Making the Rounds

Meet Your Match | What to do after your residency interview, with Chadd Kraus, DO, DrPH, CPE, FACEP

Dec 15, 2022

Listen on Simplecast

A physician residency interview is nerve wracking. So too is the ambiguity of the aftermath.

Ideally, your interview equips you with enough information to understand your fit with a program. If that’s not the case, there are steps that residency applicants can take to gain additional information about a program.

AMA member Chadd Kraus, DO, DrPH, is associate program director of the emergency medicine residency at Geisinger Medical Center and professor of emergency medicine at Geisinger Commonwealth School of Medicine. During a recent episode of the “AMA Making the Rounds” podcast, he shed some light on how medical students can go about gathering information about a program after their interviews.

Listen on the go to the full episode on Apple Podcasts, Spotify or anywhere podcasts are available.

Learn about location

Residency programs are going to highlight your fit in the medical setting. While life in a residency program’s location is very likely to come up, you might want to see for yourself.

“If it’s easy and feasible and practical to do so, to go to that community, to see what the area around the hospital is like, to see what housing in the area is like, to see what recreational opportunities, etc., are like in that community, I think it can be really helpful for an applicant in making their final decision,” Dr. Kraus said.

With the vast majority of residency interviews taking place virtually, some programs are offering “second looks,” a day on which applicants can come visit the program and see it for themselves. Kraus said at his program and others he has heard of that do a second look, that visit—or the choice to decline it—doesn’t affect how a program ranks an applicant.
“Those opportunities to come and visit in person are really a chance for the applicant to get, again, a better feel for the program, to get a better feel for the community,” he said.

To learn the fundamentals about any residency program, no online resource contains as much information as FREIDA™, the AMA Residency and Fellowship Database®, which includes more than 12,000 Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education-accredited residency programs, and offers a streamlined user experience.

**Use your network**

you want to understand what life is like in a residency program, who can give you better insight than recent graduates of that program?

“One excellent place to look ... is alumni from that program, or even employers who have hired alumni from those programs,” Dr. Kraus said. “So many programs have a long track record of putting graduates, alumni from their residency and fellowship programs, out into practice. And while some of those experiences may be more dated—someone may have trained in a program 10 years ago. But you still are able to, again, put more pieces of information into your decision and make a more informed decision.

“You can get a little bit more information about what, really, it's like to train in that program, what professional opportunities that alumni has had because they trained in that program. And again, the important thing to remember in all of this is that no program is perfect. No applicant is perfect. No program is perfect for an applicant.”

The AMA Road to Residency series provides medical students, international medical graduates and others with guidance on preparing for residency application, acing your residency interview, putting together your rank-order list and more.

**Trust your gut**

The interview aftermath offers a chance for applicants to overthink it. A gut feeling, Dr. Kraus said, has value. A useful exercise is to write down your initial impressions immediately after interviewing and then revisit them as you make a rank-order list can be a useful exercise.

“You should really use that post-interview time to write down some of your ‘gut feelings’ about the program,” he said.
“What were the things that really stood out to you? Was it a good feel? Did it meet the goals you have for your training program? Is it the type of environment that's going to be supportive and provide you with the resources you need to succeed as a resident and beyond?”

Check out these great tips to help fight rank-list uncertainty.