

Preface

Many physicians are in search of opportunities to enrich their professional lives by obtaining additional experiences and education outside of their area of practice as a way to help their patients, provide leadership in healthcare, advance their careers, or perhaps pursue excellence in a new area or field. Some physicians will choose to pursue another degree, while others will seek to expand their horizons in non-academic settings such as public service, business, education, and organized medicine.

This book fulfills an unmet need by serving as a practical guide and offering advice on how to make sense of one's career goals, what questions to ask, and how to position oneself for success. Many medical students, residents, fellows, and physicians in practice want to continue their clinical work and provide direct care for patients, while pursuing other interests. This book discusses how mentorship, formal and informal educational opportunities, volunteer and public service can enrich your professional life. We begin with an overview of healthcare today and a discussion of the relationship between personality type and job satisfaction.

Our goal is to guide you through the process of formulating concrete questions, which can then help you devise a short- and long-term career plan. A practicing physician might ask herself, "I would like to work more closely toward improving the overall health of my community – should I get an MPH degree?" A resident-physician might be wondering what the best way would be to get involved with organized medicine, and how to find good mentors. A medical student might wonder, "What kind of meaningful volunteer work should I pursue to enrich and guide my educational experiences and help me choose a specialty?" Others with an interest in business or consulting might want to know the utility of pursuing an MBA degree. This book offers advice to individuals seeking to pursue a variety of professional endeavors both within and outside of medicine.

We include a few first-hand accounts of those physicians who have distinguished themselves in a variety of career pursuits outside of traditional career paths. They tell their stories and discuss their paths toward success. We believe that there is currently no other source that addresses these important issues, and hope that you and other medical students, residents, fellows, and practicing physicians find this book a useful tool in pursuing your dreams – wherever they may take you.

Boston, MA, USA
Nashville, TN, USA

Richard D. Urman, MD, MBA
Jesse M. Ehrenfeld, MD, MPH



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Urman, R.D.; Ehrenfeld, J.M. (Eds.)

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