

4 must-haves for your first physician job after residency training

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In five years as a practicing ob-gyn, Brandi Ring, MD, has had a career's worth of titles—employee, practice partner and practice co-owner. Her career experience translates to a wealth of advice.

Dr. Ring—soon to begin a new position as associate medical director of the Center for Children and Women Southwest in Houston—has some insight on the "must-haves" for residents searching for their first job after training.

Follow these tips for nail Zoom interviews as a job-seeking resident physician.

The right support



Brandi Ring, MD

Who is doing your marketing? What about the referral process? Those are the types of questions you should be asking during interviews, Dr. Ring believes.

Support from your institution will cover your back and help you through a lot of areas that can get tricky for new physicians, including how you get paid.

"Is there someone to help you fill out billing correctly?" Dr. Ring said. "Is there someone to catch when you are not filling out billing properly or are you completely on your own? One of the things we underestimate is how we get paid. A lot of new doctors don't really understand it. It takes a year or two to figure out how you are getting paid and why you are getting paid what you are getting paid. If there's no support, nothing will ever change and you'll never be able to get that information."

A willing mentor

Even though you are entering practice, the need for guidance is still there.

"One of the most important things is a mentor at your primary practice location, someone you feel comfortable going to with the stupidest question you can imagine," Dr. Ring said. "You can find someone you are comfortable with in the interview process. You need someone—if you see something funny in the exam room—you can have them take a look. That support is critical in your first year as you develop your clinical independence and clinical acumen."

A desired career trajectory

The job you pick should put you on a path that gives you options. One example Dr. Ring offered is if you want to do research, will your employer allow you the time to do so?

"I tell residents when they are starting to look for their first job that they should write up a cover letter that tells their employer who they are, where they want to be in five years, where they want to be in 10 years, and what their life is going to look like," Dr. Ring said.

"Do they want to be a researcher? Do they want to be an academic? That first job is going to set them on the path to achieve those goals and certain jobs might not fall in line with them. It's harder to jump from private practice back into academics down the road. That was one of the challenges I found out the hard way."

Learn more from Dr. Ring about what it's like to specialize in obstetrics and gynecology.

A fit with your life plan

Like your career plan, when you take that first physician job out of residency you should look at what you want your personal life to look like in five or 10 years.

"It's not just kids and spouses. Do you have elderly parents that you are going to be taking care of?" she said. "How much are family arrangements going to require your time outside of work? If you have those family commitments and you've thought about them prior to accepting a job, it's easier to negotiate in child care, dependent care and what you are looking at in your benefit package."

For residents preparing to enter the job market, the AMA provides many resources to help physicians understand employment contracts, such as the AMA Career Planning Resource and a variety of model contracts e-books (free to AMA members).



Another valuable resource worth checking out is AMA's "Joining physician-led integrated systems: A guide to better decision making."