



PRA-BC: Program Introduction

September 27, 2019

Overview

In 2015, the province of British Columbia launched an assessment program for internationally educated family physicians who have completed residencies in Family Medicine outside of Canada, US, UK, Ireland, or Australia. This program, known as Practice Ready Assessment – British Columbia (“PRA-BC” or “the Program”), provides qualified family physicians with an alternative pathway to licensure in BC.

As a program, PRA-BC has assessed 121 family physicians since 2015. These family physicians are now practicing in 45 rural communities throughout BC.

Introduction

The program is designed to be highly interactive. The Clinical Field Assessment (CFA) is a competency-based assessment that determines if a PRA-BC candidate is ready to safely enter into independent medical practice in BC as a family physician. The Program’s curriculum includes an initial week-and-a-half centralized orientation in Vancouver. Candidates then depart to begin a comprehensive 12-week CFA in a BC community.

Candidates who successfully complete the PRA-BC program are eligible to apply to the College of Physicians and Surgeons of BC (“CPSBC” or “the College”) for provisional class registration and work under the sponsorship of a BC health authority (“HA”) and a supervising physician in a designated Return of Service (ROS) community practice in BC. The program requires a three-year ROS commitment in BC from successful candidates.

Program Entry, Pre-Screening, & Selection Requirements

International medical graduate (IMG) family physicians who are initially screened by Health Match BC based on established eligibility criteria, may qualify for entry into the Program.

The Program’s pre-screening criteria have been set out by PRA-BC and the CPSBC as follows:

- Successful completion of a medical degree issued by a school listed in the World Directory of Medical Schools (WDMS)
- Two years of postgraduate training in an international jurisdiction leading to registration or recognition as a general/family physician in that jurisdiction.

- Demonstration of completion of 7 core rotations:
 - A minimum of 4 weeks of postgraduate training in each of: (1) internal/general medicine, (2) general surgery, (3) obstetrics/gynecology, (4) pediatrics, (5) psychiatry and (6) emergency medicine.
 - A minimum of 8 weeks of postgraduate training in family practice (7).
- Evidence of having completed a minimum of 2 years of discipline-specific time in independent practice as a general or family practitioner in that or another jurisdiction.
- Academic credentials verification of medical degree, passport, medical licenses/registration and postgraduate training letters that confirm completion of the 7 core rotations through physiciansapply.ca.
- Currency in practice – section 2-8 of the College of Physicians & Surgeons of British Columbia (CPSBC) bylaws – must show evidence of minimum of 24 weeks (960 hours) of clinical practice as a General/Family Practitioner in the immediately preceding 3 years.
- CV. All activities, professional or otherwise, must be fully explained.
- [English language proficiency](#).
- Successful pass score on the MCCQE Part 1.
- Successful pass score on the MCCQE Part 2 OR a pass score of 75% on a previous NAC OSCE OR a score of 416 on the new NAC OSCE exam.

Applicants who meet all pre-screening criteria undergo a second review by PRA-BC. This review determines which applicants will be forwarded to the College for an assessment of eligibility for registration and licensure.

Applicants who have undergone a PRA-BC internal review and hold a positive ruling of eligibility for registration from the College may be invited to sit a MCC Therapeutics Decision Management (TDM) exam administration in Vancouver. A pass standing on the MCC TDM is mandatory and required to enable a candidate to participate in a PRA-BC intake.

Clinical Field Assessment

For each PRA-BC session, BC HAs identify underserved communities where successful candidates must complete a three-year ROS term with the province of BC. Eligible applicants are referred to participating HAs for interview, selection, and sponsorship as PRA-BC candidates.

Selected and sponsored candidates complete a 12-week CFA which is conducted in a community in British Columbia (“the CFA community”) under the sponsorship of a HA. They will be assessed by College family physician registrants who have completed an extensive assessor training workshop held by UBC CPD and PRA-BC.

Each candidate will be assessed on a daily basis using standardized evaluation tools including: direct observation with completion of mini-CEX assessment forms; chart audits; chart stimulated recall assessments; and multi-source feedback interviews with completion of questionnaires from other physicians, allied health-care professionals, and patients. Each assessor will also complete regular field notes by directly observing and assessing the candidate, using the eight sentinel habits of a competent family physician as identified by the College of Family Physicians Canada (CFPC). The eight sentinel habits will be assessed repeatedly over multiple domains of clinical care involving patients of all ages presenting with a multitude of clinical problems and occurring in both hospital and community-based clinic settings, in extended care facilities, and in patients’ homes.

Registration & Licensure – Assessment Class

During the Clinical Field Assessment, all PRA-BC candidates must be registered and licensed with the College in the assessment class of registration, which was approved by both the College Board and the provincial government and brought into effect on March 12, 2015 (sections 2-9, 2-35 to 2-38 and Schedule A of the Bylaws under the Health Professions Act, RSBC 1996, c. 183).

Each candidate must be sponsored by one of the province’s HAs and must be legally entitled to live and work in Canada. Candidates must remain under continuous supervision while being assessed by the designated program’s lead or primary assessor and other approved designated secondary and external assessors. Candidates must carry appropriate professional liability coverage and protection, typically with the Canadian Medical Protective Association (CMPA). During the 12-week CFA, candidates are not licensed for independent medical practice and therefore not able to act as a most responsible physician. All investigations ordered, referrals made, and prescriptions written must be signed off by the candidate’s supervising program assessor.

The CFA is a summative assessment of competency and not meant to be educational or for teaching purposes, although some formative assessment activities will occur.

The College’s assessment class of registration is time-limited and will end following the completion of the 12-week CFA component. College Bylaws allow for immediate cancellation of registration and licensure if health authority sponsorship is withdrawn, the assessor/supervisor withdraws, or if significant candidate competency concerns are identified at any time.

Practice in BC

Physician graduates of the PRA-BC program must commence practice in their ROS community a maximum of 90 days after completing the Program and finalizing their College registration.

Partnership

The PRA-BC program is a collaborative effort between the CPSBC, the Joint Standing Committee on Rural Issues comprised of representatives from the provincial government and Doctors of BC, and the University of British Columbia's Faculty of Medicine's Division of Continuing Professional Development (CPD) in partnership with BC health authorities and Health Match BC.

Program Standards

The success of the PRA-BC program is strengthened by aligning with the pan-Canadian National Assessment Collaboration (NAC) Practice Ready Assessment (PRA) family medicine program's standards and processes. Successful candidates from the various practice ready assessment programs currently available in Canada will have been similarly assessed by completing a structured, comprehensive, robust and rigorous summative competency-based assessment. Graduates of PRA-BC are "practice ready" and eligible for the provisional class of registration and licensure as family physicians.

What does it mean for a community to take on a PRA-BC graduate physician?

Return of Service

PRA-BC graduate family physicians are required to complete a 3-year ROS in their designated ROS community. This differs from the 2-year ROS requirement for graduates of the UBC IMG program.

Program Graduates

PRA-BC is not a training program and graduates of the program have remained current for clinical practice, as required by the College, up to the time of their CFA start date. PRA-BC graduates have many years of medical practice in their international jurisdiction as independent family practitioners. They are truly "practice ready" when they begin their 12-week CFA experience and commence practice in BC.

Most PRA-BC candidates have obtained their LMCC designation prior to starting their 12-week CFA. Once they pass their CFA and become graduates, they will only be required to obtain the College of Family Physicians of Canada's CCFP examinations after commencing practice in BC. Many PRA-BC graduates have specific extra scope of practice interests, training, and associated clinical skills. For example, many Program graduates have previous independent work experience in emergency medicine,

as primary care obstetricians, as family practice anesthesiologists, and as family practice surgeons. In short, they offer smaller ROS communities extra medical skillsets, and often want to offer their expanded family practice clinical skills to the ROS communities they will be serving. This is an additional advantage for their ROS communities and their patients.

Retention

PRA-BC graduates almost always bring their spouses and families with them when they commence their 3-year ROS and are therefore more likely to integrate into their new communities and stay well beyond the completion of their ROS commitments.

Finally, most CFA communities are located near the PRA-BC candidates' designated ROS communities and often are of similar size, with similar hospital and emergency room facilities and similar available community healthcare and medical resources. Often, the candidates' CFA assessors know the medical community of the neighbouring ROS community and are better informed about the specific needs of the ROS community they will serve. These factors contribute to their confidence. They feel supported and transition to their ROS independent family practice clinics more effectively, efficiently, and seamlessly, with less stress and worry.

Sponsorship

Candidates who successfully complete the PRA-BC program may be eligible to apply for provisional registration and work under the sponsorship of a health authority and a supervising physician in a designated return-of-service community practice in BC.

Attached are the CPSBC's guidelines and expectations for sponsors of provisionally licensed registrants (Appendix A and B).