



ASSOCIATION
OF PEDIATRIC
PROGRAM
DIRECTORS



COMSEP
Excellence in Medical Student
Education in Pediatrics



**APPD/COMSEP/AMSPDC Letter to Our Pediatrics Community
Residency Recruitment – Second Letter
August 31, 2020**

The leadership of APPD, COMSEP, and AMSPDC have been working collaboratively with Undergraduate Medical Education (UME) leaders, Graduate Medical Education (GME) leaders, learners, and Pediatrics Chairs to mitigate the effects the COVID-19 pandemic is having on our learners, educational programs, and health systems. Our focus has been to improve our residency recruitment processes, and as a follow-up to our prior letter of 4/28/2020, we wanted to share these additional recommendations.

To remind you, our primary goal is to optimize the recruitment process for both applicants and programs by:

- (1) Helping applicants find programs that match their career goals while providing an atmosphere conducive to their learning styles.
- (2) Providing educational programs with a consistent approach to residency recruitment.
- (3) Creating a fair and equitable application process for both applicants and programs.
- (4) Minimizing the disruptions created by the COVID-19 pandemic while following recommended health precautions during this interview season.

Therefore, APPD, COMSEP, and AMSPDC propose the following additional guidelines for the upcoming residency application cycle:

- (1) Guidance to applicants
 - a. Pre-interview:
 - i. Please make sure you have a secure internet connection for your interview. If you have any concerns about this, please let your medical school know and they can help you.
 - ii. Please review any materials the programs send you in advance of your interview.
 - b. Interviews:
 - i. Let programs know at least 2 weeks ahead of time if cancelling an interview. This will allow programs to fill these slots with alternative candidates.
 - ii. Please do not record interviews.
 - c. Post-interview communication:
 - i. We discourage post-interview communication unless it is a thank you note or you have specific questions or updates to provide.

- ii. Please do not send letters of intent or “love letters”. These types of communication will not change your position on our rank lists.

(2) Guidance to programs

a. In offering interviews:

- i. Offer at least as many interview spots as applicants invited.
- ii. Interview offers should be sent in the late afternoon, recognizing that applicants are often busier with clinical work in the morning (please note time zones).
- iii. Provide applicants at least 48 hours to sign up for interviews before releasing the spot to another applicant.
- iv. Please be as flexible with scheduling as possible.
- v. In preparing for the interview day, recommend asking applicants if they need any accommodations to make their interview experience the most productive possible.
- vi. Please offer a tech check for applicants to test their systems prior to the interview either earlier the same day or at a convenient time prior to the interview.

b. Pre-interview Materials:

- i. Programs are encouraged to provide as much program information ahead of the interview day as possible so that the interview day can be focused on 1:1 or small group interactions.
- ii. Recommend updating websites, digital brochures, videos, and other resources that highlight important aspects of your program
- iii. Consider highlighting/pre-recording an example teaching session.
- iv. Ahead of the interviews, please share with the applicants:
 - i. What platform will be used for the interview (e.g. WebEx, Zoom, BlackBoard)
 - ii. Specific information about back-up procedures to use if there are technical issues (e.g. exchange of cell/phone numbers)
 - iii. Structure of the interview day
 - iv. Planned format for the interview(s) (e.g. open format conversations, faculty asking specific questions)

c. Interview Day:

- i. We support the national AAMC guidelines for virtual interviews. We strongly discourage any in-person interviews even for internal applicants.
- ii. The interview day is going to be different this year
 - 1. Consider having a few interviews, then break before additional interviews.
 - 2. Consider abbreviating the interview day as virtual interviews may be more exhausting than in-person.
- iii. Please offer the day-time components of the interview day (individual interviews, conferences, tours, etc) on the same day (i.e., not spread across multiple days) to make scheduling easier for applicants.

- iv. It is reasonable to offer a few optional informational sessions/programmatic overviews or social/meet and greet with residents over the course of the interview season that aren't on the official interview day.
- v. Please do not record interviews.
- d. Second Looks:
 - i. We strongly discourage second looks, even for internal applicants.
- e. Post-interview communication:
 - i. All communication needs to abide by the NRMP Match Communication Code of Conduct.
 - ii. We recommend post-interview communication to be limited to:
 - 1. One follow-up message to share the contact information of leadership/ interviewers.
 - 2. One email at the end of recruitment with program updates, sent to all applicants. In the email, please remind them that they won't hear from you unless they contact you with specific questions.
 - 3. Only individual communication if applicants/program have questions for each other. Post-interview communications is permitted for responding to specific questions or for linking with mentors and/or research colleagues.
 - iii. Consistent with NRMP rules, we recommend stating “we don't expect a response back” for any post-interview communication.
 - iv. Keep in mind that even positive communications with applicants can be stressful to them.
- (3) Throughout the recruitment season:
 - a. Recognizing that programs have significant financial constraints due to COVID, recognizing that some programs have reduced administrative and coordinator support this season and increased administrative needs, recognizing that we are trying to create as equitable a recruitment season as possible, and because the students, residents, and fellows on our action team said that these are not necessary, we are strongly recommending:
 - i. Not providing food or gift cards for food
 - ii. Not distributing swag to applicants

APPD, COMSEP, and AMSPDC have provided webinars to help prepare for this virtual recruitment season:

Under All APPD:

- 5/14/2020 – How can APPD/COMSEP/AMSPDC support recruitment process?
- 6/18/2020 – Dismantling Hurdles: A Path Forward for UIM Pediatric Applicants
- 9/3/2020 – Recruitment Nuts and Bolts (including introduction to a recruitment toolkit)
- 9/4/2020 – Medical Students Applying for Residency Training: Virtual Interviews – Information Session for Medical Students

Recordings of these webinars can be found at: <https://www.appd.org/meetings-education/virtual-cafes/>

As the leadership for APPD, COMSEP, and AMSPDC, 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.