

What I Wish I Knew As a New Attending

Tips for Your First Year in Practice

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Disclosures

No financial or pharmaceutical affiliations to disclose.

Learning Objectives

- Describe key steps in the transition from resident to attending
- Anticipate and prepare for the onboarding process
- Identify common challenges during the first year of practice
- Apply practical strategies to set boundaries, build confidence, and manage expectations
- Recognize the importance of mentorship, peer connection, and systems thinking early



My Timeline

- Graduated from MCW in 2021
- Family Medicine Residency MCW/Ascension 2021-2024
- Prevea Health starting September 2024 - present

Different Paths in Family Medicine

- Rural vs. Suburban vs. Urban
- Outpatient vs. Inpatient vs. OB vs. Proceduralist vs. Urgent Care vs. Academics
- System-employed vs. Independent/Private Practice vs. FQHC vs. Academia vs. Public Health vs. Locums

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Steps from Residency to Attending

1. Apply to different places
2. Interview (usually talk with recruiter first)
3. Review contracts and negotiate
4. Pick your place!

1. Apply to Different Places

- Where do I want to be?
- What does my job look like day-to-day?
- How much support do I want?
- Who runs the organization?

Throw in some unexpected picks.

2. Interview

- Talk with recruiter
 - Initial screen and intro to organization
 - Ask questions (any rule breaker questions, the basics if unfamiliar, etc.)
- Interview
 - Travel usually covered
 - Not familiar with area, plan to spend an extra day
 - Be prepared to ask questions - You are interviewing them!
 - Follow up after interview

What Should I Ask About?

- Clinical support staff and triage system
- Clinical resources and access to specialists
- Turnover
- Call schedule details
- Flexibility with hours/days
- Urgent Care? Inpatient? Procedures? MOUD? Women's Health?
- Working with midlevel providers?

3. Contract & Negotiations

(Ask about at interview too)

- Salary and guarantee period
- Benefits
- CME/Vacation
- Starting bonus/stipend (conditional)
- Loan Repayment (conditional)
- One vs multiple sites?



4. Pick Your Place

- Consult with your advisors
 - Can also review contracts
- Decide when you want to start
 - Break after residency
 - \$\$\$
 - Health insurance
- Sign the contract!

Before You Leave Residency – Get Organized!

- Licenses, certificates, score reports, medical school transcript
 - ABFM, Steps, BLS/ACLS, Nexplanon training, SUD training, etc.
- Procedure logs (keep updated)
- Note templates
- Clinical resources from residency
- Emails and email addresses (may lose access to residency email)
- Benefits for post-residency (e.g., disability insurance discounts, financial advising)

You're an Attending!

Onboarding

1. Pre-Arrival Phase
2. First 30 days
3. First 3 months

1. Onboarding: Pre-Arrival Phase

- Administrative Tasks & Credentialing*
- IT & EMR Set up
- Schedule Planning & Panel Development
- HR & Benefits
- Organizational Orientation

Credentialing

- Long process
- Can get delayed
- Decide which procedures you want to do
- May need credentialing for clinic and hospital*

Get it done early to avoid problems.

2. Onboarding: First 30 days

- Personalized orientation
- Meet your team
- Clinical shadowing
- EHR and workflow training
- Start seeing patients

3. Onboarding: First 3 Months

- Adjust clinical practice
- Coding/billing review
- Documentation optimization
- 90-Day Review

Lessons Learned

The Hidden Curriculum of the First Year

Emotional Surprises

- Imposter syndrome
- Decision fatigue
- Loneliness

Administrative overwhelm

- Credentialing delays
- Inbox management
- Confusion about everything!
 - Accessing HR benefits
 - Finding things in clinic
 - Unsure about certain processes
 - How to get the CME I need

Power Dynamics & Boundaries

- When to speak up
- How to advocate for yourself
- Protecting your time and energy without guilt

Clinical & Operational Advice

- Prioritize clarity in communication with your support staff
- Learn your EHR inside and out
- Block time in your schedule
- Build rapport with schedulers, nurses, and MAs
- Ask for help early and often
- Align with Quality and Process Improvement :)

Tips for Personal & Professional Growth

- Establish a mentorship web
- Reflect and adapt (weekly or monthly solo reviews)
- Set your non-negotiables early and stick to them
- Be intentional about financial literacy
- Know the system: RVUs, metrics, and how you're evaluated
- Develop the ability to think on a system level vs individual

Pitfalls to Avoid

- Overcommitting to projects and roles too early
- Isolating yourself because you should know the answer
- Comparing your journey to others

References & Resources

- “Attending: Medicine, Mindfulness, and Humanity” by Ronald Epstein
- AAFP early career toolkits
- The White Coat Investor (book, website, podcast)
- Wisconsin Medical Society
- Residency faculty and advisors
- Residents who graduated before you who are in practice

Questions?

Thank you!

Please feel free to reach out any time!

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