



MCEP Residency Spotlight: McLaren Oakland

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Quick Facts

Location

Pontiac, MI

Length

3 years

Training Site

Community

ED Type

Level II Trauma
Center

Shift Length

10 hours

Shifts per Month

16-18 shifts

Elective Weeks

4 weeks

Critical Care

12 weeks

Moonlighting

Yes

Ask the Program Director: Dr. David Minter, D.O.

What Distinguishes Your EM Program from Others?

What distinguishes our program is the variety and complexity of the pathology combined with the learning environment. Our indigent patient population is full of complex medical cases that create daily challenges. Our trauma population is comparable to major metropolitan cities in its blunt to penetrating ratio. This exposure combined with a supportive learning environment, that values resident autonomy, creates a synergy for resident growth that is unmatched. It's like Pontiac, MI was designed to create exceptional emergency medicine physicians.

How Do 3-Year vs. 4-Year EM Residencies Differ in Benefits?

4-year residencies are required to offer an additional educational/specialty opportunity which mandates the addition of time. Medical students should weigh the opportunity cost of the additional year of training (time and lost wages) to their overall career goals. I certainly find the idea of having a niche in emergency medicine attractive. I personally completed a 5-year residency in internal medicine and emergency medicine. To promote the benefits of an additional educational goal, our 3-year residency is offering scholarly tracks (medical education, observation medicine, sports medicine, EMS, etc.) to help create a niche without the additional year.

Are There Lesser-Known Aspects of Your Program That You Could Share?

When medical students are looking for hospital learning environments, they typically look at university hospitals, community hospitals, urban centers. We have the benefits of all three. We have a friendly one-on-one learning environment where everyone knows who you are, like a community center. We have the pathology and cultural diversity of a large urban center and all the institutional benefits of university affiliation with Michigan State University. Additionally, we are one of the oldest osteopathic emergency medicine residencies in the country, as well as the home of the formation of emergency medicine as a specialty (see Pontiac–Alexandria plan).

What Is Your Approach to USMLE/COMLEX Step 1 Scores and the Pass/Fail Change?

At the end of the day, learners need to pass boards, whether this be COMPLEX/USMLE or specialty boards. There are a multitude of other factors that indicate a thriving and effective emergency physician. To me, the change has not made a significant difference, as it is only a small component in our decision process when we are deciding who will be a good fit for our program.

Can You Detail the Research Opportunities Within Your Program?

Our residency requires the completion of either original research or a quality improvement project; and, to be honest, most of our residents participate in quality improvement projects. Quality improvement focuses on analyzing a current process and implementing potential solutions to determine an effective change at a local level. Since many of our learners are new to this process, we have dedicated core faculty staff who assist residents with converting ideas into actionable projects and advise them through the process.

What Qualities Do You Look for in Residency Applicants?

I know this idea sounds rather vague, but since we have such a unique training environment, we look for residents that are a good "fit" for our culture. Unlike most hospital programs I have worked in, everyone's congenial to each other here. Medical knowledge is of course important, but this can be taught/learned over time. We are a small program with many other residencies that we interact and exchange knowledge with (IM, Ortho, ENT, FP, Cardio, Critical Care, etc). I've never seen a place where this happens with this little friction or conflict. So, in reviewing an applicant, I think about how they would support and maintain our culture; for our program, this is a priority.

What Makes an Applicant Stand Out in Your Residency Selection Process?

Demonstration of medical knowledge, as well as professionalism, are always encouraged. Resident professionalism, and specifically effective, respectful communication, are the hardest areas to teach and remediate. So, it is helpful if they area resident is already accomplished in these areas. Our program seems to attract residents that are interested in medical education, so an interest in this area is a bonus. We offer several opportunities for residents to engage in teaching (medical students, younger learners, other residency programs) and, external to the program, in local medical schools.

What is the Structure of Mentorship Within Your EM Program?

We offer a multitude of structured mentor relationships, such as a "Big Sib" program, advisors, and academic coaching. To focus specifically on mentorship, we have found that it is more beneficial when both parties are engaged in the process. Thus, we offer formal training to mentors and mentees to ensure success. To assist with the matching process, we have a brochure of all of our faculty, which includes a self-evaluation from each mentor. This allows residents the option to choose a mentor whose strengths best match the resident's intentions for the relationship. We also pair a 3rd year resident with a 1st year resident in the "Big Sib" program to assist with the transition from medical student to resident and the management of new roles in the first year of residency.

How Does Your EM Program Support Resident Wellness?

Wellness is the bedrock that ensures a resident is mentally and physically fit to be at their best. We offer regularly scheduled events where our resident cohorts can bond and unwind. Some are institutionally supported and some are resident and attending driven. We have dedicated core faculty staff who have specialized training in wellness to assist in these endeavors and who can provide coaching for residents that are having issues with work-life balance. Additionally, we have a wellness committee, consisting of a core faculty member and residents, to review and suggest wellness activities and improvements. Historically, our program has attracted strong female leaders; to maintain this tradition, we have implemented a "Women in Medicine" wellness event with some of our female faculty members.

What Community Engagement Opportunities Do Residents Have?

We offer several opportunities for community engagement, such as community events, health expos, screening days, non-profit volunteer opportunities, and working with local schools. They are not required of our residents, as their time is limited, but the opportunities exist.

How Do You Prepare Residents for Leadership Roles in EM?

We prepare our residents for leadership roles by allowing them to be active leaders. Our residents are given as much autonomy as can safely be allowed. We do not have a hierarchy in the complexity of cases they can pick up, and they are taught to take ownership for their patients. The relationship between attending and resident in decision making is more collaborative in nature, benefiting from the attending's experience. In the resident's third-year, we expect them to act as a junior attending, not only overseeing their own patients, but also helping junior learners as needed and minding the department as a whole. The most consistent feedback we get from graduating residents is how comfortable they feel as an attending on day one.

We also allow 3rd year residents to apply to be chief residents. We typically have an academic chief and an administrative chief resident – to promote leadership roles. There are also elective opportunities to participate in hospital administration.

For more information on the McLaren Oakland Residency, please go to
<https://www.mclaren.org/gme-medical-education/mclaren-residency-programs/15>

Program Information provided via the EMRA Match tool

<https://webapps.acep.org/match#/>

**Thank you Dr. David Minter for taking the time to complete our
MCEP Spotlight Interview!**