CHED MEMORANDUM ORDER
No. 14
series of 2021

SUBJECT : GUIDELINES ON THE CONDUCT OF CLINICAL ROTATION OF POST-GRADUATE INTERNS DURING THE PANDEMIC PERIOD

In accordance with the pertinent provisions of Republic Act (RA) No. 7722, otherwise known as the “Higher Education Act of 1994”, CHED Memorandum Order (CMO) No. 18, series of 2016, otherwise known as the “Policies, Standards, and Guidelines for the Doctor of Medicine Program”, CHED-DOH Joint Memorandum Circular (JMC) No. 2021-001 on the Guidelines for the Gradual Reopening of Campuses of Higher Education Institutions for Limited Face-to-Face Classes During the COVID-19 Pandemic, Association of Philippine Medical Colleges, Inc. (APMC) Advisory on the Reiteration of Guidelines for the National Internship/Clerkship Programs for 2021-2022, and Inter-agency Task Force for the Management of Emerging Infectious Diseases (IATF) Resolution No. 138, series of 2021, approving face-to-face clinical rotation of post-graduate interns regardless of community quarantine status, the Commission on Higher Education (CHED) hereby adopts and promulgates the following guidelines on the Conduct of Clinical Rotation of Post-graduate Interns (PGIs) During the Pandemic Period.

I. RATIONALE

The internship is the last phase of the basic training of the physician. However, the pandemic has greatly affected and disrupted the school calendar, including the schedule of clinical rotation of post-graduate interns. Hence, in order to ensure satisfactory completion of the 12-month internship, which is necessary for taking the Philippine Licensure Examination (PLE), there is a need to issue guidelines for a safe and healthy clinical rotation of post-graduate interns during the pandemic period.

II. COVERAGE

All public and private training hospitals accredited by the Association of Philippine Medical Colleges, Inc. (APMC) to offer post-graduate internships may apply for authority to conduct face-to-face clinical rotation of post-graduate interns. These Guidelines shall not cover the five (5) medical schools with 5-year medical curriculum namely, University of the Philippines (UP) Manila, the UP Manila School of Health Sciences in Leyte, St. Luke’s Medical Center, the Ateneo de Manila University, and the Ateneo de Zamboanga University.
III. DEFINITION OF TERMS

Post-graduate Internship

is the fifth (5th) year of basic medical education and a phase of the professional education of the physician in order to further hone academic and technical proficiency in medicine.

COVID-19

refers to the Coronavirus Disease 2019 which is caused by the virus known as the severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2).

Non-COVID Area

refers to the area/ward/building in the hospital/clinic setting that caters to non-COVID patients.

Community Quarantine

refers to the restriction of movement within, into, or out of the area of quarantine of individuals, large groups of people, or communities, designed to reduce the likelihood of transmission of infectious disease among persons in and to persons outside the affected area.

Teaching and Training Hospital

refers to a health facility accredited by the Association of Philippine Medical Colleges, Inc. (APMC) for the conduct of the Post-graduate Internship Program.

IV. GENERAL GUIDELINES

The following are the general guidelines recommended in the conduct of the clinical rotation of post-graduate interns during the pandemic period:

1. The teaching and training hospitals may modify the post-graduate intern's curriculum depending on the pandemic situation in their respective areas.

2. The clinical rotation for post-graduate interns may be either:
   a. Purely virtual rotation; or,
   b. Blended rotation (limited face-to-face rotation with a virtual component).

   It is within the discretion of the post-graduate interns to decide whether he/she will undertake the limited face-to-face rotation. The post-graduate interns may also file a leave of absence from the hospital and the APMC.

3. Face-to-face clinical rotation of post-graduate interns shall hereinafter be allowed regardless of community quarantine status and upon issuance of the Certificate of Authority by the CHED Regional Office (CHEDRO) concerned.
4. Unified duty hours for accredited hospitals for face-to-face clinical rotation of post-graduate interns will be observed:
   a. No straight 24-hour duty;
   b. For 12-hour duty shift: 8:00 am to 8:00 pm;
   c. For 8-hour duty shifts:
      Morning shift: 7:00 am to 3:00 pm;
      Afternoon shift: 12:00 noon to 8:00 pm;
   d. No night shift and no evening duties after 8:00 pm; and,
   e. Non-duty work hours shall be 8 hours or less: 8:00 am to 5:00 pm or shorter.

5. Undergraduate interns of the 5-year medical curriculum shall follow the internship curriculum, requirements, rotation schedules, and duty hours of their respective medical schools and base hospitals. They shall however follow whatever is applicable from these guidelines. This refers to the: University of the Philippines (UP) Manila, the UP Manila School of Health Sciences in Leyte, St. Luke's Medical Center, the Ateneo de Manila University, and the Ateneo de Zamboanga University.

V. SPECIFIC GUIDELINES

A. Face-to-face clinical rotation of post-graduate interns

1. The recommended models for this clinical rotation are the latest Program for Interns and Program for Clinical Clerks of the University of the Philippines - Philippine General Hospital, and the National University Hospital.

2. The teaching and training hospitals may resume face-to-face clinical rotation provided there is a written authority from the CHED Regional Office.

3. The schedule of the regular rotation of post-graduate interns is stipulated in the 2019 Manual of the National Internship Program. This may be modified by the training hospital during the pandemic. However, the following major rotations should be emphasized: Medicine, Pediatrics, Surgery (including Eye and ENT), Obstetrics-Gynecology, and Community Medicine.

4. Only fully vaccinated post-graduate interns shall be allowed to join the face-to-face rotation. Unvaccinated post-graduate interns shall continue with the virtual learning modality and may join face-to-face clinical rotation two (2) weeks after the second dose of the vaccine, provided, there is a CHEDRO authority for their hospital to conduct face-to-face clinical rotation.

5. Interns will be allowed to rotate in non-COVID units including non-COVID operating rooms, non-COVID holding areas, Intensive Care Units (ICUs), and telemedicine hubs. They are excused from going on duty at the emergency
room, outpatient department, triage area, and ambulance service. The post-graduate interns may do volunteer work in various vaccination centers which shall be credited to their duty hours.

B. Application Procedure for the Issuance of Certificate of Authority to Teaching and Training Hospitals on the Conduct of Limited Face-to-face Clinical Rotation for Post-graduate Interns by the CHED Regional Office (RO)

The following are the procedures for the teaching and training hospital that wish to hold limited face-to-face clinical rotation:

1. Teaching and training hospitals must submit the documentary requirements to the concerned CHEDRO (Refer to Annex A). The following shall be submitted:
   a. Application Letter;
   b. Certificate of Accreditation from APMC;
   c. List of requirements for interns prior to the start of clinical training;
   d. Vaccination program for healthcare workers, employees, interns, and clinical clerks;
   e. Protocols for diagnostic testing;
   f. Duties and Responsibilities of Hospital Safety Officers;
   g. Daily Health Check (symptoms tracking) policies before reporting for hospital work;
   h. Personal measures to mitigate disease transmission. Describe the use of:
      • Masks and face shields;
      • Physical distancing;
      • Handwashing and personal hygiene;
      • Ventilation of rooms; and,
      • PPE rules for various COVID areas.
   i. Implementation of safety protocols in hospital work areas. (Include foot traffic, limitation of movement, mass gatherings, case conferences, mealtime rules, disinfection of workplace, and physical distancing in hospital premises and call rooms);
   j. Policies for reporting of infections and contact tracing;
   k. Quarantine and return to work/duty guidelines;
   l. Infection control and preventive measures outside the hospital for the protection of interns.

2. The CHEDRO shall check the completeness of the documentary requirements. If complete, the CHEDRO shall coordinate with the Department of Health (DOH) - Field and Implementation Coordination Team to evaluate the information provided and assess the preparedness of the teaching and training hospital through the completion of Annex B. In case that the teaching and training hospital was able to secure clearance from the Department of
Health - Field and Implementation Coordination Team on the conduct of face-to-face clinical rotation for post-graduate internship prior to the release of these Guidelines, the said clearance shall serve as the assessment of DOH on the preparedness of the hospital.

3. The CHEDRO shall issue a Certificate of Authority to the teaching and training hospitals on the conduct of limited face-to-face clinical rotation for post-graduate interns.

4. The Certificate of Authority shall be valid for one (1) year from the date of issuance of the certificate.

Only hospitals accredited by the APMC (Refer to Annex C) may apply for the face-to-face clinical rotation. CHEDRO shall grant authority based on the documentary review of the health and safety protocols of the hospital. There shall be no on-site inspection of hospitals by the CHEDRO.

C. Health and Safety Protocols in the Hospital/Institution

1. In the non-COVID units (low-risk areas), the prescribed Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) is Level 2 - 2.5 (surgical mask or N95/KN95 mask and face shield/goggles). In these areas, gowns and clean gloves will be provided when handling patients. PPE that is beyond what is required should be provided for by the post-graduate interns themselves.

2. All post-graduate interns are required to wear at least a face mask and face shield at all times within the hospital premises.

3. During unexpected circumstances when the post-graduate interns require an additional level of protection (Level 2.5), these should be easily requested from the nurses' stations/units of their respective wards every time they go on duty.

4. Physical distancing requirements should be strictly followed.
   a. Post-graduate interns should maintain at least a one (1) meter distance from anyone in the hospital premises;
   b. Tables and beds in the call rooms should be at least (1) meter apart; and,
   c. The allowable number of people in a given ward/clinic based on floor area should not be exceeded (not more than 1 person per square meter).

5. Post-graduate interns should follow foot traffic in the hospital premises, including entry and exit into and from the units.
6. Communal eating, because it also entails the removal of the face mask and face shield, is prohibited. Eating is allowed only in designated places in the hospital. When eating, a distance of at least two (2) meters between diners is advised.

7. Guidelines for reporting symptoms, infection and contact tracing developed by the institution should be strictly followed.

8. Elastomeric respirators should be disinfected at the end of each day. Disposable face masks should NOT be recycled.

9. Dining out especially in confined spaces without the proper distance requirements should be avoided.

10. Health declaration forms shall be accomplished and submitted daily before going to duty.

D. Health and Safety Protocols Outside the Hospital/Institution

1. Post-graduate interns should refrain from going to areas in the locality where there are high rates of infections.

2. Post-graduate interns should bathe right away and change to new clothes upon arrival in their lodging area.

3. For post-graduate interns who live in shared accommodations, the proper distancing of beds and working desks should be arranged. Strict infection prevention measures should also be instituted when using common areas such as the kitchen, receiving areas/the living room, and toilets/bathrooms.

4. If they need to go home to their families, post-graduate interns should strictly follow infection control measures of strict handwashing, physical distancing, and proper wearing of masks and face shields.

VI. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

A. The teaching and training hospitals shall:

1. Ensure the safety of the post-graduate interns conducting face-to-face clinical rotation by providing them with the PPE needed during the clinical rotation and must be replenished regularly.

2. Report COVID-19 positive cases and actions taken to the concerned CHEDRO.
B. CHED Regional Offices (CHEDROs), in consultation with the DOH - Field and Implementation Coordination Team, shall:

1. Evaluate and review the application documents of the teaching and teaching hospital.

2. Issue Certificate of Authority to hospitals on the conduct of limited face-to-face clinical rotation for post-graduate interns based on the documentary requirements on health and safety protocols.

3. Suspend/withdraw authority for violations on the provisions of these guidelines.

C. Post-graduate interns shall:

1. Strictly adhere to the health and safety protocols of their respective teaching and training hospitals.

2. Be transparent in declaring health conditions.

VII. SEPARABILITY CLAUSE

If any part or provision of these Guidelines shall be held unconstitutional or invalid, other provisions hereof which are not affected thereby shall continue to be in full force and in effect.

VIII. EFFECTIVITY

These Guidelines shall take effect immediately.

Quezon City, Philippines, \textbf{Oct. 1, 2021}.

For the Commission:

\begin{center}
\textbf{J. PROSPERO E. DE VERA III, DPA}
Chairman
\end{center}
ANNEX A

Self-Assessment Checklist on the Completeness of Documentary Requirements of Teaching and Training Hospital and Readiness of Post-graduate Interns to Conduct Limited Face-to-face Clinical Rotation
For Use of the Teaching and Training Hospital

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Check Box</th>
<th>Areas of Assessment</th>
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<td><strong>Documentary Requirements</strong></td>
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| ☐ | Quarantine and return to work/duty guidelines |
| ☐ | Infection control and preventive measures outside the hospital for the protection of interns. |
| **Readiness of Post-graduate Interns** | |
| ☐ | All post-graduate interns have active Philhealth memberships. |
| ☐ | All post-graduate interns are fully vaccinated. |
ANNEX B

Evaluation on the Completeness of Documentary Requirements of Teaching and Training Hospitals for Face-to-face Clinical Rotation of Post-graduate Interns
For Use of the CHED Regional Office and the Department of Health (DOH) - Field and Implementation Coordination Team

Teaching and Training Hospital: ________________________________

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<<Name>>
<<Designation>>
CHED - Regional Office

<<Name>>
<<Designation>>
Department of Health (DOH) - Field Implementation and Coordination Team
ANNEX C
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