

## **Obtaining Independent License to Practice Rheumatology in Ontario**

### **Dr. Ashley Sterrett**

*In 2017, Dr. Sterrett relocated to Toronto from Tampa, Florida. She successfully obtained her license from the Royal College by training under the supervision of an Ontario rheumatologist. Dr. Sterrett prepared the following document with the goal of helping other international rheumatology graduates who wish to relocate to Ontario.*

#### **Pathway 1.**

- Take Royal College Exams in IM and then in Rheumatology

#### **Pathways 3 and 4:**

- These are for US trained rheumatologists (physicians) who do not take the RC exams
- The pathway is based on where you went to medical school
- Ultimately, it requires 12 (6-18 range) months of supervised practice with an Ontario licensed rheumatologist: the purpose of this is to learn how to work within the Canadian Healthcare System
- While you are practicing under supervision: you will bill independently and be paid by OHIP (the government once monthly). During this time, you will accrue your own patient roster. The goal is that you keep this roster once you have your independent license and add to it.
- At the end of the 12 month supervisory period, the CPSO will have a licensed rheumatologist assess your practice to ensure you have accumulated enough experience through your patient exposures. Primarily— do you understand the EAP process, do you understand the billing process, do you appreciate what OHIP covers for patients etc. This assessment is at your cost—you must pay the CPSO for this assessment and have no other option—it was over \$5k when I went through this in 2017
- Once you pass this assessment, which you should if your supervisor was helpful, then you have an independent license to practice Rheumatology (and only rheumatology as you were not supervised practicing anything else) in Ontario. That means no moonlighting in IM or IM call (yay!)
- Should you want to move to another province (don't do it!) you will NOT have to repeat this process. You can apply for your license and should receive a similar "limited license" for that province. Quebec does require French equivalency test—unique to Quebec—otherwise each province is similar in requirements though I am told Ontario, BC, and NS are the most difficult licenses to obtain overall regardless of the pathway.

- Finding a supervisor is the most difficult part of this process as most Ontario physicians do not understand this process. You are expected to work 4-5 days a week for approximately 40 hours with the supervisor present most of the time or available by phone. You also need a back-up supervisor should your primary supervisor become ill/be unable to complete the term. The supervisor is not compensated by the CPSO for this, but you typically pay a fee to use the space, as you would in any practice.