

BURNOUT. The word gets thrown around a lot. I frequently meet with medical students interested in becoming an emergency physician. I usually ask what other physicians say when they hear of their interest in emergency medicine. One of the top 3 comments they get is something along the lines of: 'Aren't you afraid you are going to burn out?'

I think high burn out rates is one of the many urban legends about the practice of emergency medicine. The American Board of Emergency Medicine has a longitudinal survey of EM residency graduates. It indicates that the attrition rate in Emergency Medicine is similar to other medical specialties and that most EM physicians would select EM again as a career choice.

I don't want to minimize the risk of burnout. We have all felt it at the end of a bad day, a string of busy shifts or during certain periods in our lives. It is important to be aware of it, and take the necessary steps to prevent it, and deal with it aggressively if it shows up.

The reason I was thinking about burnout, is because Dr. Larry Lamberty, one our faculty members, is going to retire at the end of June, 2012. I will be losing one of my primary examples of how you can not only have a long career in EM, but also thrive in the practice. He can run circles around the new grads in terms of work RVUs/hour, is an effective teacher, and gets great patient satisfaction feedback. That's not to say he doesn't get grumpy sometimes, but we will be losing one the great role models of our specialty.

I don't want to get too sentimental, and I won't tell you how old Larry is, but I would like to recap some of his contributions. Dr. Lamberty originally trained in family medicine, and had a small town practice for several years before he saw the light. He became ABEM board certified in emergency medicine under the old grandfather clause. He has practiced emergency medicine for 27 years. He arrived at our program just before the turn of the century in 1999. Although I think he was a little 'crispy' when he got here, little did I realize how quickly he would get a second wind, and what a critical role he would play in the development of emergency medicine at UNMC.

Besides usually being the most clinically productive clinician, he has won a 'golden apple' for resident teaching, and was recently awarded a physician leadership award from the Nebraska Medical Center. The format of this letter is too short to allow me detail all of his contributions, let me just say he will be sorely missed. I think I can speak for everyone in the department in thanking Larry and wishing him and Elaine a great retirement. They both deserve it. If you see him, give him a pat on the back.

Academically, we continue to make scholarly contributions, with 20 peer review articles, 9 book chapters and numerous regional, national and international presentations this academic year.

I would like to thank the graduating residents for all of their hard work over the past 3 years, and all that they have contributed to the program traditions. They will be heading to Minnesota, North Dakota, Iowa, Washington DC and one will be staying here in Nebraska.

I would also like to welcome the new incoming residents. Every year the next class is best class, and it is no different this year. We had over 400 applicants this year, and the strength and depth of the applicant pool continues to improve. The new residents are coming to us from Iowa, Nebraska, Missouri, Pennsylvania and Wisconsin.

We are looking forward to welcoming Dr. Aaron Barksdale. He has been a faculty member at Truman Medical Center for the past 3 years, and like all good Nebraska kids, he eventually made his way back to Nebraska. He will be a great addition to the faculty, and I look forward to him developing his clinical and research career here.

We welcomed new babies from Drs. Cynthia Hernandez, Steven Schmidt, Thomas Spiegel, Eric Ernest and Eric Schneider and from our Education/Simulation Coordinator Kelly Deerson. Our big, happy family continues to get bigger.

In closing, even though Dr. Lamberty is irreplaceable, we will figure out a way to move forward, I'm looking forward to bigger and better things in the upcoming year. As always, thanks for your continued support.

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