

## The Foundations of Internal Medicine/ General Internal Medicine Proposal

February 2010

### The FIM/GIM Proposal. What is it?

The Royal College's Specialty Committee in Internal Medicine (SCIM) has proposed changes to the structure of Internal Medicine (IM) training in Canada. Under the proposal, the core training pathway for internists would be reconfigured into a three-year Foundations of Internal Medicine (FIM) program and a new two-year subspecialty called General Internal Medicine (GIM). The FIM program would focus entirely on "core" competencies for all residents wanting to pursue IM or related subspecialties. The aim is to ensure that trainees possess the core medical knowledge and basic clinical skills of the specialty area in order to move on to further advanced training. GIM would be a two year subspecialty program that could be selected following successful completion of the FIM training and attestation by written examination from the College. Some of the changes that will result from the current proposal include:

- Attestation without Certification. Successful completion of the Principles of Internal Medicine exam at the end of the three-year period will confer an attestation. It is not intended to lead to a license to practice. Residents who successfully complete the FIM program and earn Royal College attestation, would become qualified to match into the subspecialties into which current IM graduates enter, as well as the new two-year GIM. Under the current proposal, trainees would still receive certification in Internal Medicine *upon successful completion of their subspecialty*.
- Changes in the timing of the Principles of Internal Medicine exam from the fourth year to the end of the third year of training (before starting subspecialty training).
- Impact on trainee recruitment into GIM. The addition of an extra year of training for GIM - on par with other IM subspecialties - may reduce residents' interest in GIM, thereby negatively impacting recruitment.
- Impact on health human resource planning and societal needs. Canada already suffers from a shortage of general internists and implementing an additional year of training may exacerbate this problem. In addition, the inability to certify after successful completion of the FIM examination may reduce and most likely eliminate a portion of the workforce in GIM.

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### The CAIR Position

CAIR resident representatives have been present at all Royal College standing committee meetings since October 2009, where this proposal was presented, including the FIM/GIM Summit which was recently held in December, 2009. Resident reps have voiced residents' concerns on issues of importance to residents, including a possible increase to the length of training for GIM and impact on resident recruitment and health human resource planning. CAIR is opposed to any increase in the length of training, without evidence as to the benefits of such a change. CAIR has developed a position paper based on the FIM/GIM proposal as it currently stands. This was presented to the Director of Education at the Royal College in December and voiced by our reps at the Summit. After hearing from invited stakeholders in December, the SCIM agreed to revise the proposal, taking into account stakeholder concerns. When this has been received, CAIR will have an opportunity to present this to our members and comment on the revised proposal. As the national representative body of resident physicians, CAIR is committed to ensuring that proposed enhancements to the education and training environment have a positive impact on both the quality of medical education and the practice environment of residents. To view CAIR's response on the proposal to restructure IM training in Canada, please [click here](#).

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### What happens next?

In order to ensure that the voices of all residents are heard on this issue, we invite residents to send in their individual perspectives on the FIM/GIM proposal. Resident feedback is essential to ensuring that the proposed changes and recommendations are feasible and practical from the viewpoint of the resident. Your views will inform CAIR's response to the revised proposal from the SCIM.

Please send your responses directly to CAIR at [cair@cair.ca](mailto:cair@cair.ca). Hard copy submissions may be sent to the CAIR office: **151 Slater Street, Suite 412, Ottawa, ON K1P 5H3**. If you wish to submit your perspectives in confidence or anonymously, please indicate this in your submission. CAIR will continue to keep residents informed on this important issue.