

4 things medical students should know about private practice

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Brendan Murphy

Senior News Writer

As a younger physician leading a private practice, Omar Maniya, MD, believes medical students should strongly consider the potential upsides of life in this practice setting as they consider their career futures.

Dr. Maniya took part in an episode of the “AMA Moving Medicine” video series and offered some key insights for medical students considering the private practice route after completing residency. Here’s a look at some key takeaways from Dr. Maniya, who is CEO of Maniya Health, a private practice in Hamilton, New Jersey.

You are blessed with autonomy

If you are the boss, the buck stops with you. And that, ultimately, is the case in the private practice setting, said Dr. Maniya, who was trained as an emergency physician.

“There’s a lot of suits making the decisions, and a lot of loss of a sense of efficacy on the part of physicians” when they are working for someone else. That being the case, Dr. Maniya said, “because you see a patient, you know the right way they have to be treated and the way you want to treat them, but you might not necessarily be able to do that. ... And I think all of those things are flipped on their head in private practice.”

Read more about why Dr. Maniya thrives as a private practice CEO.

Private practice isn’t for everyone

Private practice takes a certain personality type, one that is more self-sufficient, Dr. Maniya. He added that you don’t need to run a private practice to make a difference working in that setting.

“I feel like I was born to do this, but I want to just make a distinction,” Dr. Maniya said. “I don't think that ‘Go run a private practice’ is the right career path for every single person, because then society and American health care would be 800,000 or 900,000 individual practices. People have different things that they want out of life, but even if you're not running the place, being in a small organization, particularly in private practice, it's set up so that everyone can take individual leadership roles.”

It's hard to build a business

When you are the new kid on the block and lack name recognition, it can be tough to build a customer base.

“When you're a small private practice and people have heard of you in your local area but not really, you have to go win people's hearts and minds every, every single day,” Dr. Maniya said. “And so, that's tough. That means that ... I saw a patient on Friday who had a really swollen finger that I thought about all weekend and I was worried about. He had an appointment on Thursday, but I called him on Monday and I said, ‘Hey, I just wanted to check in. No co-pay for this. This is not a real visit. I just want to know how your finger's doing.’ And he was so grateful that I did that. And that's the sort of thing that wins hearts and minds.”

It takes astute clinical judgement, effective collaboration with colleagues, and innovative problem-solving to succeed in an independent setting that is often fluid, and the AMA offers the resources and support physicians need to both start and sustain success in private practice.

Find out more about the AMA Private Practice Physicians Section, which seeks to preserve the freedom, independence and integrity of private practice.

You can effect change

When you are running a practice, you can spearhead change much more quickly than you can as one part of a much larger organization.

“It's a lot easier to make change than you think it is,” Dr. Maniya said. “I will give you an example. When I was an emergency medicine resident, working in an emergency department, treating COVID patients, I, for nine months, did not know where to get a same-day COVID swab to keep myself, my family and my patients safe. It took nine months to get that figured out. Over here, it took 48 hours. We called up a lab company. We said, “Hey, we got a parking lot. Do you want to set up shop here all day, every day and do drive-through COVID testing for free? Because the CARES Act covers it.” And they said yes, and 48 hours later, we're doing drive-through COVID tests. That wasn't hard.”



“AMA Moving Medicine” highlights innovation and the emerging issues that impact physicians and public health today. You can catch every episode by subscribing to the AMA’s YouTube channel or the audio-only podcast version, which also features educational presentations and in-depth discussions.