



April 24, 2026

Re: Nomination for 20th Annual Heed Ophthalmic Foundation Residents Retreat

Chicago, Illinois, September 26-27, 2026

Postgraduate Program Director and Department Head Letter of Support

Dr. Kelly Ann Hutchinson

Attention: The Society of Heed Fellows and the Heed Ophthalmic Foundation adjudication committee

Members of the Selection Committee:

It is my distinct pleasure to write a letter of recommendation on behalf of Dr. Kelly Hutchinson, a third-year resident in our ophthalmology residency program at Queen's University, Kingston Ontario. Dr. Hutchinson has consistently proven herself to be a committed, hard-working, and organized scholarly resident and prolific researcher. In fact, Dr. Hutchinson oversees multiple research teams involving the mentoring and management of numerous medical students. During her time with the department, she has consistently demonstrated the ability to initiate, manage, and bring to completion multiple research projects, while simultaneously teaching junior learners how to excel in clinical research. She has delivered multiple grand rounds and journal club presentations with poise and expertise, is involved in a variety of academic committees with our department and has been deservedly chosen for multiple academic awards. She leads by example and with integrity, and she is the ideal candidate for this mentorship and networking opportunity to bolster and help shape her academic career.

As both her Program Director and Faculty Supervisor for one of her largest current umbrella projects, "Inside the Emergency Eye Clinic: Referral Quality, Triage Efficiency, Inequities, and Outcomes at a Tertiary Centre", I can personally attest to her commitment to research, ophthalmology and bettering clinical medicine. She is thoughtful in her scientific design combining excellent research knowledge with growing clinical knowledge to generate meaningful projects. Recognizing the potential of our ophthalmology emergency eye clinic data set, Dr.

Hutchinson expertly parsed out the data to optimize several meaningful projects to maximize research output and impact.

Dr. Hutchinson is an excellent research supervisor herself, mentoring her medical student team members in a manner that pushes them to their full potential. She is prompt and precise with communication and efficiently manages her projects with reasonable but ambitious deadlines. She is able to troubleshoot setbacks, pivot when required, and proactively anticipates issues.

Her emergency eye clinic projects have generated conclusions that impact incarcerated patient care, low socioeconomic status groups, the optimization of resident triaging, improvement of our referral system etc. This research project has the potential to create meaningful and tangible change in our ophthalmology department, the Queen's emergency department, our community referral centers locally and provide perceptive conclusions for the national and international medical community to potentially apply to their own centers.

We have already been successful in publishing and presenting many of the projects associated with our joint research venture (see biosketch), and Dr. Hutchinson has been integral in the manuscript writing process as well as abstract creation and submission. She is concise, professional and creates insightful discussion resulting in publications that are compelling and clear.

Dr. Hutchinson has also demonstrated leadership in other areas of academic medicine throughout her residency training, serving as our accreditation resident lead, resident research representative, wellness committee resident representative, as well as serving as a mentor for the Queen's Medicine Aesculapian Society Mentorship Program. Although Dr. Hutchinson has been recognized for her outstanding achievements via numerous scholarships throughout her Undergraduate, Master's, and Medical degrees, she is incredibly modest and always quick to share her successes with peers and team members. Recently (2025), she was awarded the Canadian Society for Clinical Investigation (CSCI) and Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR) Resident Research Prize for Queen's University, and she has been nominated again this academic year for equally impressive research accomplishments.

I have every confidence that Dr. Hutchinson has a bright future as a leader in academic ophthalmology, and that she will continue to make meaningful contributions to the ophthalmology research and academic community throughout her already impressive career. In summary, Dr. Hutchinson has distinguished herself through her scholarly achievements and continuous demonstration of mentorship, research integrity and commendable work ethic. She exhibits significant potential for continued excellence and growth as a researcher, future academic ophthalmologist, and as a mentor to other students and colleagues. She has been an asset to the ophthalmology resident training program at Queen's and demonstrates academic

citizenship by sharing her projects generously and lending her expertise through her committee and leadership roles. If you require additional information, please feel free to contact me at r.curtis@queensu.ca or 343-363-3275.

Yours sincerely,



Dr. Rachel Curtis, MD, FRCSC

Postgraduate Program Director

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In full support,



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