



Applying for Residency

MEDICAL STUDENT COUNCIL PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

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Driving home from my final residency interview, I reflected on the emergency medicine residency application process. What would I do differently? What helped me the most? Each step of the application process brought multiple questions and difficult choices. For assistance, I obtained advice from classmates, current residents, mentors and Google. Each of these sources provided useful information,

but it is the combination of personal investigative work and insight into my educational, professional and personal goals that will ultimately lead to matching at the right program. To increase your odds of finding and matching at a top program, I recommend three things: start working on your application early, do an emergency medicine rotation at your home institution and take advantage of the interview.

Part one of the application process is preparation. It is vital that you understand the nuances of the application process and are familiar with the specialty of emergency medicine. A great way to start is by reading *Rules of the Road for Medical Students*, by Drs. Antoine Kazzi and Joel Schofer. This book is an excellent guide and includes many chapters that should be read during the third year of medical school. In addition, start researching potential programs and apply for an away rotation at a program that suits your interests.

Emergency medicine rotations are crucial for your development as an emergency physician, but also play a significant role in your ap-

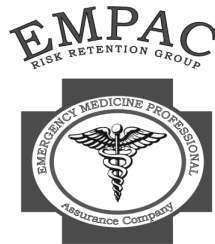
plication. As a program director stressed to me, emergency medicine is a small world. Most of the program directors know and trust each other. Try to rotate at a hospital with a residency program, make known your intention to pursue emergency medicine and work hard. Early in the rotation, ask the clerkship or program director to write you a standard letter of recommendation (SLOR). This letter is unique to emergency medicine and is uniformly accepted as one of the strongest and most accurate ways of assessing an applicant.

My favorite part of the application process, and ultimately the most useful, was hitting the interview trail. If possible, try to schedule light rotations in December or January. During interviews, you will inevitably hear two phrases at each program, "we work hard and play hard" and "we see great pathology." To evaluate the first phrase, attend the applicant dinners to watch the residents interact. Do they get along? Would you enjoy spending time with them? If you have the chance, schedule a shift in the emergency department to see how the faculty, staff and residents mesh. Use your emergency medicine rotations as a baseline to compare other programs, and ask as many questions as you can.

The final common pathway in applying for emergency medicine is formulating your rank list. Luckily, there are many programs for you to choose from, and you will learn emergency medicine no matter where you train. To increase your odds of matching at a top choice, begin planning now. Get an emergency medicine mentor, plan your rotations wisely, work hard and have fun!

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