

The Residency Interview

Interviewing at residency programs is a critical, complex stage that adds substance to the process of residency selection. All the months of research and preparation finally reward you with the chance to find out how the programs on your list actually compare with one another. Unlike the earlier stages in the residency selection process, which are focused on background research, the interview provides the opportunity to visit and observe the program and meet your potential colleagues and mentors.

The goals of the interviewers during the interview process are similar to your goals as a residency candidate. They want to confirm and expand upon the information that you provided in your application. They're also trying to determine how compatible you would be with the residents and faculty in the program. Just as you're trying to put your best foot forward, the representatives of the residency program want to show their program in the best possible light without painting a misleading picture. Like you, your interviewers are attempting to shape their rank order list (ROL) of candidates for the Match.

“Have fun! Interviewing for residency is WAY more fun than interviewing for med school.”

— KARLY PIPPITT, MD, FAAFP
SALT LAKE CITY, UT

Three Key Interview Objectives

1. Assess how compatible you are with the program and how well the program meets your stated goals
2. Convey your sense of compatibility with the program to the faculty members, residents, and staff who interview you
3. Assess the program's relative strengths and weaknesses so that you'll be able to structure a justifiable ROL

Conveying compatibility with the program goes beyond making a good impression. In a sense, you are “trying the program on,” or demonstrating to the faculty and residents of the program that you'd be a welcome addition. You may want to think of your interview as an exercise in role-playing, with you in the role of a recently matched resident in that program. But keep in mind that role-playing is not the same as acting. **In your eagerness to charm and impress your interviewers, don't be insincere.** Your interviewers want to find out who you really are. It doesn't serve anyone's purpose for you to give a false impression.

If you keep in mind that the interviewers have their own agenda to fulfill, you won't be dismayed or intimidated by the tougher questions they use to find out more about you. In fact, by thinking about what the interviewers are trying to get out of the interview, you can anticipate their likely questions and have well-thought-out answers ready.

Be careful not to let your attention to the third objective obscure the first two. Being prepared to address all three objectives will increase your chance of having a successful Match.

“Just be authentic. No sense in trying to mold yourself to fit the style or vision of a particular program. Residency is long and hard. You want to end up at a place that is the right fit for you.”

— ALEXA MIESES, MD, MPH
DURHAM, NC

Interview Scheduling Tips

Most programs participating in the National Resident Matching Program® (NRMP®) schedule interviews from September through January. You'll hear some differences of opinion as to whether it's better to be one of the first, middle, or last candidates that a program interviews, but no evidence demonstrates that timing makes a difference in how the program ranks a candidate. Since you don't have complete control over the timing of your interview, try not to be anxious about it.

The following tips will help you plan for productive and enjoyable interviews.

- **Pace yourself:** When interview offers start coming in, make sure to respond quickly, but don't fill up your entire schedule before you've had a chance to hear from the programs you're most interested in. Many applicants schedule too many interviews; end up running out of time, money, or interest; and drop interviews late in the season.
- **Take every interview seriously:** Some people suggest you should schedule the interview for your most highly valued program after you've had some experience with one or two interviews

in other programs. However, it's not recommended to treat any interviews as “practice interviews.” This is a waste of your time and the program's. Make sure any program at which you accept an interview is one you're seriously considering.

- **Confirm the details:** Contact programs to confirm your appointment about a week before your scheduled interview. This will give you an opportunity to confirm the place and time of your meeting, find out who you're going to meet first, and perhaps learn some other details (e.g., where you should park).
- **Allow ample time:** Typically, an interview will take one full day, though you may be invited to meet with one or more residents and faculty for dinner the night before. If your travel schedule permits, allow some time to tour the community and/or spend some informal time with the program's residents or faculty.
- **Involve your spouse/partner/significant other, if possible:** If your spouse/partner/significant other will be accompanying you on your interviews, you may want to plan additional time to assess other aspects of the program and community that are important to him or her. Some programs involve spouses/partners/significant others in the interview process (e.g., offering tours of the community or other organized activities), but not all do. Clarify this with the program ahead of time so that you know what to expect and how to organize your schedule.

Helpful Tools

The “For Students” section of the AAFP app offers tools to help you keep track of programs you’re interviewing with, take notes, and rate programs after you interview. It also includes a questions tool that allows you to curate and export a list of items to ask about during each interview.

The Electronic Residency Application Service (ERAS®) Interview Scheduler is a tool that allows programs to send interview invitations to applicants in the ERAS system and gives applicants the ability to schedule, waitlist, cancel, and decline interviews in MyERAS. However, programs that participate in ERAS don’t have to use the ERAS Interview Scheduler. Be sure you find out the preferred interview scheduling method for the programs in which you’re interested.

Well-being During Interview Season

From the time ERAS opens in September, the pressure of the Match process can feel overwhelming. Interview season, which often lasts from September to late January, is a common source of stress, particularly from a time-management standpoint. Booking travel, preparing for multiple interviews, and then traveling to them can make it difficult to practice self-care or feel present in clinical education experiences.

Although the Match is a high-stakes time, the following are some tips to safeguard your well-being during interview season.

- **Know your worth:** Remember that what happens during the Match is not what determines your worth as an individual. Trust the process and prepare as well as you can for it, but don’t let whatever ultimately happens define you or your future.
- **Put things in perspective:** Keep in mind that you’re interviewing programs as much as they’re interviewing you. Do what you can to give yourself a sense of control during the experience.

“Schedule interviews in chunks of two to three geographically approximate programs. Do them over a few days and then take a week or so off to recuperate. Eat healthily. Exercise. Practice difficult questions in advance so that responses are prepared and come easily, instead of lying in bed at night worrying about what you were just asked.”

— DAVID R. NORRIS, MD, MA, FAAFP, JACKSON, MS

- **Build yourself up:** Before you interview anywhere, remind yourself what you're most proud of accomplishing during medical school and reflect on all the ways you've grown throughout training. This exercise will build your confidence and self-compassion. It can also prepare you for behavioral interview questions, which can only be answered well by drawing on your personal experience.
- **Reach out for support:** Make time to connect with medical school peers and your support network of family, friends, and/or mentors. It can be helpful to talk about what you're going through with people who intimately understand the unique challenges of the Match, as well as people who simply know you well and are champions for your success.
- **Let go of mistakes:** Every interaction on the interview trail won't be perfect. If you come away from an interview feeling defeated, don't obsess over what you think went wrong. Simply identify what you'll do differently in the future to avoid a similar outcome.

Budgeting for Interview Season

Estimating and tracking your expenses before and during interviews will help you see where you can save money and limit expenses and where you just have to call the spending an investment in your future (which, of course, it is). **Unfortunately, expenses incurred during the search for a residency position in the Match aren't tax-deductible.** If you're keeping receipts, it will be for your own budgeting goals and needs. You can also share them with a tax professional if you have questions about your own circumstances and how they affect what, if any, deductions you might be eligible for.

Write a letter to yourself that is encouraging and lists your values at the start of the [interview] season. If you ever start to doubt yourself, re-read that letter."

— ALEXA MIESES, MD, MPH, DURHAM, NC

Budgeting Tips

- Don't spend money interviewing at many more programs than you need to. Interview expenses for both students and residencies have grown significantly in recent years, but without any corresponding positive outcome or benefit. Essentially, there are the same number of candidates, but candidates are interviewing at more programs, largely motivated by fear and misguided advising.
- Don't go on an interview if you don't plan on ranking the program. It's a waste of money and time.
- Find out if the residency program offers virtual interviews. This isn't a common practice yet, but some programs are piloting virtual interviews, especially in the first round.
- Coordinate interviews geographically, if possible. This can help you maximize your travel time, particularly if you're traveling far from home or school. However, be careful not to schedule so many back-to-back interviews that you're too tired to represent your best self.
- If you have a spouse/partner/significant other, strategize which locations you need to see together. He or she might not need or want to visit every program with you.

- Ask residency programs that invite you to interview what arrangements they make for interviewees. Family medicine programs are more likely than some specialties to offer assistance and support for travel-related expenses. Many offer lodging for your interview, and some even offer to cover other travel expenses.
- If you're interviewing in a city where you can stay with a friend or family member, take the opportunity to save yourself some money and spend quality time with someone who cares about you.
- If you're flying on an airline that charges extra for carry-on items or checked bags, try to pack light. You'll probably want to bring your interview outfit as a carry-on item anyway so you don't run the risk of not having it once you arrive.
- Most, if not all, interviews will include a dinner as part of the process. Some may offer breakfast and lunch, too. To save on meals the day before or the day after your interview, pack food or pick up a few essentials at a grocery store.

ACCORDING TO THE ASSOCIATION OF AMERICAN MEDICAL COLLEGES (AAMC), THE MATCH TYPICALLY COSTS STUDENTS WHO ARE NOT TRAVELING WIDELY APPROXIMATELY \$1,000, AT A MINIMUM. SOME STUDENTS MAY SPEND UP TO \$7,000.

Travel Rewards

Many medical students join airline and/or hotel rewards clubs and then dedicate a line of reward credit to their interview travel. This can be a great way to earn miles, extra hotel nights, or cash back when you travel for interviews, especially given the sign-up bonuses you get with most credit cards. Research these programs carefully so you understand when and how your rewards can be used. Also, be sure you know about any fees you might be charged.

Before you sign up for a credit card that gives travel rewards or cash back bonuses, read the fine print to ensure that the card will actually be helpful. It's also very important to pay off your balance each month. Credit cards—particularly cards that claim a 0% interest rate—can be unforgiving if you miss a payment or make only minimum payments on your balance. You could end up spending more on interest than your plane tickets would cost otherwise, especially if your card charges an annual fee for the rewards program.

Preparing for Your Interview

- Be prepared to **answer the following questions**:
 - Why did you choose family medicine?
 - Why did you choose to apply to this residency?
 - What are your strong points?
 - What are your weaknesses?
 - What are your overall career goals?
 - How would you describe yourself?
 - What do you like to do in your free time?
 - Describe a particularly satisfying or meaningful experience during your medical training. Why was it meaningful?
- Be prepared to **answer questions with specific examples and behaviors that showcase what you want them to understand about you**. Don't just make general statements. For example, rather than answering a question by saying, "I'm a team player," you should say, "Here's an example of how I have been able to work with others to accomplish a collective goal."
- Be prepared to **adjust to different interviewing styles**.
- Be prepared to **"interview yourself" if your interviewer doesn't ask you great questions**. Practice your personal narrative, but don't over-rehearse. Be familiar with what you're going to say, but don't practice so much that you don't answer questions genuinely. To avoid sounding scripted, pause before you answer questions you've been asked in multiple interviews. Jumping in too soon after an interviewer finishes a question can make your response seem canned.
- Be prepared **for the possibility of behavioral interviewing**, during which you might be presented with a case or situation and asked to respond as you would if the case/situation was really occurring.
- Be prepared to **ask your interviewers to give examples or anecdotes when you ask them questions**. It's absolutely appropriate to ask them to elaborate on an answer such as, "Yes, we can offer experience in that area of interest" by saying, "Can you give me an example of a resident who has done this and what it looked like?"

Think about what three things you'd like the program to know about you and make sure that message comes across clearly. Many questions can be anticipated, so think through your answers to those so you can spend your energy answering the more unusual questions. Also, prepare at least one question for each program that relates specifically to that location."

— DEB CLEMENTS, MD, FAAFP
CHICAGO, IL

DO YOUR RESEARCH

Before your interview, do some research to find out:

The residency program's mission and the patient population it serves

Residencies will want to hear that you're motivated to serve the patients that they care about so deeply. They would rather hear about your interest in their patients than your interest in their city or geographical area.

The names of your interviewers

Put their names into a literature search. You can impress interviewers—faculty, residents, or others—with knowledge of their areas of research. Plus, you may find out you have some common interests!

Information about the community

Visit the websites of the area's local news outlets and chamber of commerce and other sites that provide information about cultural offerings, community problems, the housing market, and job opportunities for your spouse/partner/significant other, if applicable.

YOUR INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Always bring a list of your own questions to an interview.

Write these down or save them in convenient place so that you'll be sure to ask them. Having specific questions about the program will show that you've really given some thought to the qualities of their program. Interviewers get tired of answering the same questions, just as you do, so try to think of a few that reflect your own special interests. Also, be aware of what the program has published on its website so that you don't ask the interviewers to repeat that information.

Decide beforehand which questions you want to ask which type of person (e.g., a question about the details of the call schedule might be reserved for the chief resident). On the other hand, there may be some questions you will want to ask everyone to determine whether there is any discrepancy, such as a question about attending and resident interactions.

During the interview, avoid dominating the conversation, but try to be an active participant in the interviewing process so your interviewer will have a sense of your interest in the program and your ability to formulate good questions.

Suggested Interview Questions

In Appendix B, you'll find an extensive list of suggested questions that you can ask during your residency interviews

to learn about a program's focus areas, strengths, and challenges so you can determine if it fits your preferences. These questions were developed with input from family medicine residency program directors and are organized by the following topic areas:

- General questions for faculty and program directors
- General questions for residents
- Academic or research careers
- Fellowships
- Global health and international service

- Integrative medicine
- Leadership and advocacy
- Osteopathic manipulative treatment
- Procedural skills
- Sports medicine
- Underserved populations and social determinants of health
- Well-being and culture
- Women's health and obstetrics

The AAFP app's "For Students" section lets you compile select suggested questions into one customized list and export or print it to take with you on the interview trail.

Tip:

Just before the interview, take time again to review the information you've received from the program and any material you may have gathered from other sources. Write down information you've found that you want to verify, as well as any initial impressions you may have formed based on the written material. Pay special attention to the names and positions of people you are likely to meet.

On Interview Day

In addition to the program director, you should talk to other faculty members, residents from different levels of training, and any other individual with whom you would have significant contact as a resident in that program. Often, the residency program will have prepared your itinerary, listing the names of the people you're going to meet and the amount of time—generally 20 to 30 minutes—allocated for each person. **Remember that all members of the faculty and staff may be critiquing you as soon as you start an interview.** You should see the hospital and clinic facilities during your interview. If you have free time, spend it in places where there are residents. This will give you a better feel for the actual working environment.

Remember your goals for the interview so you can establish the right frame of mind. You want to project a positive, confident, and enthusiastic demeanor without being overbearing or insincere.

During your residency interview, talk about your involvement in family medicine and show your enthusiasm for the specialty. Be specific and use details to describe what you find appealing about family medicine.



Interview Basics

- Before you leave your house or hotel room, make sure you have everything you need for the interview (e.g., your notes, paper and pen, tablet or laptop, an extra copy of your credentials).
- In terms of appearance, the general advice is to be neat and comfortable and wear professional clothing (e.g., a suit). Your outfit doesn't need to be expensive. Dress in a way that helps you feel confident. Avoid anything flashy that will compete with your personality.
- Be on time; better yet, be early. Allow yourself plenty of time to get through traffic, find a parking space, get to know your surroundings, catch your breath, and arrive before the appointed time for the interview.
- Be kind, courteous, and professional with everyone you meet, including the office staff, faculty, residents, and anyone associated with your visit. All of these people may have input on resident selection and could be your future colleagues.
- Try to be open and honest. It's okay to be nervous, but don't let your nervousness hide your personality.

PROHIBITED INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

According to federal law, you do not have to answer certain questions. It is illegal to make employment decisions on the basis of age, race, color, religion, sex (including pregnancy or child-rearing plans), national origin, age, disability, or genetic information. Some states and cities have discrimination laws that expand upon those of the federal government. To avoid charges of discrimination based on any of these protected classes, many employers do not ask questions that would elicit this type of information during an employment interview.

Residency programs are also prohibited from asking applicants to reveal the names, geographic locations, or other identifying information of programs to which they have applied or may apply. Programs also may not ask applicants whether they have applied to other specialties.

Parental Leave, Pregnancy, and Child-Rearing Plans

A typical concern during the interview process is questions related to pregnancy and child-rearing plans. The federal prohibition against discrimination on the basis of sex includes discrimination on the basis of pregnancy and child-rearing plans.

You do not have to answer questions related to marital status, number of children, or plans to have children.

During your interview, you may want to ask about the residency program's provisions for parental leave and/or child care responsibilities. Federal regulations provide for 12 weeks of maternity/paternity leave. State regulations may provide for more than 12 weeks of leave, so be sure to check the regulations in the state of each program to which you apply. Federal law does state,

however, that the amount of time allowed for maternity/paternity leave must be the same as that which is provided for sick or disability leave.

RESIDENCY INTERVIEW CHECKLISTS

You may have already formulated a list of standard questions that you want to ask every program for comparison, or you may have developed a checklist of program characteristics to fill out for each interview.

In Appendix C, you'll find a sample residency interview checklist created by J. Mack Worthington, MD, of the Department of Family Medicine at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville. It was developed specifically for the evaluation of family medicine residencies.



Taking Notes on Your Interview

Using standard questions in all of your interviews will help you compare responses across the multiple residency programs you visit. However, don't concentrate on your notes so much that you interfere with effective interchange during the interview. Instead, capture your impressions right after the interview. It's also a good idea to take some notes throughout the day to jog your memory about significant comments, concerns, particularly good points, or particularly bad points.

Designate a notebook to bring with you on the [interview] trail. Decide what your top 5 to 10 factors are when choosing a program, and, after every single interview (that night...don't delay!), write down how the program does or does not meet those factors for you. It may not seem like it at the time, but you simply will not remember the details of every program by February, and they will all start to blur together. Being able to review your same-day reactions will be immensely helpful when [you make] a rank order list."

— MICHELLE BYRNE, MD, MPH, CHICAGO, IL

“Some interview questions are importantly meant to challenge you, so try to recognize a challenging versus [an] inappropriate question. Remember that you’re interviewing them, too. If you are uncomfortable because it is inappropriate or seems too personal, then you can try to rephrase the question to make it more appropriate and [stated] in a way that you are willing to answer. If they press you and make you really uncomfortable, then you don’t want to work there. Consider excusing yourself from the interview day altogether with as much grace as possible.”

— KATIE HARTL, MD, TUCSON, AZ

Tips From the Experts

- “While academics still matter, family medicine also focuses on relationship and skillful communication from the outset. Once you’ve been invited to interview, the most important skills are demonstrating empathy, a willingness to work hard, and a commitment to team work.” – DEB CLEMENTS, MD, FAAFP, CHICAGO, IL
- “Make sure to get enough sleep, and don’t schedule yourself back to back for interviews, if you can help it.” – ANNA ASKARI, MD, MSBS, PALM DESERT, CA
- “Try to connect with family and friends wherever you go in the United States for interviews. Reflect on your vision and goals to accomplish in family medicine, as this will help rejuvenate you.” – ROMERO SANTIAGO, MD, MPH, SACRAMENTO, CA
- “You want to be approachable, but this is not a casual event. It is a job interview. Do not address or speak to the interviewer as if they are a close friend. Treat them with respect.” – ANNA BALABANOVA, MD, CHICAGO, IL
- “Leave interview dinners at a reasonable time. Do not feel rude for saying that you want to go get some rest to be fresh for the next day. Everyone else wants to leave at a reasonable time as well, and the residents want to go to bed, too!” – MICHELLE BYRNE, MD, MPH, CHICAGO, IL
- “State your discomfort. At the end of the day, if you are uncomfortable in an interview, when the program is trying to impress you, then you will likely be uncomfortable if you match there.” – BRITTANY WATSON, MD, CHARLOTTE, NC
- “You will find that your perfect fit program is one in which you enjoy the people that you are around, as well as [finding] motivation in thinking about the resources that a program has and connecting these to the passions and visions that you have as you progress forward in family medicine.” – ROMERO SANTIAGO, MD, MPH, SACRAMENTO, CA

Do's and Don'ts of Post-Interview Etiquette

Most medical students strive to remain professional during and after the residency interview process, but it can be challenging to figure out the rules for communication during the matching process versus the standard etiquette for interviews.

- **DO** be aware of your social media “footprint.” Adjust your behavior or privacy settings as needed during interview season.
- **DO** develop your own process for interview follow-up and be consistent.
- **DO** write down your impressions and update your checklist as soon as possible after the interview.
- **DO** send a thank you note to the program and/or to individuals with whom you interviewed to recognize their hospitality and to reaffirm your interest in the program, if applicable.
- **DO** be authentic in your communication. Personalize your message and build on the conversation you had in the interview.
- **DO** ask for more information if you discover several vital questions that you didn't have the opportunity to cover during the interview. This is perfectly acceptable, particularly if one of your interviewers—most likely, a resident—has invited you to contact him or her for more information.
- **DO** complete all materials in Electronic Residency Application Service (ERAS®) and the NRMP, and have current contact information available, including address, phone number(s), and email.
- **DO** understand that if you're invited by the program for a second visit, it can be made at your discretion and should not have a bearing on the program's ROL.
- **DO** realize that program directors and residency faculty are NOT permitted to solicit post-interview communication from applicants.
- **DO** be careful about sharing your ROL with others, including classmates, residents, your medical school, and residency faculty. You never know how the Match will turn out.

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- **DON'T** misinterpret post-interview follow-up from programs as a commitment from them. Determine your ROL based on your preferences.
 - **DON'T** send multiple generic emails to the same program director or residency faculty. Make your follow-up contact personal and ask direct questions about the program.
 - **DON'T** go back for a second visit unless you are invited. Residency programs are not prepared for uninvited guests.
 - **DON'T** post positive or negative comments on your social media accounts regarding your interviews.

Knowing NRMP rules that govern the matching process and your rights and responsibilities under the Match Participation Agreement will help you navigate the Match in a professional manner. The NRMP and the Council of Medical Specialty Societies (CMSS) have developed a tip sheet for the Match, available at www.nrmp.org/residency-applicant-checklist-match-tips.

“Definitely reach out to program directors for your top three to five choices with questions about anything important to you: the employment process, the benefits, the patient population, average procedure numbers, etc. Their responses will go a long way with setting your Match list. Easy and helpful communication means good fit.”

— KATIE HARTL, MD, TUCSON, AZ

Second Looks

Some programs discourage “second looks” and may interpret it as an insult if you request one. Try to get some insight into this issue when you talk to the residents in the program.

On the other hand, some programs will offer you the opportunity for a second look. Take advantage of the invitation if you think a second look would help. Be aware that programs may interpret your interest in coming back as an indication of your enthusiasm for the program.

Tips for Ranking Residency Programs

After you’ve completed your interviews, your next task is to assess the information you’ve collected and use it to establish your ROL. Determining how to ultimately rank the programs you visited will take time, and you’ll likely adjust the order multiple times as the due date for ROLs nears.

Here are some pointers to keep in mind as you evaluate and rank programs:

- **Take your time.** It can be helpful to put your notes aside for a while to give yourself some time to air your thoughts. Talk through your reasoning with advisers, friends, and family, but remember that the final decision is yours.
- **Don’t overestimate yourself.** Although you may think you will match at your top choice, you increase your chances of not matching by listing only one program.
- **Don’t underestimate yourself either.** If you really want to go somewhere in particular, rank that program first, even if you don’t think you have much chance. The program may not get its top 10 choices, and you might be number 11 on its list. Ranking a competitive program first won’t negatively influence your chances of matching to less competitive programs lower on your list. Remember, only you will know what rank you matched.
- **Don’t list programs that you don’t want.** If you do, you might end up at one of these programs. Decide whether it is better to be unmatched than to be matched to a program that you don’t want.
- **Rank according to your priorities.** Remember that the order in which you rank programs is crucial to the Match process. Upon casual consideration, one or more programs may seem fairly

equivalent to you. But if you take the time to consider carefully, you may discover reasons you would rank one program higher than another. The matching algorithm is fair, but it is also indifferent to anything other than the ROL provided. If you rank one program above another, it will put you in the first program if it can. It won't stop to consider that, after all, maybe geographic location is more important to you than a higher faculty-to-resident ratio.

- **Don't make your list too short.** On average, unmatched students' lists were shorter than matched students' lists. The average ROL for all Match applicants was 10.91 programs in 2018, up from only 7.46 in 2002.
- **Start over, if necessary.** If you've completed your interviews but decide that you still haven't found what you wanted, look at some more programs. Don't be too frustrated if this is necessary. It's better to put in a little extra legwork now than to have lingering doubts later.

Rank order lists are due in late February each year. Applicants and programs submit their ROLs through the NRMP.

"If you're lucky, you might just feel it in your gut. For people who are more cerebral, the right program is one in which you liked the other residents (believe me, that will become important when the going gets tough), and where you think you will get skills you want as an independent practicing physician."

— ALEXA MIESES, MD, MPH, DURHAM, NC

Ultimately, finding "the right program" means different things for each applicant. The choice may be difficult because your options seem equally great in many ways. If that's the case, don't downplay the more personal-level preferences that might make one program seem like more of a "fit" than another. **If you've been open-minded throughout the interview process and done your research, trust your instincts as you rank programs.** Also, know that whatever the outcome on Match day, you'll be on your path to becoming the physician you always wanted to be.

"Residency is a time of growth, change, and lots of hard work. It is essential to be in a place where you are supported well. For some people, the residency itself may provide ample support, but for others it is essential to make it a high priority to be in a place where you have outside support. If you know that you need nature on weekends, prioritize that. If you want to be a quick drive from your family, prioritize that. If you need to be in a city that has regular arts and cultural events you can tap into, prioritize that. Make sure that your rank order list is reflective of places you can build a healthy, happy life, even when training is tough."

— MICHELLE BYRNE, MD, MPH, CHICAGO, IL