



AMERICAN ACADEMY OF
HOSPICE AND PALLIATIVE MEDICINE

July 9, 2020

Dear HPM Fellowship Program Directors,

The ongoing COVID-19 Pandemic will impact the upcoming fellowship recruitment season. Applicants may not be permitted to travel, have health concerns with air travel or risk self-quarantine if they travel to some states. As a community, we should seek creation of an equitable application process for all HPM fellowship applicants and programs for the health of our applicants, program faculty and staff, and patients.

The Alliance for Academic Internal Medicine (AAIM), Association of American Medical Colleges (AAMC), and the National Resident Match Program (NRMP) have all come out with statements recommending a shift to virtual interviewing for the coming recruitment season. Many local Graduate Medical Education offices are following suit by restricting in-person visits across institutions.

While some programs may not be feeling the brunt of COVID at this time, there are many local and regional outbreaks disproportionately affecting certain applicants and programs. With rising case numbers and an uncertain trajectory heading into the fall, there is the potential for considerable disruption to the interview process mid-season if attempting to start this recruitment in-person.

Based on current understanding of the pandemic, the American Academy of Hospice and Palliative Medicine (AAHPM) similarly recommends that programs conduct **all** fellowship interviews virtually, **both for external and internal applicants**. We recognize face-to-face interviews provide a level of rapport that can rarely be obtained via a virtual meeting. To ensure that candidates and programs that interview virtually are not disadvantaged, AAHPM further recommends an “**all-in**” approach to virtual interviews. This approach promotes an equitable applicant evaluation process and eliminates potential concern among fellowship candidates that a decision not to interview in-person could be construed as demonstrating insufficient interest in a program. With “**all-in**” virtual visits and interviews, programs and applicants will have a consistent process to assess each other. Likewise, we expect that all programs will continue to adhere to the [Match Communication Code of Conduct](#).

AAHPM is committed to providing resources and educational offerings to HPM fellowship program directors to help with this transition to virtual interviews, continuing our tradition of holistic review of applicants entering our field. As we work on developing a formal session with content for conducting virtual interviews, you are encouraged to continue to use [Connect](#). The AAHPM Fellowship Training

Committee and leaders from the Fellowship Directors SIG will schedule regular unstructured check-ins on topics related to COVID and recruitment. Details will be posted to Connect as they become available.

In the meantime, we encourage the creation and sharing of resources, tools, and best practices for virtual interviewing with the rest of the HPM community, for both programs and applicants.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Rodney O. Tucker, MD, MMM". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, looped initial "R".

Rodney O. Tucker, MD MMM FAAHPM
President
American Academy of Hospice and Palliative Medicine