

GUIDELINES SUPPORTING LEARNERS IN REDEPLOYING WITH PRECEPTORS DURING COVID-19

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PURPOSE

Provide guidance for Toronto region (TR) healthcare and academic institutions related to the movement of learners with their preceptors, where preceptors are redeployed for the purposes of addressing challenges arising from the COVID-19 pandemic. The overall goal is to provide flexibility in ensuring continuation of clinical placements for health professional learners while addressing health system need.

ISSUE

As the COVID-19 pandemic continues to evolve and increase its burden on capacity of Toronto Region (TR) healthcare institutions, redeployment of clinical personnel continues to surge in response to COVID-19 (Executive Council of Ontario, 2021). Some of these clinical personnel serve as preceptors for health professional learners.

As a result, learners may be asked to follow their preceptor to the site(s) of redeployment to continue their placement. The period of redeployment for preceptors (and their teams) varies and is unpredictable, which may result in a learner not being able to accrue enough clinical experience and/or confidence to graduate.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES TO FACILITATE REDEPLOYMENT OF LEARNERS

The following principles are recommended for academic and healthcare institutions to abide by should the need for the learner to follow their preceptor in redeployment arise during the COVID-19 pandemic:

- 1) Home Hospital to determine necessity of redeployment:** The Home Hospital will determine if the learner can continue their placement at the Home Hospital despite the preceptor's redeployment. If it is not feasible for the placement to be continued at the Home Hospital during the preceptor's redeployment, then the Home Hospital will need to involve necessary stakeholders and abide by the Guiding Principles to arrange the learner's redeployment.
- 2) Learner's consent:** The Home Hospital must obtain and keep record of the learner's willingness and consent to move to different healthcare institutions as part of their placement. The Home Hospital may choose to adapt **Appendix A** to communicate to the learner considerations to include in his/her decision to consent to redeploying with their preceptor.
- 3) Preceptor is responsible for learner's education needs:** The preceptor will continue to be responsible for the learner and be accountable to the relevant health program for meeting education requirements of the placement. The Home Hospital may choose to adapt **Appendix B** to communicate to the preceptor on this responsibility and to ask if the preceptor advises for their learner to follow them during redeployment.
- 4) Streamlined onboarding:** Movement to a new site with their preceptor is not considered a new placement. Consistent with the approach for redeployed staff, the movement of learners along with their preceptor is part of their placement with the Home Hospital. Apart from requirements that are unique to a hospital, the learner will not be required to repeat orientation for onboarding requirements that are common between the Home Hospital and site(s) of redeployment.
- 5) Approval from academic institutions:** The Home Hospital should notify the academic institution of the specific learners that wish to redeploy with their preceptors, to ensure that the academic institution

authorizes the learner's transition into another site of placement. The academic institution may consider reviewing its affiliation agreements with hospitals or consulting with the preceptor to inform their approval of the learner's redeployment.

6) Communication and coordination between Home Hospital and site(s) of redeployment: The Home Hospital will communicate with the site(s) of redeployment and involve any necessary departments (e.g. **Student Centre (SC), Human Resource (HR) and Occupational Health & Safety (OHS) departments**) to ensure appropriate coordination and communication of the following information to expedite movement of learner(s) across sites:

- All TR institutions have agreed to harmonize the support of learners in redeploying with preceptors during COVID-19 by implementing the Guiding Principles set in this document.
- SC, HR, and OHS departments at the Home Hospital will notify receiving hospitals as necessary to ensure that information about the learner(s) who is/are redeploying with their preceptor are relayed from the Home Hospital to the site of redeployment where necessary and appropriate. Such information may include, but is not limited to, the following: learner's academic institution, academic institution's approval of learner's movement, learner's consent, where they are redeployed to, when redeployment begins, updates to details of the redeployment (e.g., if the learner is being redeployed again to another site).

References

Executive Council of Ontario. (2021, April 9). Ontario Regulation made under the Emergency Management and Civil Protection Act: Work Redeployment for Local Health Integration Networks and Ontario Health . Ontario, Canada.

Appendix A: Communication to Learner

Dear Learner:

As you may be aware, clinical professionals are being redeployed rapidly for the purposes of addressing challenges arising from the COVID-19 pandemic. Your preceptor, [Name of preceptor], is being redeployed from your Home Hospital [name of home hospital] to [site of redeployment]. Please reply to this communication on whether you consent to also follow your preceptor in this redeployment. Some considerations to help with your decision:

- *By consenting, you will not need to restart the onboarding process, but may be required to complete some site-specific requirements upon the redeployment to [site of redeployment]*
- *If you do not consent, you will remain at the Home Hospital and may not obtain the necessary clinical experience intended by your placement as your preceptor may not return to the Home Hospital by the end of your placement period due to the unpredictability of COVID-19's impact on redeployment.*
- *Discuss with your preceptor on the need to redeploy with them.*

If you have any questions regarding your redeployment options, please contact [Home Hospital Education Office contact name] at [contact information of the contact]

Sincerely,

[Name of VP Education, Position Title]

Appendix B: Communication to Preceptor

Dear Preceptor:

As you may be aware, clinical professionals are being redeployed rapidly for the purposes of addressing challenges arising from the COVID-19 pandemic. As you are being redeployed to [site of redeployment], please advise if your learner should follow you in your redeployment. Note: you remain responsible for the learner's education needs if your learner follows you in your redeployment.

If you have any questions regarding your redeployment options, please contact [Home Hospital Education Office contact name] at [contact information of the contact].

Sincerely,

[Name of VP Education, Position Title]