



In Transition



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Be Your Own Best Patient: Stay Healthy and Enjoy Your Career



Here it is, almost four months since graduation. Finances are stabilizing, and you're adjusting well to your new role and group. Emergency medicine feels good right now. How do you keep it going? What things should you watch out for and what resources are there when times get tough? In this final issue of *In Transition* we'll help you answer these questions.

Although physicians often place their health at the end of their priority list, we all know it is key to our happiness as well as our career longevity. ACEP's Wellness Section and Well-Being Committee have developed resources to help emergency physicians. In [ACEP's Wellness Book for Emergency Physicians](#), topics such as burnout, health, diet, exercise and dealing with stressors are explored. Originally developed in 1995, this book has since been revised and expanded. The chapter on burnout is especially helpful, outlining the definition, causes, and symptoms of burnout. There is also an adult APGAR to check your level of wellness.

Although financial planning was addressed in previous *In Transition* issues (e-mail academicaffairs@acep.org if you'd like another copy), the topic deserves an extra mention here. By creating an appropriate budget you will minimize this universal stressor. It's tempting to pick up an extra shift for a little more money, but in the end it's not always worth it. Plan your finances appropriately so you can spend your free time on yourself, your friends, and your family- not on extra shifts.



Speaking of shift work, understanding and maintaining your circadian rhythm is also critical to your health and happiness. ACEP's policy [Emergency Physician Shift Work](#) summarizes the best approaches to healthier scheduling, and includes a link to its accompanying policy resource education paper [Circadian Rhythms and Shift Work](#). This paper analyzes sleep and shift work, and provides strategies to deal with this unavoidable aspect of the practice of emergency medicine.

One of the most stressful occurrences in a physician's life is being sued. In her article [Litigation Stress](#), and in the Wellness Book's chapter on litigation, Louise Andrew, MD, JD, FACEP, discusses malpractice litigation and offers physician coping strategies. The Medical Legal Committee's white paper, [So You Have Been Sued!](#), walks you step by step through the mechanics of a lawsuit. ACEP has numerous other resources on their [Medical-Legal](#) and [Wellness](#) pages, including information on their peer-to-peer counseling for those experiencing litigation stress. Individuals from the Wellness Section and the Well-being Committee have volunteered to speak with members that are experiencing professional burn-out.

Whether experienced by you or a colleague, physician impairment is more common than we'd like to admit. ACEP's policy statement [Physician Impairment](#) and the chapter in ACEP's Wellness book entitled [Physician Impairment](#) provide resources for dealing with this important issue.

Being part of a community is crucial to physician happiness and success. Becoming part of your hospital's community and spending time with your friends and family will add to your success as a physician. There are also many email list serve communities to which you can subscribe; one of the most popular in emergency medicine is [EMED-L](#). EMED-L is a world-wide community of over 1,000 emergency physicians, nurses, and medics discussing issues surrounding the practice of emergency medicine. Beware--you may receive many e-mails, so consider the DIGEST command to group the e-mails together. ACEP now has [The Central Line](#) which is another useful resource. Facebook is also becoming a valuable resource for web forums and networking.

Organized medicine is another community that not only provides abundant resources and advice, but also a large pool of colleagues and future friends. We hope you continue to use the Section of Young Physicians to develop your community while discovering the community of ACEP. Be sure to attend your chapter's annual and local meetings. Chapter and education meeting information can be found on [ACEP's Master Calendar](#) or by contacting your [State Chapter](#).

This is the final issue of the *In Transition* series. If you have any suggestions or comments, please e-mail them to YPS staff liaison [Marjorie Geist](#), to improve this series for next year's graduating residents. We hope you found the *In Transition* monthly series helpful, and we wish you success in your emergency medicine career.

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