

## Resident Testimonials

Commenting about the University of Alberta Family Medicine Residency Program proved to be tougher than I thought. I have many good things to say and don't want to sound like a paid advertisement. First and foremost, the Department is, without question, all about their residents. All staff within the department try to ensure that we have enjoyable clinical and academic experiences. The program wants us to excel, and thus tries to create an environment where we can do just that. Furthermore, Dr. Schipper makes herself readily available to the residents, offering support and advice whenever needed. The clinical curriculum is challenging, yet a lot of fun. As an "off-service" resident in many rotations, I was curious as to how we would be treated/received in the other disciplines. Family Medicine is highly respected by the other specialties/departments at the U of A, and thus we get great learning experiences in all our rotations. We seem to have a reputation for being well trained and knowledgeable residents. For myself, I am amazed at the level of knowledge and clinical skill I have developed in a short period of time. In addition, the structure of our training, through elements like horizontal elective time, allows us to explore personal interests in preparation for our careers in medicine. All in all, the program has really opened my eyes to just how many options there are in Family Medicine, and provided avenues for me to explore these options. I find myself happier and happier with my choice of pursuing Family Medicine at the University of Alberta.

*Justin Balko MSc, MD*

*FMR2, University of Alberta (Leduc Community Site)*

"As an out of province resident coming to Edmonton from a big city like Vancouver was an adjustment to say the least. Having a new set of responsibilities and learning the protocols of different hospitals were only a couple of the novel things I needed to get used to. However from my first day of residency, on call for Internal Medicine at the Alex, although admittedly daunting, I have felt supported and respected as a family medicine resident in the program at U of A. The atmosphere amongst residents and staff in the hospitals is collegial which makes for a more conducive learning environment. From the administrative support staff to our fabulous program director in Dr. Schipper, the entire department works towards ensuring the best opportunities and training for our residents. Working more closely with Dr. Schipper this year as one of the co-chiefs, I am so impressed by her genuine concern and enthusiasm toward the residents and how timely she is at responding to resident concerns. Being one of the first programs to institute the "benchmark" exam this year is a testament to the forward looking thinking of the department. In addition to the myriad of rich learning opportunities, we have a cohesive group of residents who know how to balance work with play. From the post academic half day social events to the winter retreat in Jasper, our residents know how to have fun. I feel privileged and fortunate to be part of the residency program here and would have no reservations in recommending it to others."

*Jamil Hirji Bsc, MD*

*FMR2, University of Alberta (Royal Alexandra Site)*

"I cried bitter tears when I learned that the AIMG Program matched me to Edmonton and not Calgary in February 2008. I just thought at that time that I can not leave my husband and teenage daughter by themselves in Calgary. On the other hand, I always believed that "all things work out for the best." Hence, I went in Feb 2008 to do the mandatory pre-residency for four months and it was the best four months of my life since I came to Canada! The Grey Nuns Family Medicine Centre has a homey feel where all the staff are kind and will try to make you feel that you belong. As an IMG, that sense of acceptance is huge. The preceptors are extremely bright and knowledgeable without being threatening. Never did I once feel that I was different due to my colour or my training in Asia. The staff are happy to have me and they are open to whatever I can contribute from where I came from. Not only that, I was impressed that even at the start of the training, we were already being prepped on how to pass our CFPC exams. We even have confidential sessions to take care of our emotional and mental health and wellness. The academic days are equally impressive. Small group sessions from each respective site followed by the joining of all the residents from all sites for informative lectures on different topics optimize the learning at the Academic Day. To top it off, we have leaders and a program director who constantly work to maximize our learning experiences during our training. We can always approach them for whatever concerns we have with our rotations - we always feel that they are there for us to be safe, to learn, and to enjoy the two years of our time with them. Now more than ever, I am so happy and thankful that U of A chose me. Never mind if I have to drive on my weekends off to see my family in Calgary. Truly, "all things worked out for the best...."

*Yolanda Alcaraz-Limcangco, M*  
*FMR1, University of Alberta (Grey Nuns Site)*

"When asked about the family medicine program at the U of A a few thoughts come to mind:

The advantages of a career in family medicine are variety and flexibility... that is exactly what our program is about! The different teaching sites and preceptors all provide a unique experience, which you can tailor to your interests. I always look forward to my half days back at clinic where I never know what type of patients I will be seeing!

Being part of a very large program may seem intimidating at first, but you will not get lost in the crowd. On rotations, I was always surrounded by colleagues and felt like I had a built in support network. Everyone is really approachable from preceptors to site administrators and even the program director. Any grievances I had were dealt with expediently. At the U of A, you are seen both as an individual, as well as a member of a larger community."

*Stephanie Mullin, MD*  
*FMR2, University of Alberta (Grey Nuns Site)*