Military Residency at Queen’s Family Medicine

Unique Training Needs. Tailored Program.

In Canada, as in many NATO nations, General Duty Medical Officers (GDMOs) are trained within civilian medical schools and family medicine residency programs. These residency programs have an obligation to provide education and training in both general family medicine and military-specific medicine. In most cases, however, there is no formal differentiation between the curricula delivered to military and civilian residents, despite the fact that their scope of practice and work environments may be vastly different after graduation.

The Queen’s Family Medicine Residency Program is different. Here at Queen’s, we have created a program tailored specifically to the needs of future GDMOs.

Dr. Alanna Durand (2017 Graduate)

“Overall, the Queen’s program has been an excellent opportunity as a military resident. The ability to work in a clinic in first year with physicians who previously worked in the military was extremely useful, as was the dedicated rotation in military psychiatry, notably as a MOTP student who had limited exposure to the military environment in the past. There were also many opportunities to meet with practising GDMOs and ask questions, as well as optional activities such as attending the field hospital on the military base.”

“The Queen’s program for MOTP residents is second-to-none and I am very happy with my decision to attend.”
After completion of a family medicine training program, Canadian Armed Forces GDMOs require more than the broad and generalist skill sets of their civilian counterparts. They are also expected to practise in difficult and isolated environments, often with little physician colleague support. Additionally, GDMOs care for a diverse and unique patient population comprising soldiers and, when deployed internationally, wounded or ill combatants and Indigenous civilians. The Queen’s military-specific program recognizes and addresses these challenges.

Based on the experience of many years of training military residents, the participation of two former military physicians on our faculty – including Queen’s Family Medicine Postgraduate Education Program Director Dr. Brent Wolfrom – and two decades of departmental involvement in capacity-building in conflict and post-conflict countries, Queen’s Family Medicine offers a unique learning environment for military residents. Specifically, we have adjusted our general family medicine curriculum in a number of key areas such as trauma, intensive care, psychiatry with military populations, and experience in remote and challenging settings. During the core first-year family medicine program, many of our military residents are matched with preceptors with military practice experience. These preceptors also often act as our military residents’ academic advisors.

Dr. Bryan Fukakusa (PGY2)
“*I feel very strongly that the Queen’s Family Medicine program is the best program for military residents. Over many years, they have worked actively to develop a special curriculum to meet our unique learning objectives.*

“In my family medicine clinic, I’m working alongside retired medical officers who are very enthusiastic about sharing their career experiences with me and extremely helpful in teaching me about occupational or military medicine.”

Dr. Jojo Jiang (2017 Graduate)
“*I’m very happy with my choice to come to Queen’s. The trauma rotation was amazing, as it’s the closest thing we can get to experiencing what we may encounter later on during deployments. The psychiatry rotation occurs mainly with the base psychiatrist, so we’re seeing exactly what we’ll deal with in the CF.*

“I’ve also had many insightful discussions with (former-military faculty members) Dr. Brent Wolfrom and Dr. Matt Simpson regarding a medical career in the forces. Kingston is a great city to live in, of course, but in particular for the CF.”

“It’s been great having the base so close by, and it’s nice to have convenient access to the base gym or a quick pop-by for any administrative issues that come up.”

Dr. Patrick Edwards (PGY2)
“*Not only are the military residents well looked after, they also have the opportunity to tailor their training to areas shown to be lacking in most civilian residency programs from the perspective of military graduates.*

In addition to a very supportive faculty at Queen’s, we also benefit from a very supportive base. The ULO has been very helpful and available. There’s also a great rec centre, several messes, and lots of cheap activities, from the shooting range to scuba diving.

I don’t think there’s another program in the country that goes out of its way for its military residents like Queen’s. With such a great location and program, I’d recommend all military residents attend this program.”

“As it relates to military training, the Queen’s program is without equal, and by a considerable margin.”

The department has been closely involved with the Canadian Institute for Military and Veteran Health Research (CIMVHR) located at Queen’s-Royal Military College, which can offer military residents engagement with rich and rewarding research. Additionally, Queen’s proximity to Canadian Forces bases in Kingston and Trenton provides a valuable opportunity for involvement with the base GDMOs.

It is recognized that family medicine training is exceptionally broad. In adjusting our curriculum to address areas of perceived training gaps for our military residents, we have taken great care to avoid diluting other critical learning opportunities provided through our general family medicine program.

Through our specialized training program, Queen’s military graduates are well equipped to confidently practise in military settings, as well as in any Canadian community.

Cover and surgery photo (soldier at left of bedside): Queen’s Department of Family Medicine faculty member Dr. Matt Simpson working in Panjwaii District, Kandahar Province, Afghanistan, in 2010.