



APPD/COMSEP/AMSPDC/CoPS/@FuturePedsRes/NextGenPediatricians
Second Letter to Our Pediatrics Community
Re: 2021-2022 Recruitment
August 13, 2021

The leadership of APPD, COMSEP, CoPS, AMSPDC, @FuturePedsRes, and Next Gen Pediatricians have been working collaboratively with Graduate Medical Education (GME) leaders and learners and Pediatrics Chairs to improve our residency and fellowship recruitment processes. As a follow-up to our prior letters from 5/19/2021, we wanted to share these additional recommendations.

The objective of this collaboration is to identify approaches to optimizing the recruitment process for both applicants and programs by:

1. Helping learners find programs that match their career goals while providing an atmosphere supportive of how they learn best.
2. Creating a fair and equitable application process for both learners and programs.

We have already strongly recommended that programs **do not offer in-person interviews** for the 2021-2022 season.

For the 2021-2022 residency and fellowship application cycle, we also strongly recommend that programs **do not offer in-person second looks** or other in-person visits. As alternatives to in-person visits:

1. Programs may provide information about the surrounding area.
2. Programs may hold virtual sessions.

Rationale:

We have discussed this at length with our communities, and heard resounding consensus that our learners, program leadership, and chairs support this decision for the following reasons:

1. **Health and Safety:** Eliminating unnecessary travel will help to minimize health risks due to COVID-19 and Delta or other variants. In turn, by minimizing these impacts on our applicants and programs, we decrease risk to the patients we serve.
2. **Equity:** Virtual interviews and not having in-person visits are more equitable for applicants and programs, both in terms of cost savings and in terms of varying travel and visit restrictions from the COVID-19 pandemic.

3. **Minimize time away from clinical endeavors:** Recognizing that our learners' clinical time has already been significantly impacted, not having in-person visits decreases their time away from clinical training. In addition, there will be saved time from not needing to potentially quarantine after travel.
4. **Implicit Pressure on Applicants:** Learners are anxious to avoid being perceived as disinterested in a program, and therefore any activity that is offered by a program (even as an option) can augment existing pressures in the application process. We want to minimize that pressure.
5. **Cost savings:** Virtual interviews save significant money for applicants and programs.
6. **Environmental impact:** Virtual interviews will decrease the environmental impact of travel (Donahue, JGME 2021).
7. **Effective assessment:** The majority of applicants and programs highlighted that they thought the assessment of applicants was sufficient using virtual interviews in the 2020-2021 cycle.

Of note, there was consensus to do an entirely virtual season even before the COVID-19 Delta variant was increasing, due to the aforementioned concerns and particularly due to equity. In addition, internal medicine residencies and fellowships have made the same decision nationally to hold only virtual interviews and second looks.

As the leadership for APPD, COMSEP, CoPS, AMSPDC, @FuturePedsRes, and Next Gen Pediatricians, we appreciate your partnership in creating an equitable and inclusive recruitment process that helps all of our learners and programs find the best possible matches.

References:

1. 5/19/2021 [Letter to Pediatrics Community re: Residency Recruitment](#)
2. 5/19/2021 [Letter to Pediatrics Community re: Fellowship Recruitment](#)
3. Frohna JG, Waggoner-Fountain LA, Edwards J, Fussell J, Payne E, Gigante J, Vinci B, Heitkamp N, Neelakantan M, Degnon L, Blankenburg R, for the Pediatrics Recruitment Study Team. National Pediatric Experience with Virtual Interviews: Lessons Learned and Future Recommendations. *Pediatrics*, Jul 2021, e2021052904.