

2020-2021

INCOMING STUDENT HANDBOOK



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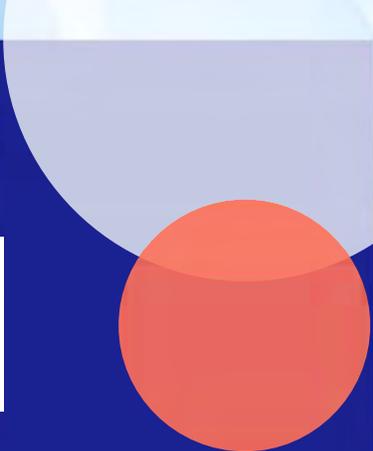
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VISIT US ONLINE AT WWW.OMSA.CA!



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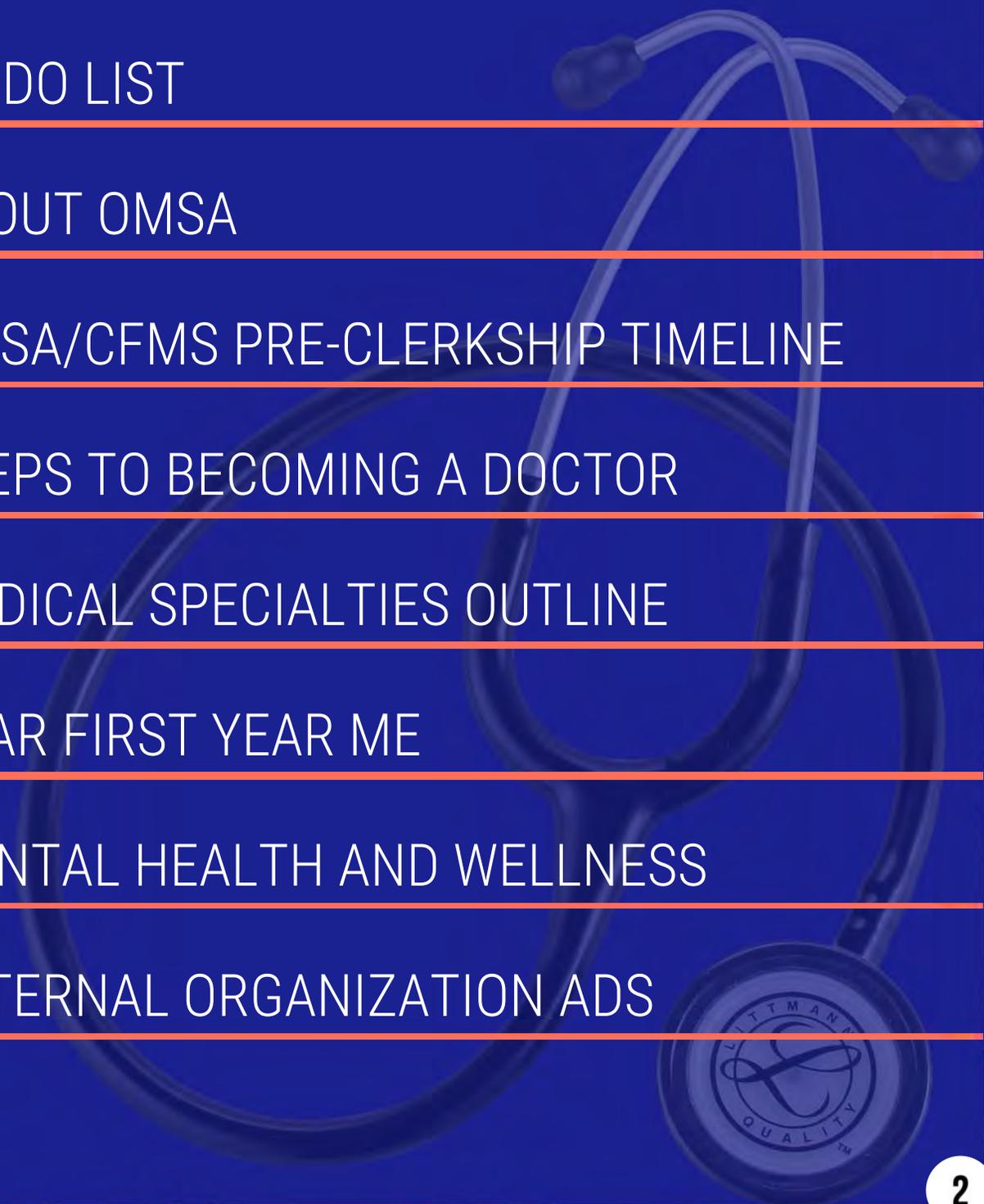
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INTRODUCTION

Congratulations on being accepted to medical school and taking the first steps towards your future career as a physician! We would like to officially welcome you to medical school in Ontario.

Medical school presents many exciting opportunities to pursue your ambitions and learn alongside an amazing and diverse group of trainees. You will not only learn about the causes, symptoms, and management of illnesses, but will grow as a person, make life-long friends, and meet future colleagues.

Entering medical school is an exciting time for new students. The stress of the application and admissions process is behind you, and you begin to prepare for the adventure ahead. However, this transition can also bring about many questions. At some points, medicine may seem like its own language and its own little world, full of words and acronyms most people have never heard of. We hope this handbook can help to answer some of your questions and provide a brief overview of things to look forward to in the next few years.

The goal of this handbook is to help you ease your way into medical school and introduce you to the medical student organizations at the provincial and national level. These organizations put on events, provide useful resources, and advocate on behalf of medical students. You'll learn about the services these organizations provide and how to get involved. You'll also be introduced to some of the other professional organizations which you might interact with and be supported by throughout your training and career. These organizations play a pivotal role in supporting medical education and the practice of medicine within Ontario, and we think it's important for students to understand their role early on. Once again, congratulations on your tremendous achievements thus far. We wish you the best of luck as you continue forward with your medical training!

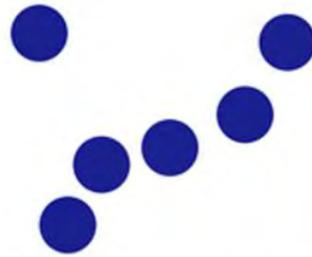
Please feel free to email us at education@omsa.ca with any comments, questions, or concerns—we'd love to hear from you! You can also visit our website at www.omsa.ca.



MEDICAL SCHOOL TO-DO LIST

- JOIN CLASS GROUPS ON **SOCIAL MEDIA**
- APPLY FOR **OSAP**
- APPLY FOR SCHOOL **SCHOLARSHIPS AND BURSARIES**
- CONSIDER ACQUIRING **LINE OF CREDIT**
- PAY **TUITION FEES**
- CREATE WEEKLY, MONTHLY, AND ANNUAL **BUDGETS**
- FIND **LIVING ARRANGEMENTS**
- PLAN **TRANSPORTATION AND PARKING**
- CONSIDER ACQUIRING **LIFE/DISABILITY INSURANCE**





OMSA

Ontario Medical Students
Association

AÉMO

Association des étudiant·e·s
de médecine de l'Ontario

The **Ontario Medical Students Association (OMSA)** is a student organization that represents over 3500 students from the six medical schools in Ontario.



 omsa.ca

 [@omsaofficial](https://facebook.com/omsaofficial)

 [@OMSAofficial](https://twitter.com/OMSAofficial)

 [@omsaofficial](https://instagram.com/omsaofficial)



OMSA strives to comprehensively **represent the voice** of medical students on important issues and to provide **opportunities to excel**.

OMSA SERVES THREE MAIN PURPOSES:



TO **ADVOCATE** FOR MEDICAL STUDENTS

OMSA advocates by engaging with the Ontario Medical Association (OMA) and other stakeholders on provincial healthcare issues, creating position papers, forming partnerships, and highlighting grassroots initiatives from member schools.



TO **BRING MEDICAL STUDENTS TOGETHER** THROUGH EVENTS, GRANTS AND INITIATIVES

OMSA brings medical students together at events such as:

- **Ontario Medical Students Weekend (OMSW)**, a weekend in the fall to meet students from other schools and engage in workshops
- **Wellness Retreat**, a weekend in early spring to relax and tune out the noise of medical school
- **Leadership Summit & Annual General Meeting**, a weekend in late spring where students receive leadership training and attend our AGM to run and vote for elected positions and provide input into the organization's vision for the subsequent year
- **Day of Action**, a weekend in late spring where students learn about an advocacy topic selected by Ontario medical students through the OMSA Advocacy Survey. Students then use this knowledge and lobby MPPs at Queen's Park to provide solutions to issues
- **Ontario Student Medical Education Research Conference (OSMERC)**, a conference highlighting medical education research by medical and other health professions students across the province of Ontario and beyond

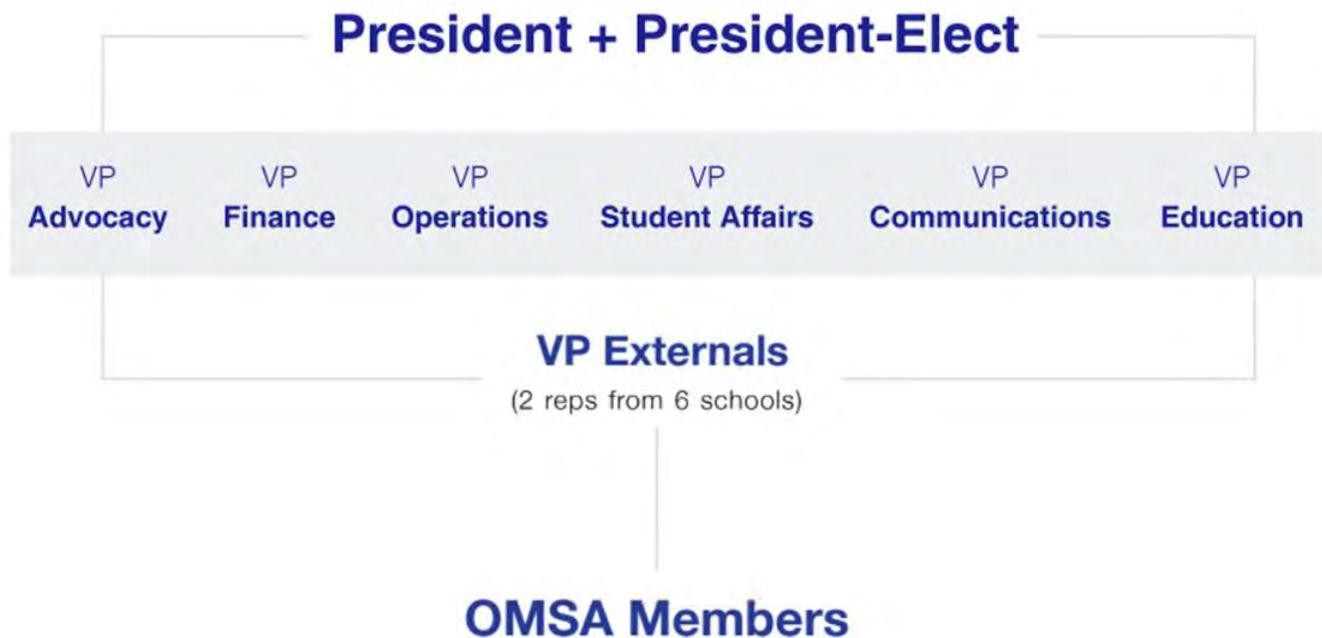


TO OFFER **SERVICES** TO BENEFIT MEDICAL STUDENTS

Such as conference, research, and innovator grants; opportunities for mentorship; and our Student of the Season series.



ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE



OMSA REPRESENTS A GREAT WAY FOR STUDENTS TO GET INVOLVED.

The council consists of the President, President-elect, 6 portfolio VPs (Communications, Operations, Finance, Education, Advocacy, Student Affairs), and 12 VP Externals (2 from each school). VP externals are elected internally at each school and the President, President-elect, and portfolio VPs are elected at the annual OMSA elections in May. Each portfolio also has a sub-committee of students from all years, selected through an application process annually in September.



2020/2021 OMSA/CFMS PRE-CLERKSHIP TIMELINE

Note: This schedule may be adjusted due to COVID-19.



HOW YOU BECOME A DOCTOR

Becoming a doctor is a long journey that only begins with getting into medical school. We have laid out the key milestones along the path to becoming a fully-fledged practicing physician.

STEP 1: GET YOUR MEDICAL DOCTORATE (MD)

This is what you will be doing for the next 3 or 4 years (depending on your school). You spend the first half of medical school in class, listening to lectures, doing some pre-clerkship clinical work, and learning the foundations of medical knowledge. In the second half of medical school you go to the wards where you get to apply everything you learned and gain experience helping patients. We acknowledge that this is an arduous journey, but we hope it can also be an exciting time of growth and learning. At the end of medical school, you will receive your MD degree.

STEP 2: GET LICENSED

Before you begin practicing as a resident physician, you are required to write the Medical Council of Canada Qualifying Examination (MCCQE) Part I. This is a Canada-wide exam that contains multiple-choice questions and clinical decision-making cases with short-answer responses. Part 2 tests your clinical abilities through several interviews with standardized patients and takes place once you are in residency.

STEP 3: COMPLETE RESIDENCY

The next step is getting certified. After finishing medical school, you will start a residency program in your field of interest and learn from physicians with years of clinical experience. Some specialities include family, internal, and emergency medicine as well as neurology, psychiatry, and surgery. Residency is a minimum of 2 years, but can be up to six years depending on the specialty in which you are training. Residency is the first time you will care for patients as a doctor. Your fellow residents and staff will be there along the way to help guide you and teach you.

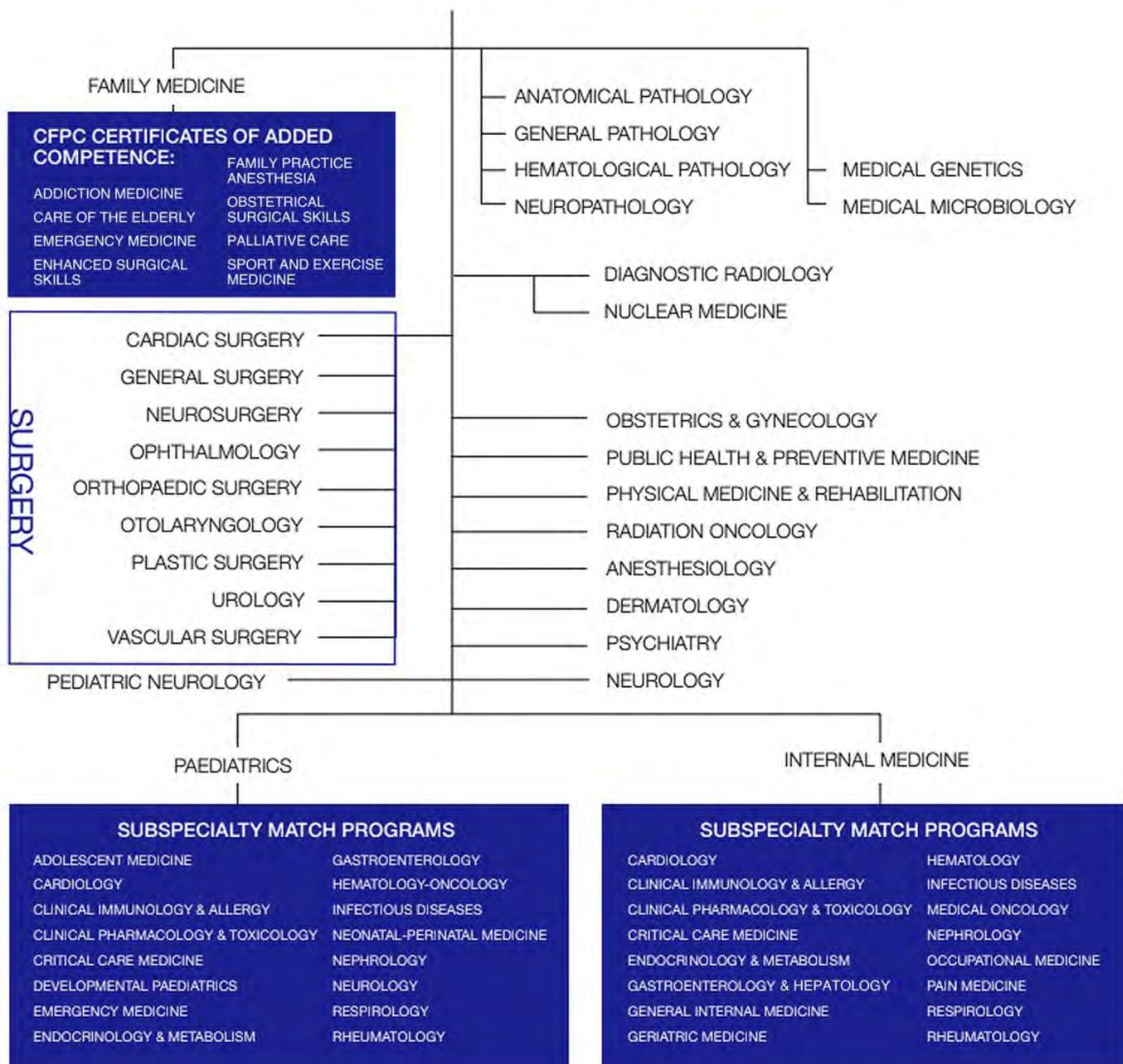
STEP 4: GET YOUR BILLING NUMBER

After completing residency and getting certified you will apply to the Ministry of Health for an OHIP billing number. Once obtained you will be able to submit claims to the Ministry of Health for insurance services. Congratulations! Now you can independently put all your hard-earned skills to use!

MEDICAL SPECIALTIES

Medical school is the first step to a career in medicine. After completing medical school, most students will go on to complete a residency program to be certified by either the College of Family Physicians of Canada (CFPC) or the Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada (RCPSC). Below is an outline of all the residency programs which can be entered directly from medical school, as well as the medicine and pediatric sub-specialties and the CFPC Certificate of Added Competence programs.

MEDICAL SCHOOL GRADUATE





DEAR FIRST YEAR ME

ON LIFE OUTSIDE OF SCHOOL

“Medical school can be really busy; I can't overstate how important it is to prioritize your own wellness through hobbies, exercise & nutrition, friends/family, or just plain sleep! I definitely over-studied in pre-clerkship, and while it is important to be prepared, you have a lifetime to learn medicine. Time flies, try to enjoy these next 3-4 years realizing that much of what you learn (about yourself & the world) will be outside, not inside the classroom.”

- Kevin Karivelil, McMaster University, Class of 2020

“Medicine will be your new professional life. But your life outside medicine will always be more important. Never lose sight of the people and the activities you care about.”

- Anonymous

ON UNCERTAINTY

“You will be amazed at what you are capable of! Believe that you have what it takes to become a great doctor, and don't be defeated by the days that feel impossible. All of us have those days - medical school is hard, because it should be.”

- Lena, McMaster University, Class of 2021

“A lot of us grapple with feelings that we should be trying harder, studying more, or just smarter in general. I grapple with those feelings a lot. This is my advice. Work a reasonable amount so you don't feel too guilty for how lucky we all are. But, remember you're now on a tour bus and when you get off, you'll be a decent doctor. Trust the process. You're good enough to be here. You don't have to be smart in all ways. There are a lot of clinicians who provide excellent clinical care, who are dummies in their own special way, like I am in mine.”

- Anonymous

ON STRESS & LEARNING IN MEDICINE

“Don't sweat the small stuff! As high-achievers, we tie a lot of our personal value and self-esteem to our accomplishments, no matter how big or small. Medical school is a different kind of learning environment with different expectations and requirements that will challenge you in academic and practical ways. You'll have to prioritize and this looks different than in undergrad. In Medical school, a quiz worth 1.5% may not be worth 2 extra hours of studying. Receiving "Meets Expectations" on one evaluation is amazing and should be celebrated instead of losing sleep over why you did not "Exceed Expectations". And having someone correct your technique for a knee exam is a valuable learning opportunity, not a failure. Training our brains to accept these small things goes against our instincts as high-achievers, but will allow you to recognize valuable learning opportunities, prioritize your own mental health and become well-balanced clinicians providing the best patient care. Just remember... reflect, learn, grow, and let it go.”

- T. Bailey, University of Ottawa, Class of 2020



MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLNESS

Medical school is a **marathon**, not a sprint. It's important to pace yourself, not get overwhelmed and continue to partake in activities that relieve stress and bring you joy. Instead of studying 24/7 try to keep a **balanced lifestyle** that includes time for hobbies, friends, and family. **Have some free time?** Join an interest group, try to pick up an instrument, do some intramural sports, or explore the lively city around you.

Here are some support resources specifically for medical students, and physicians:



Physician Health Program, helpline for all residents, students, and physicians, provided by the Ontario Medical Association (OMA), confidential and toll-free: 1-800-851-6606.



PARO 24-Hour Helpline, for residents, medical students, their partners, and their families, confidential, toll-free and accessible anywhere in Ontario 24/7: 1-866-HELP-DOC (1-866-435-7362).

Here are additional support resources you may find helpful:



Good2Talk, helpline for post-secondary students in Ontario, confidential and toll-free 24/7: 1-866-925-5454



Barrett Centre for Crisis Support, confidential and toll-free 24/7: 1-844-777-3571

If you need help and want someone to talk to make sure you reach out to your friends, colleagues, and faculty. OMSA has also put together a comprehensive guide with multiple mental health resources for medical students. You can find it at <https://omsa.ca/en/mental-health-resources>.

Remember we are all in this together and need to support one another.





Here are a few other organizations that you will encounter during your medical training that offer various supports and services to medical students. More information on these organizations is provided in the following pages.

CANADIAN FEDERATION OF MEDICAL STUDENTS (CFMS)

ONTARIO MEDICAL ASSOCIATION (OMA)

CANADIAN MEDICAL ASSOCIATION (CMA)

MD FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

CANADIAN RESIDENT MATCHING SERVICE (CARMS)

ASSOCIATION OF FACULTIES OF MEDICINE OF CANADA (AFMC)

PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATION OF RESIDENTS OF ONTARIO (PARO)

RESIDENT DOCTORS OF CANADA (RDC)

COUNCIL OF ONTARIO FACULTIES OF MEDICINE (COFM)

COLLEGE OF PHYSICIANS AND SURGEONS OF ONTARIO (CPSO)

CANADIAN MEDICAL PROTECTIVE ASSOCIATION (CMPA)

Unsure of what
comes next?
Don't worry —
it's going to be okay.

Brought to you by MD Financial Management,
onboardMD makes the complicated world
of med school easier for you to navigate.
Get exclusive tools and information
that will simplify your path to becoming
a physician in Canada.

Your journey in medicine
starts here.

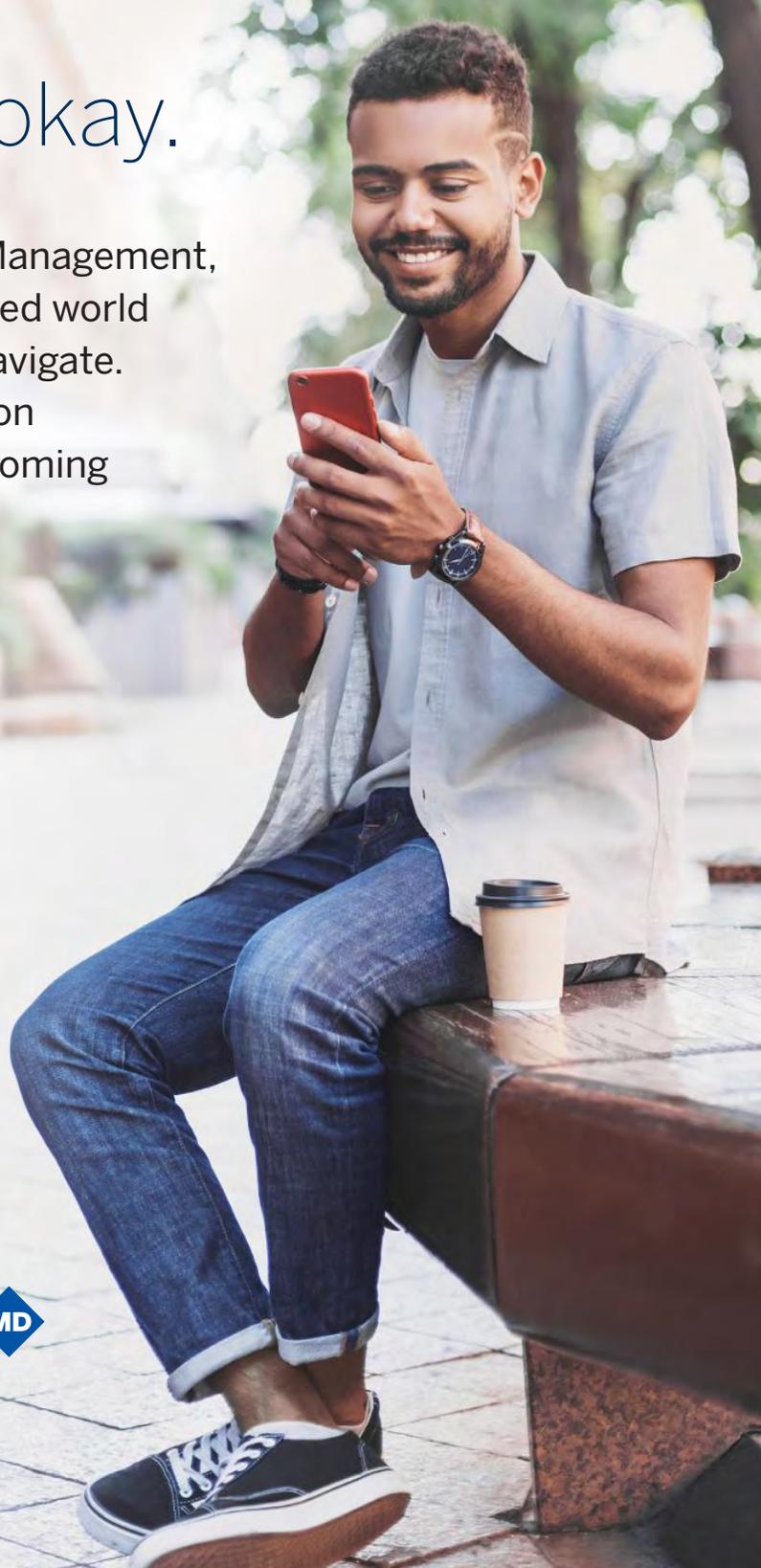
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For more information about MD, check out md.ca.





What is CaRMS?

We are a national, independent, not-for-profit, fee-for-service organization that provides a fair, objective and transparent application and matching service for postgraduate medical training throughout Canada.

What do we do?

After medical school, you'll need a residency position to continue your medical training – and that's where CaRMS comes in. Like any other job, residency positions have an application process. CaRMS facilitates that process and, at the end of it, we run a match that gets you your best possible outcome.

How does the match work?

After your application and interviews are complete, you tell us where you want to train, residency programs tell us whom they want to train – and our algorithm does the rest, matching applicants to programs based on both parties' preferences. For more information on how the algorithm works, visit carms.ca/algorithm.

What's next?

We'll visit your school before your application year to tell you everything you need to know to prepare for your residency match. In the meantime, visit carms.ca to learn more.



THE ASSOCIATION OF FACULTIES
OF MEDICINE OF CANADA



OUR GOAL IS TO SUPPORT YOU

HELPING YOU PREPARE FOR THE MATCH

Designed for medical students in Canada, the [AFMC Match Myth-Buster Video Clips](#) aim to demystify preconceived ideas about the residency matching process and guide you during this crucial step of your career. Find them in the e-tools section at www.AFMC.com



PORTAL WEBSITE

HELP DESK WEBSITE

HELP DESK EMAIL ADDRESS

Time-saving tips on applying for visiting electives

1. Know the elective requirements at the host school
2. Complete the immunization requirements early
3. Add electives to your wish list and upload documents before starting an application
4. Add your completed and 'scheduled' core rotations
5. Diversify your choice of host schools

YOUR MATCH: OUR TOP PRIORITY

As co-chair of the **Physician Resource Planning Advisory Committee**, a group supported by the Federal/Provincial/Territorial Committee on Health Workforce, AFMC plays a critical role in ensuring the right mix, distribution and number of physicians to meet societal needs while helping you on your journey to a meaningful clinical or non-clinical career. AFMC has also made reducing the number of unmatched Canadian medical school graduates its top priority.

AFMC supports you along your pathway to practice

PRE-ADMISSIONS	DURING YOUR MD	RESIDENCY MATCH	RESIDENCY TRAINING	DURING YOUR PRACTICE
Admission Requirements Report MCAT Fee Assistance Program	AFMC Student Portal Accreditation of Canadian Medical Schools	Myth buster videos AFMC Resident Matching Committee (ARMC) Physician Resource Planning Advisory Committee	PGME Council Canadian Medical Forum Canadian Post-MD Education Registry	Continuing Professional Development tools Accreditation of Continuing Medical Education
Future MD Canada	National Committees & Networks in medical education and health research Canadian Conference on Medical Education			

On behalf of the Professional Association of Residents of Ontario (PARO), we would like to say **WELCOME** as you start medical school.

Every medical school graduate enters residency training to become a specialist certified by either the College of Family Physicians of Canada or the Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada. You are probably not thinking about residency yet but we want you to keep in mind that PARO is here to provide support as you travel through this next phase of your training.



PARO AND MEDICAL STUDENTS

Throughout your time at medical school, residents will be an important part of your clinical and educational experience.

Teaching – residents play a vital role in medical student teaching. PARO supports our members to enhance their teaching abilities to help you be successful.

Working – in their clinical roles, residents serve in a supervisory role to junior residents and clinical clerks.

Transition into Residency

Resources – PARO has developed extensive resources to help medical students transition into residency including our Prepping for Residency Guide, New Resident Welcome Program, PGY 1 Orientation Sessions, Podcast Series and the PARO Call Kit.

PARO Events – our local PARO site teams plan events with the goal to assist medical students transition smoothly into residency.

Leadership – PARO provides opportunities to foster future resident leaders through invitations as Ambassadors to PARO General Council as well as involvement on select PARO strategic teams.



Confidential Helpline (1-866-HELP-DOC) – the PARO Helpline (in partnership with Distress Centres of Toronto) is available for medical students and residents, their partners and family members. When you call the toll free number you are connected to a Helpline volunteer with extensive training in acute crisis intervention, depression, anxiety and knowledge of the common stressors of residents and medical students.

ABOUT PARO

PARO is the official representative voice for Ontario's doctors undertaking specialty training. We champion the issues that create the conditions for residents to be their best and ensure optimal patient care. To fulfill this mission we must achieve three key goals:

Optimal training so that residents feel confident to succeed and competent to achieve excellence in patient care.

Optimal working conditions where residents enjoy working and learning in a safe, respectful and healthy environment.

Optimal transitions – into residency, through residency and into practice – so that residents are able to make informed career choices, have equitable access to practice opportunities and acquire practice management skills for residency and beyond.

Questions? 1-877-979-1183
paro@paroteam.ca
myparo.ca

The Council of Ontario Faculties of Medicine (COFM)

[The Council of Ontario Faculties of Medicine](#) is the Committee of six Ontario Deans of Medicine who collaborate on provincial issues to support the delivery of high quality, accredited medical education to Ontario's medical students.

[COFM is an affiliate group of the Council of Ontario Universities \(COU\)](#) - an organization that works with its members, Ontario's publicly assisted universities, to find consensus on a range of university issues and advance them with government and other stakeholders. COFM serves a similar role, working with its members to advise University Presidents and Principals



on issues related to medical education.

Working closely with three main Ontario ministries - Health, Long-Term Care and Colleges and Universities, COFM works closely with government and one another to provide leadership on key healthcare issues, such as the supply of the right number, mix of and distribution of physicians in Ontario.

As an example, more than a decade ago, one in 11 Ontarians couldn't find a family physician; there were lengthy wait times for specialty care, especially in rural areas. [Today, a strategic partnership of Ontario universities and government has brought care closer to the homes of people across the province.](#)

[We've graduated 1,900 family doctors over the past 10 years](#), transforming family medicine and improving access for patients.



Northern Ontario School of Medicine

COFM has a number of subcommittees and working groups that advise COFM on issues related to undergraduate, postgraduate, distributed, and family medicine education, admissions, research, and continuing professional development.



Queen's University Gastroenterology

The input and voice of learners is of significant importance within each Faculty of Medicine and on COFM sub-committees related to undergraduate, postgraduate and distributed medical education.

Representatives from the [Ontario Medical Students](#)

[Association](#) and the [Professional Association of Residents of Ontario](#) are appointed annually to these committees. All provincial undergraduate and postgraduate policies receive input from learners, as do other provincial decisions.

Major issues are discussed at COFM in order to develop a collaborative approach to implementing solutions, in areas such as:

- Physician human resource planning
- Implementation of competency-based medical education
- Career counseling standards
 - Ensuring all students receive a consistent standard related to career counseling, that includes physician forecasting data
 - How to ensure learners are counseled on the best match strategy
- Distribution of physicians across Ontario and how distributed medical education has contributed to improved distribution.

Below are the COFM Sub-Committees:

1. UE:COFM (Undergraduate Education)
2. PGE:COFM (Postgraduate Education)
3. PGM:COFM (Postgraduate Management)
4. FM:COFM (Family Medicine)
5. DME:COFM (Distributed Medical Education)
6. CPD:COFM (Continuing Professional Development)
7. Research:COFM
8. MAC:COFM (Medical Admissions Committee)



CPSO

Serving the people of Ontario through effective regulation of medical doctors

All doctors in Ontario are required to be members of CPSO to practise medicine. Our role and authority are set out in the Regulated Health Professions Act (RHPA), the Health Professions Procedural Code under the RHPA, and the Medicine Act.

WHO WE ARE:

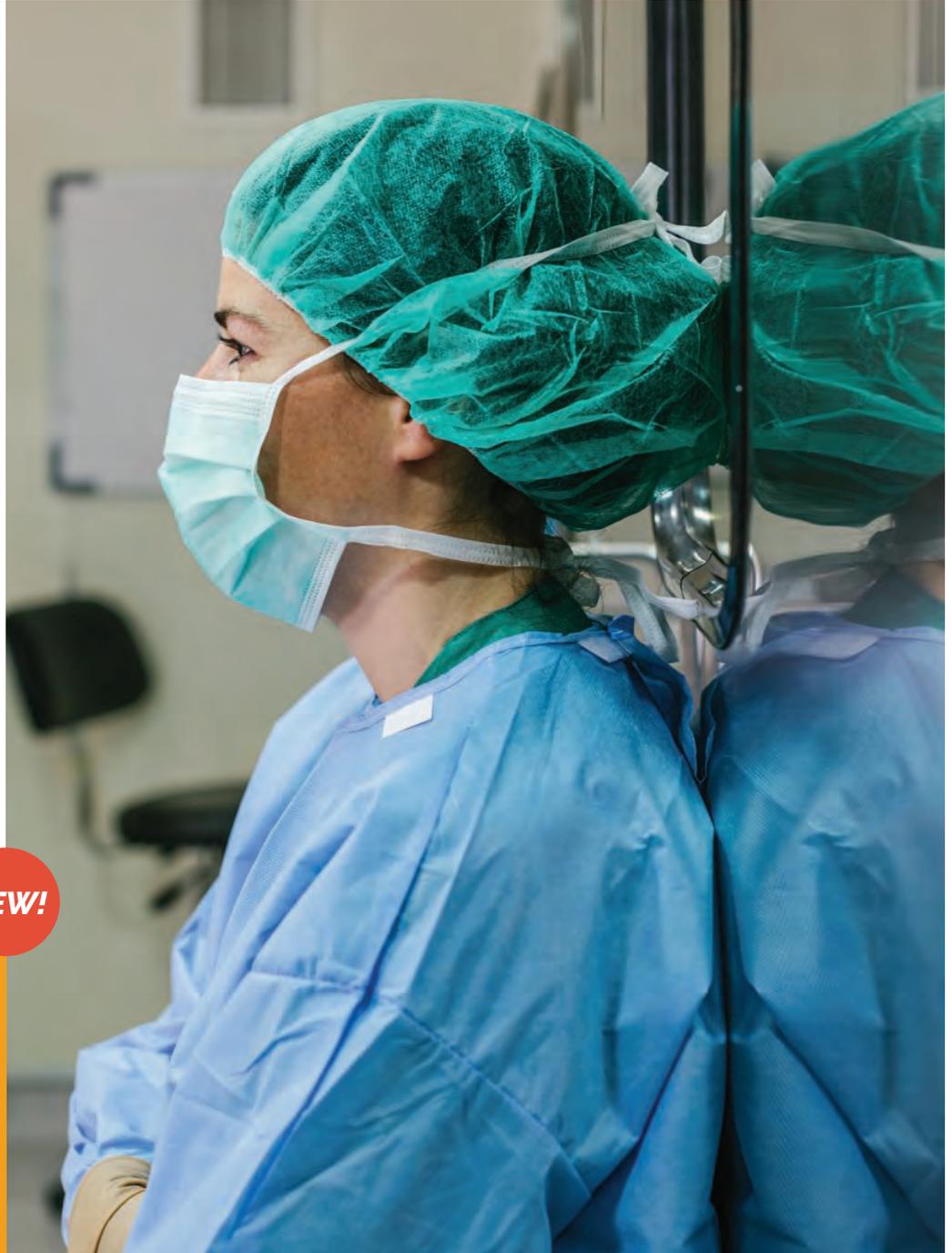
College of Physicians and Surgeons of Ontario (CPSO) regulates the practice of medicine to serve the public interest.

WHAT WE DO:

We issue certificates to practise, develop policies, monitor and maintain standards, investigate complaints, and conduct discipline hearings. We provide clear and useful guidance to the public and the profession about medical regulation in Ontario.

THE COLLEGE AND YOU

Don't wait to make the College an important part of your professional life. You will be a member of the CPSO and held accountable to our high standards throughout your career. Get informed early and get involved where you can. You are the future of medicine and medical regulation.



eDIALOGUE

NEW!

CPSO's official publication for doctors is now available in a digital format. The mobile-friendly site features all the same content as the print magazine and more. Stay up-to-date by signing up to receive email notifications when new content is added.

cpsodialogue.ca

HAVE A QUESTION?

EMAIL US: OUTREACH@CPSO.ON.CA

STAY CONNECTED WITH US:

WWW.CPSO.ON.CA



Congratulations, you're a med student!

As you progress in your journey to become a physician,
the CMPA has resources and tips to help you every step of the way.

YEAR

1

You're developing
core medical
concepts and skills



Follow us on social media for unique tips and strategies to
mitigate risk.    

Join our **CMPA Safe Care Hub!** A Facebook group created for
trainees and new docs across the country.

YEAR

2

You're integrating
foundational sciences
into clinical practice



Read our articles about the fundamentals of safe care that
will help as you start learning how to interact with patients.

YEAR

3

You're transitioning
to clinical clerkship



Access the **CMPA Good Practices Guide**. This online resource is
mapped to CanMEDS and offers case studies and training videos to
help you reduce diagnostic errors, ensure informed consent,
document information properly, and much more.

YEAR

4

Prepare for effective
transition to residency
training



Visit our website. We have resources to help you manage
difficult patient situations, properly disclose adverse events,
and navigate interprofessional team dynamics.

You're a med school graduate!

You will need liability protection during your postgraduate training. Choose the CMPA to ensure you are protected.

Please feel free to reach out to us with any questions, comments, or concerns – we'd love to hear from you!

Email us at:
education@omsa.ca

You can also visit our website at
www.omsa.ca

A blue stethoscope is positioned diagonally across the bottom half of the page. The background features a grid pattern of light purple and white squares, with a red triangle in the top right corner. The bottom of the page is a solid blue band containing the OMSA and AÉMO logos and names.

OMSA **AÉMO**

Ontario Medical
Students Association

Association des étudiant·e·s
de médecine de l'Ontario