee the discipline. The COS will review the minor clarifications requested prior to formal launch of the discipline.

If you have any questions or concerns, I invite you to get in touch with our office, via myself or Ms. Sarah Taber, Associate Director, Education Strategy and Accreditation, at cos@royalcollege.ca.