PREFACE

Career Development

Training in general surgery and colon and rectal surgery prepares us for the treatment and management of our patients. Unfortunately, few residency programs prepare their trainees for the next step—getting a job. There are few written resources available, and most of us rely on our mentors and friends for advice and guidance. The same is true for our colleagues who have chosen to redefine their career (e.g., academics to private practice, or military practice to academics). This issue of *Clinics in Colon and Rectal Surgery* is devoted to career development, with a goal to provide the reader with defined career options in colon and rectal surgery, and basic information to help develop a successful and satisfying career.

A colon and rectal surgery career starts with an approved training program (Colon and Rectal Surgery

residency or “fellowship”). In this issue’s first article, a current trainee describes her experience and offers advice for future applicants to our specialty. After training, there are various career opportunities for colon and rectal surgeons in private practice, clinic practice, the military, and academics. The next two articles define these career paths and give insight into the risks and benefits of each. When considering job opportunities, these articles provide the reader with a broad overview of immediate and long-term considerations to facilitate an informed career decision.

Within academic surgery, there are many career opportunities for colon and rectal surgeons. The different academic tracks offered at most university medical centers include clinical surgeon, clinical scholar, surgical educator, and surgical scientist. Each of these career tracks has specific job expectations and requirements for advancement. One of these is research. The article on research in academia and education provides additional tools and advice on how to optimize your efforts into a successful academic career.

An important component of any medical career is participation in professional societies. Therefore, we have included an article which provides information on the societies of importance to colon and rectal surgery and reasons for participation.

When considering job opportunities, a fundamental knowledge of contracts and contract contents helps the applicant understand the terms of hire. Specific items to consider are qualifications, remuneration, hidden costs, restrictive covenants, and even termination of contract. Signing a contract means that you understand and agree with its contents and terms, and is a legally binding document. It is recommended that all applicants have contracts reviewed by a qualified attorney to ensure that the best possible circumstances exist to ensure a successful transition and career in your new job. Elizabeth Snelson and Chris Moore, both practicing attorneys, provide some basic information to assist our readers.

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Retirement is something we are all aware of, but for most young colon and rectal surgeons, it is limited to financial considerations. This is somewhat narrow minded and does not take into consideration personal factors that we may not consider early in our careers. Retirement is a personal and individual event. The questions of when, why, and how are more specific to the individual and are shaped by our life experience, desires, personal and family commitments, as well as financial considerations.

In keeping with *Clinic's* usual focus, we have also included an article of original research on the effects of chemotherapy on primary rectal tumors.

I am grateful to my colleagues who have contributed to this issue. These topics are not readily found or reviewed elsewhere in the literature; therefore, few references are listed. Nevertheless, the authors, based on their experiences and knowledge gained through their own career choices and the mentoring of multiple colleagues and trainees, have provided guidance and the basic tools to achieve a successful and rewarding career in colon and rectal surgery.

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Guest Editor