



Entering Practice: Pivotal Decisions for Residents

Q&A

Q: Academic vacancies seem to be scarce - are they all posted or do you have to ask around? (Cleveland Clinic, Florida)

A: Most are posted, but there some that are not. If you have a particular place or area you are interested in, I would definitely ask them. It never hurts to ask. Also, ask your program director as well, as they may have some information or have heard about some postings. – Dr. Jeffrey Kenkel

Q: In a solo private practice, how do you find coverage for your patients/practice when you're not in town? (Nassau University Medical Center)

A: Unless you're the only solo plastic surgeon in town, there's usually no problem getting coverage since the others will eventually need coverage as well. Usually I rotate the coverage among two or three surgeons. The situation will be different if you're setting up practice in a town where you'll be the sole plastic surgeon. You should consider this when choosing a practice location. – Dr. Clyde Ishii

A2: I have developed relationships with other plastic surgeons in town with whom I trust. We reciprocate office coverage. You will also need colleagues you can list as references when you reapply for privileges at hospitals and surgery centers. Get to know and be friends as best you can with the docs in your area. – Dr. Michael Edwards

Q: What are the best ways to make extra money during the lean years when starting a practice? (MayoClinic)

A: The first several years are critical for your ultimate financial success and yes, they can be lean. Primarily, keeping your overhead low is the most important thing you can do to survive. Borrowing money in the short term for living expenses is what most new surgeons do. I chose to get a part-time job at a local HMO hospital covering their general surgery call during the evening hours. – Dr. Robert Kachemeister

A2: During your early years in practice you'll have lots of spare time on your hands unless you join an established practice. Instead of trying to make extra money, I would use this time to set up your practice properly, prepare for the boards, meet your colleagues, introduce yourself to the ER staff/nurses, etc. You may let other plastic surgeons know you are available to assist on long cases, microsurgery, etc. If you apply yourself and are available the cases will come your way. – Dr. Clyde Ishii

A3: **In addition**, take great care of your patients from the time they call your office through the one year follow-up. Word of mouth is very important in maintaining patient flow. – Dr. Michael Edwards