

Rotation Details

Family Medicine is an exciting discipline of medicine that challenges physicians to be the best that they can be, calling upon them to utilize sound medical knowledge, solid diagnostic and clinical acumen, and excellent interpersonal skills to provide effective health care to a defined patient population. Through the Family Medicine clerkship rotation, you will gain knowledge of common and unique health care problems in primary care, learn how to approach the undifferentiated problem, appreciate the concept of coping with uncertainty, recognize the value of time as a diagnostic and therapeutic modality, and become familiar with opportunistic intervention and preventative care. These opportunities will arise in the context of long-term relationships with patients and families across a breadth of health care issues. Six weeks in Family Medicine will provide a richness of experience and perspective that will position you to be an effective health care provider in any and all branches of medicine. Dynamic. Challenging. Rewarding. Welcome to Family Medicine!

The Family Medicine is a six-week rotation revolving around a one-to-one experience pairing a medical student with a community-based family physician. The most significant component of the Family Medicine rotation is the time spent with the clinical preceptor in the office setting. However, separate mandatory half-day sessions are organized in several areas for each rotation including - Early Childhood Development, Palliative Care, Global Health, Complementary & Alternative Medicine and Care of the Elderly. A schedule for these teaching sessions is provided at the outset of the rotation and most of them occur during the first week of the rotation. Attendance at all sessions is mandatory to achieve a completed rotation. While there is no established On Call component for Family Medicine, there is an expectation that students will participate in On Call duties during the Family Medicine rotation if and when their preceptor is on call.

The Family Medicine rotation tutors are either full-time faculty with the Department of Family Medicine or part-time faculty with specific McMaster tutor training. Tutorials, a key component of the rotation, are weekly three-hour sessions held throughout the rotation. Family Medicine residents occasionally co-tutor these groups.

Obstetrics is a targeted area for specific exposure. It is expected that obstetrics will either be provided in the office with the preceptor or via the Community Maternity Centre. You should discuss these expectations with your preceptor when starting your rotation, to ensure that approximately one half day per week is devoted to obstetrical care.

Students can expect to receive notice of their community preceptor's name and location approximately two weeks prior to starting their rotation. Preceptors are located in the Hamilton-Wentworth area, Kitchener/Waterloo & Fergus as well as St. Catharines & West Niagara. Distant placements are done according to the students' desire to have a distant or rural placement or dependent on preceptor availability. The community preceptors assigned for our Family Medicine clerkship are family doctors who are skilled and experienced in teaching Family Medicine. They may be located right in Hamilton, in surrounding communities, or in more distant communities in South Central Ontario. We also have preceptors available through the Mac-CARE and ROMP program. We have a number of different locations to consider for your Family Medicine rotation:

“Local Placements”

The majority of our preceptors are located in the Hamilton-Wentworth area, with some in surrounding communities such as Brantford, Burlington and Oakville, as well as smaller communities in between. We have a number of local preceptors available for each rotation throughout the year, thus we do **not** need to “lottery” these local spots. Local spots are considered to be within a 60 minute commute from Hamilton.

If you do not get lotteried to one of the spots listed below, you will be assigned “local”. If you are assigned a Family Medicine rotation “locally”, you may contact us regarding any preferences for local placements and we will do our best to accommodate your requests where possible. We also have some spots available at our

McMaster Family Medicine Teaching Units (Stonechurch Family Health Centre and The West End Clinic - McMaster Family Practice). We cannot guarantee that you will receive the “local” spot of your choice, but we try to ensure that anyone who wants to remain “local” is able to do so. Our department does not pay accommodation or travel for “local placements”.

“Lottery Spots”

We are able to offer a limited number of placements in some great places that appeal to many students. Each of these locations are outlined below. The Mac-CARE Program will arrange and cover the cost of housing and will provide some compensation for travel to and from these locations. You will receive information from Mac-CARE about funding if you are selected for a placement in one of these locations. We offer these lottery spots in groups of 4-6, so that we can provide the same kind of small group learning experience that you would receive in your family medicine rotation if you remained local, including tutorials, and small group sessions. Note that the rural family medicine core clerkship may be slightly different from “local” experiences in that the clerk is expected to follow the family physician in all the settings where they may practice (ie. hospital rounds, ER shifts, obstetrical duties, etc).

1. St.Catharines and West Niagara

Depending on whether your preceptor is located in St. Catharines or West Niagara, this rotation allows you to either live in the St. Catharines area, which we encourage you to do, or commute from Hamilton. The popular West Niagara area places students in the communities of Grimsby, Beamsville, or Smithville. Students are encouraged to live in the local accommodations which are funded by Mac-CARE.

2. Fergus and area:

Students must live in the Fergus area accommodations for this rotation, as the commute is too far. Mac-CARE will arrange and cover the cost of accommodations.

3. Kitchener-Waterloo and area:

Kitchener-Waterloo and area is a newer distant site. Students are encouraged to take advantage of accommodations arranged by the Mac-CARE Program in the area but commuting is a possibility as well.

Other locations

We do have McMaster preceptors located in many other communities across south central Ontario, including Waterford, Collingwood, Midland, and Dunnville to name a few of the popular ones. However, in order to fulfill the requirements of the clerkship rotation, students need to complete their tutorial component and small group teaching sessions requirements; therefore, the commute back to McMaster is mandatory. Students interested in a more distant placement such as the ones listed, should contact the Undergraduate Family Medicine Department who will assist in making arrangements through ROMP.

The Department of Family Medicine is located at McMaster Innovation Park (MIP) 175 Longwood Road South and our program assistant; Andrea Colbert-DeGeit (Ext. 21659) colbert@mcmaster.ca is available from Monday to Friday, 8:00am to 4:15 pm.

The Program Director for Undergraduate Family Medicine, Dr Jon Mikle, may be reached through Andrea.