

July 1, 2018

Dear Members of the Fellowship Selection Committee,

I am pleased to write this **strongest** letter of recommendation on behalf of Dr. Nino Balanchivadze in support of her application to hematology oncology fellowship. Dr. Balanchivadze has waived her right to see this letter. I currently serve in multiple roles at Grand Strand Medical Center, where Dr. Balanchivadze has worked since 2014, including as the Associate Program Director of the Internal Medicine residency and the Program Director of the Transitional Year residency at our institution. I work clinically as a hospitalist and count Dr. Balanchivadze as among my most respected colleagues. I oversee the scholarly activities for our residency programs, assisting and supervising residents and faculty from the earliest stages of project conception, through research conduction, and ultimately to presentation or publication. I have had the opportunity to develop a very close working relationship with Dr. Balanchivadze during her time at our institution and know she is an **outstanding** candidate for hematology oncology fellowship.

Dr. Balanchivadze has been a **pivotal** member of the core faculty for our internal medicine residency program since its inception in 2015. Even prior to the launch of the residency program, she took on an active role in interviewing and recruiting both resident candidates as well as faculty for our institution, being wholeheartedly committed to developing a high caliber internal medicine residency program at our regional/community hospital. As a member of our core faculty, Dr. Balanchivadze has been instrumental in educating trainees and faculty across a variety of roles, including as an attending hospitalist on the internal medicine wards, as a didactic educator during our academic half day sessions and noon conferences, and as a leader of our program evaluation committee. She brings a **consummate passion for teaching** to each of these roles, and it was no surprise to me when she was selected as the faculty of the year during the very first year of the program. She has gone on to receive multiple other teaching awards at our institution from both the internal medicine and transitional year residents, attesting to her dedication and commitment to medical education.

Dr. Balanchivadze's excellence as a teacher is matched by her top-notch patient care. She has the ability to relate to patients from all walks of life, and communicates both with her patients and colleagues with a sense of humble confidence. She is compassionate, thorough, and always cognizant of providing appropriate, evidence based care to each and every one of her patients. She is an advocate for her patients when needed, ensuring that they receive a high quality of care each and every time in the hospital. For example, I can think of numerous instances where she has personally dedicated hours of time to ensuring safe discharge planning for patients with multiple complex social issues, recognizing the attention to detail necessary for providing optimal care. Additionally, her **clinical acumen** is among the best of the colleagues I have worked with during my career. From considering rare diagnoses, to reexamining fundamental assumptions other physicians have made in order to uncover the true underlying pathophysiology of a patient's condition, Dr. Balanchivadze consistently uses her **broad fund of medical knowledge** to render meaningful, accurate, and timely diagnoses for her patients. I know this skill will serve her well as a hematologist and oncologist, working to unravel challenging diagnoses as well as initiating complex treatment regimens for her patients, and communicating both with clarity and precision.

Dr. Balanchivadze has played a critical role in supporting scholarly activities during the course of her time at our institution. She has been the **most prolific member of the core faculty** for our internal medicine residency program in terms of overseeing resident projects and case reports. Despite having a busy clinical schedule, she takes the time to identify cases with rich learning pearls or clinical insights and provide these to the residents for all scholarly presentation purposes. During the first year of our brand-new residency program, she worked with nearly every resident in the program to help them achieve a scholarly presentation at a regional or state wide meeting. When I had the chance to attend the conference and view the posters, her name was on almost every single one from our institution! The residents love working with her as a faculty mentor, as she provides guidance, inspiration, and thoughtful, timely feedback on their drafts and revisions. In addition, her past scholarly activities have led her to presentations of her own at regional and national meetings, attesting to her tremendous potential to **make an impact as an academician** in the future.

Beyond the clinical and research impact that Dr. Balanchivadze has had at our institution, she has truly distinguished herself as a leader among the physician faculty. In 2017, she was elected to serve as the vice chair of the department of medicine at our institution, gaining praise and recognition for her **vision, demeanor, professionalism, and respect among the faculty**. In 2018, she assumed the role of chair of the department of medicine. In this capacity, she has made an impact not only in running large monthly meetings with the utmost of decorum, but also in working with the hospital administration to tackle a variety of important issues directly relevant to the safe and timely care for patients such as the integration of mid-level practitioners and the hospital's paging/communication system. She has earned the admiration of physicians across the hospital and continues to do an excellent job in this capacity. Dr. Balanchivadze has a leadership style that is both **dynamic and calm** and reflects her personality; she is very well received by all those she works with.

In summary, Dr. Balanchivadze is a **superior** candidate for hematology oncology fellowship. She is someone who is always willing to work hard clinically, deliver compassionate care, conduct scholarly activities, teach those around her, and serve as an inspirational leader. She has made an incredible mark within our institution and has all the traits that will allow her to continue to do so as a fellow in the future. As a current program director, she is someone who I look at as an ideal, exemplary trainee and would be very ecstatic to have an entire residency cohort comprised of trainees with similar traits, aptitude, and disposition. I am pleased to give Dr. Balanchivadze my strongest support for her fellowship application.

Thank you very much for your time and please do not hesitate to reach out to me if I can be of any further support.

Sincerely,



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