



## Pulse

# Tuition fees and medical residents

Even though residents at the University of Toronto successfully protested the levying of tuition fees recently, trainees at other institutions have not been so lucky (see accompanying articles, pages 469 and 478).

Data collected by the Association of Canadian Medical Colleges in 1998 show that while most universities charge a registration fee, all Quebec

medical schools as well as Dalhousie University instead set substantial tuition fees for residents. These range from from \$1683 to \$3084 per year. In Quebec, government grants help defray a large portion of the tuition fee. Even though the Ontario government agreed to pay the \$1950 tuition fee charged to U of T residents this year, there is no guarantee it will pay the fee

in future years. The University of Calgary also has a tuition fee, but at \$664 it is more in line with the registration fees charged by other schools.

Some of the schools that charge only a registration fee have seen substantial increases over the last few years. For instance, at Memorial University the 1998/99 fee represents a 328% increase over the fee levied 10 years earlier.

There is also a wide range of resident pay scales, with salaries depending on the location and rank of training. The lowest levels of pay for all ranks of training are found in Newfoundland and Manitoba. The highest salaries are in Ontario and BC. Depending on rank level, the difference between the highest and lowest pay rate ranges from approximately \$7800 to \$12 000 per year.

Post-MD clinical training fees and salaries, 1998

University	Registration fee (\$)	Tuition fee (\$)	First-year salary (\$)
Memorial	500	-	30 176
Dalhousie	-	1683	32 057
Laval	-	3071	33 596
Sherbrooke	20	2892	33 596
Montréal	-	2886	33 596
McGill	-	3084	33 596
Ottawa	190	-	37 974
Queen's	190	-	37 974
Toronto	190	1950	37 974
McMaster	190	-	37 974
Western Ontario	190	-	37 974
Manitoba	706	-	30 416
Saskatchewan	-	-	32 955
Alberta	606	-	32 653
Calgary	-	664	32 653
British Columbia	286	-	37 658

Source: Association of Canadian Medical Colleges

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## Tuition battle ...

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equivalent of residency training. They also serve the public and teach undergraduates. "The arguments have not changed," he said. "Pressure from a well-organized pressure group should not cause us to reconsider a decision we've already made."

Dr. Murray Urowitz, the university's associate dean of postgraduate medical education, had little sympathy for the residents. "Residents applying to the U of T all knew that applying to us meant paying a tuition of

\$1950, yet they still applied and were selected," he told *CMAJ*. "When we sent out our letters of acceptance, we added no new regulations. [And now] many of the trainees have decided to renege on their contract."

The next step in the dispute is an internal review. Urowitz said the task force that will conduct the review was to be appointed in early August, and will likely take 6 to 8 months to complete its work.

He said the university was introducing the fees simply because the province has cut its education grants and "the funding had to come from other legitimate sources."

He said the university remains

adamant that medical students pay the tuition fee, and the Canadian Resident Matching Service will include this fact when it provides information to residents applying for the 2000 match. "The real issue here is not the tuition fee," he said, "but the funding of post-graduate education in this province."

PAIRO, meanwhile, would like a 2-year moratorium on the fee. Tepper says PAIRO will participate in the internal review "but we strongly believe that imposing tuition does not recognize the contribution that residents make to the bottom lines of hospitals and universities." — *Patrick Sullivan, CMAJ*