

Application for the Jon Philipp Scholarship for Observership in the field of Obstetrics and Gynecology at the Baylor College of Medicine, Houston, USA

I am happy to have this opportunity to apply for the Jon Philipp Scholarship for Observership in the field of Obstetrics and Gynecology at the Baylor College of Medicine, Houston, USA.

My name is Dr. Pema Choden Bhutia, and I have been working with the Royal Government of Bhutan since 2001. I started my career as a District Medical Officer, and served both in Western and Central Bhutan. Thereafter I worked at the Comprehensive Emergency Obstetric Care Centre in Trashigang (Eastern Bhutan) for four years as the only OBGYN catering to patients in the Eastern Region. I am currently working as a Consultant Obstetrician and Gynecologist at the Jigme Dorji Wangchuck National Referral Hospital (JDWNRH) in Thimphu, Bhutan.

Working for the care and betterment of girls and women in remote parts of Bhutan, and now in urban Thimphu, has given me a good understanding of the challenges and difficulties that girls and women continue to face in both urban and rural areas, and it motivates me to work harder for their wellbeing. I consider myself most fortunate to be able to contribute to the improvement of the lives of girls, women, newborns, and hence their families through my service.

I am also an Assistant Professor at the Khesar Gyalpo University of Medical Sciences of Bhutan (KGUMSB) in the Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology. In addition, at this medical university, I am the Course Coordinator for post graduate residency program in Obstetrics and Gynecology. In the past, I have also served as Intern Doctor Coordinator.

In addition to these responsibilities, I assist the Head of the Department, and I have taken on the role of Officiating Head of Department numerous times in his absence.

Besides my clinical work, I also engage in many collaborative activities with the medical university, reproductive and newborn health programme of the Ministry of Health, and several other agencies that work on women's health, newborn outcome and medical education. I was also the Moderator for the Bhutan Symposium, and moderated and coordinated educational webinars which are organized by THE LINK Bhutan, Opportunity for Life, Inc.

I believe in continuous learning and skills enhancement. With the fast changing knowledge and technologies in the medical field, I feel that it is important to stay informed and find better ways and methods of doing things and improving patient outcomes.

If given the opportunity, I feel that an exposure visit at this reputed medical educational institute will help me in gaining new knowledge and skills, and in observation of good practices. These will not only help me make improvements within my work place as Obstetrician and Gynecologist, but also in my capacity as a faculty member at the KGUMSB, thereby translating into shared knowledge and practices with students and colleagues.

I would look forward to enhancing my knowledge and skills through exposure to some of the following activities at Baylor's College of Medicine:

- Observation of medical care in outpatient, and inpatient department of Obstetrics and Gynecology
- Observation of Obstetrics and Gynecology procedures and surgeries (if permitted)
- Observation of preoperative / preprocedure counseling and consent taking
- Observation of patient education and counseling to the patients
- Observation of team dynamics, roles of health workers.
- Observation of facilities and infrastructure
- Observation of academic activities
- Observation of research activities

On my part, I am confident that I will be to share my knowledge and experiences, which are unique in Bhutan, and also contribute to the cultural and academic engagement between our countries.

I envision that after the completion of observership, I will be able to improve the following aspects of patient care and medical education in Bhutan:

- **Quality of medical care** of women particularly Reproductive Endocrinology and Infertility (REI) related care, and particularly for menopausal women and infertile couple in Bhutan. Currently we are able to provide limited service in this area due to lack of subspecialist in these fields. There are limited treatment options available in the country. There is need for research to generate evidence-based data to prioritize our actions to improve quality of care for these group of women. With the experience of observership, I would be able to identify gaps in our knowledge, practice and resources, and recommend strategies for improvement and optimal management of menopausal women and infertile couple.
- **Quality of patient centered care and counseling** to women, couples and family members, as well as counseling to those with special needs such as adolescents and cancer patients.
- **Quality of teaching methodology**
- **Revisit current OBGYN residency training curriculum** of Bhutan which is due for curriculum revision and recommend improvement strategies to the stakeholders.
- **Strengthen collaboration** between The Link Bhutan, Baylor College of Medicine and OBGYN department of Bhutan to enhance our academic engagements, including by coordinating educational webinars for residents and faculty.

In the past I have had my medical trainings in India, Bangladesh and Thailand. The experiences in these Asian countries have been valuable and rewarding. I have, however, never had the opportunity to study or gain exposure from a university in the United States or the Western world. The chance to gain exposure at Baylor College of

Medicine, an outstanding and well-recognized medical Centre, would be an opportunity of a lifetime for me. It would give me knowledge about new methods, technologies and procedures, and will benefit me immensely both as a medical practitioner and as an individual. I will gain perspective and benefit from the experience, and the learning that I will get will not only benefit me but through my work help to improve the lives of newborns, girls, and women in Bhutan.