

Caveats for Emergency Medicine Physicians and PAs

(Borrowed from James Roberts, MD)

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- Always put the patient's well-being and comfort and the family's expectations foremost in your plans.
- You are no longer a resident; the buck stops with you.
- Introduce yourself to all patients, apologize for the wait and hand out your business card.
- You are the team leader. Portray a positive attitude and professional demeanor, and set the tone for the entire staff. A positive attitude is a force multiplier.
- Deal with the reality that you will never ever have enough time, personnel, equipment, or backup to make this job easy.
- Always, always, always be nice to patients and families but also to the cleaning lady, secretary, security guard, nurse, practice manager, cafeteria worker and x-ray tech.
- Be especially nice to old people; you will be one in a heartbeat.
- Talk to your patients, talk to them again, and always, always, always talk to the family.
- Try to sit down whenever possible; it shows the patient you are giving him your time and attention.
- Do not argue with patients over nonissues, such as a few Percocet, an x-ray or blood test, or even admission to the hospital if it's a close call.
- Resist the temptation to always be correct or vindicated.
- Don't publicly criticize another physician, another hospital, or some other physician's views. Don't argue in front of patients or with residents and attendings from other departments.
- Eschew hubris at all times. You're not that good, smart, or accomplished to be inflexible or pious with a colleague or patient.
- Instill confidence in nurses, residents and medical students.
- Call a consultant for a medical problem or situation that is going poorly or if you are in over your head.
- Remember that charting, documentation, and billing issues are part of the annoying routine that pays your salary and reduces risk.
- Don't write anything on the chart you would not want to see published in the newspaper or on the web.
- Remember this: You will be sued.
- Be self-starting, innovative, and self-sufficient.
- Don't miss a shift, and show up on time.
- Be ready to help a colleague who asks for a schedule switch.
- Offer everybody a cup of coffee or a cold drink.
- A coloring book, lollipop or a warm blanket go a long, long way.
- Be careful with alcohol and your ready access to Vicodin and Percocet.
- Go to your chief with problems - and solutions.