

Welcome and thank you for your interest in the University of Nebraska Medical Center's new emergency medicine residency program. With the approval of the emergency medicine residency program at the University Nebraska Medical Center at the September, 2003 RRC meeting, you may be wondering: "Do we really need another emergency medicine residency program in the United States?" I don't know the answer in your region of the country, but I can say that here in the Great Plains region, the answer is yes. There has been a desperate need for an EM training program here for some time.

Despite encompassing nearly 20% of the landmass of the continental United States, the Great Plains region (all of Nebraska, South Dakota, North Dakota, Kansas; western Oklahoma and Texas; and eastern New Mexico, Colorado, Wyoming, and Montana) was without an emergency medicine residency program until now. Around the periphery of the region are EM training programs in Kansas City, Denver, Albuquerque, and Dallas; however, the majority of the residents from these programs have not chosen to practice in the Great Plains region.

In fact, we know that only about 1/3 of the practicing emergency physicians in the region are residency trained and board certified in emergency medicine. We also know that at our medical school, only about 1/3 of the students who have left the state to train in emergency medicine have returned to practice emergency medicine in the region. The best predictor of where you practice is where you train. Over the next several years we hope to populate the emergency departments in the Great Plains with residency-trained board certified emergency physicians trained at our program.

Your next question might be: "Why would I take a risk at applying to a newly approved EM residency program?" I think that is a fair question, and I think the answer will depend on your own individual risk tolerance, although I think the risk is small. The emergency medicine RRC is very stringent, and if a program is approved by the RRC, you can be assured that the clinical and educational resources are in place to prepare you to become a skilled board certified emergency physician. Our faculty members trained at six different residencies; have anywhere from 1-20 years of clinical experience; have been educating medical students, residents and practicing physicians for several years; and since January, 1997 have published 39 peer reviewed articles, presented at national and international meetings and have contributed 68 chapters to ten textbooks.

If you have a streak of the pioneer spirit in you, then I think the reward in coming here could be high. You will have the unique opportunity to help start a new program with new traditions; spend some of your time training in a rural hospital ED setting; help open, in the Fall of 2005, one of the largest EDs in the region (20,000 square feet, 16 exam rooms, 13 critical care rooms, 8 observation rooms, 4 trauma beds, with nearly 50,000 visits); and at the end of your career be able to look back and say that you made a difference in the emergency care provided in this region.

The web site is under construction, so come back often to visit. Be sure to see Dr. Wadman's comments in the program director's welcome, and call if you have any questions.

*Robert L. Muellleman*, MD, FACEP  
Professor and Chief  
Section of Emergency Medicine