

Alberta Doctors' Digest

Students helping physicians during COVID-19

Alex Corrigan is a final-year medical student at the University of Calgary. As the past president of the Calgary Medical Students' Association, his leadership skills were called upon during the unprecedented pandemic and led to the launch of the Students for Healthcare Providers initiative.

This initiative provided support to physicians within Calgary who required daycare services or logistical support during a time when there were limited resources and many physicians struggled to balance the demands of clinical responsibilities with family needs. Alex promptly took action and recognized an opportunity to help maintain the efficiency of the clinical workforce and to help decrease additional stress on physicians.

Additionally, Alex volunteered for eight weeks as a contact tracer with the Alberta COVID-19 Exposure Response Team, which is responsible for developing a prompt action plan for case investigation, contact tracing and communication strategy to those impacted by the virus. This team was led by medical officers of health and public health residents who developed a model to use medical student volunteers to manage the work efforts that flattened the curve and protected Albertans.



Alex Corrigan promptly took action during the pandemic to help decrease additional stress on physicians (photo credit: Rachael Turner)

The impacts of the pandemic have significantly affected all Albertans, and clinical clerks found their medical school journeys changed in the blink of an eye as placements were suspended to protect their safety. Although Alex could have used the time away from the hospital to take a well-deserved break, instead he looked for ways to help. Always with a smile on his face, Alex is the type of leader who can quickly adapt in a new environment and learn from the team. It's impressive to witness how quickly he analyzed the evolving

pandemic situation in Calgary and developed many integrative plans for medical students to help the community sustain contact tracing demands and clinical resources.

In addition to his work at the University of Calgary, Alex has made his mark at the provincial level with the Physician Resources Planning Advisory Committee, working to develop strategies to fill physician service gaps across the province, specifically in rural communities. At the national level, with the Canadian Federation of Medical Students, he advocates for medical curriculum advancement, equity among medical school admissions and strategies for improving access to care for patients.

Alex is always willing to provide a helping hand, offer a listening ear or give you a boost of confidence after a difficult day at the hospital. Without a doubt, he always shows up to work hard with a big grin on his face. His positivity and kindness are infectious and will serve him well as he transitions to residency next year.

Thank you, Alex!