



Welcome to Emergency Medicine and RAMS! Reflections on the NRMP Match 2023

To our new colleagues who just matched into emergency medicine, [SAEM RAMS](#) wants to congratulate you on joining an incredibly rewarding specialty. Through your diversity, our specialty will continue to evolve in novel directions; you are entering a field that excels in teamwork, critical thinking, and procedural skills. As EM physicians, we are the safety net of the health system; there for our patients 24 hours a day, 7 days of the week, and 365 days of the year.

[SAEM RAMS](#) is proud to partner with you through our numerous committees, interest groups, and academies to help you find your niche within EM. We hope these opportunities provide you with mentorship to explore a career in academics while also helping you develop your leadership skills. You will connect with leaders in our field who are eager to help in your leadership development. Additionally, [SAEM RAMS](#) has [resident](#)- and [medical-student](#)-focused Career Roadmaps to help you find your way within our organization and your sub-specialization of interest. Emergency medicine is positioned strategically to continue fulfilling the needs of our communities and providing exciting career opportunities for physicians. You may be aware of the recent National Resident Matching Program (NRMP) results that left 555 unfilled EM residency positions and has garnered attention nationwide. There are numerous variables to consider when looking at how we got here and to understand why we, as the future leaders of our specialty, remain so enthusiastic about our choice to be emergency medicine physicians.

Some people may claim that practicing EM over the past three years has been stressful. We weathered the height of the COVID-19 pandemic and emerged as the heroic leaders on the front lines, working to save lives and discovering the novel management of this emerging disease. We have witnessed staffing shortages, increased acuity, and boarding. We often see and treat patients beyond the typical walls of the emergency department (ED), such as seeing patients in the waiting room. When our students rotate through the ED, these challenges may color their experience of our specialty. While early in the pandemic, we had an increasing number of students applying to EM, the chronicity of some of the challenges may have turned some students away from our specialty. Despite these challenges, EM physicians hold the unique opportunity to lead multidisciplinary teams in a dynamic environment to care for patients on what is often the worst day of their lives. To make a distinct impact on people from all stages of life, backgrounds, and ability to access health care outside of our walls is a privilege



that brings tremendous purpose to many. What initially drew many of us to this noble specialty is stronger today than ever before. As a specialty and organization, we have work to do. [SAEM RAMS](#) will continue to focus on how to improve the educational opportunities and leadership development for our members and will collaborate with other national organizations to continue advancing our specialty.

Some students have expressed concern about job prospects when entering our specialty. The EM Workforce Report (conducted before the COVID-19 pandemic) in 2021 predicted a median surplus of nearly 8,000 EM physicians by 2030.¹ The conclusions notably drew concern. While the intentions of this report were well-meaning, no one could have predicted the effects of the pandemic. What failed to garner appropriate attention: depending on the modeled attrition rate, we could actually be facing a *shortage* of EM physicians by 2030.¹ Since completion of the study, we have seen a higher attrition rate resulting from the pandemic which will certainly decrease the theoretical surplus. Another study performed a reanalysis of EM workforce attrition rates from 2013 to 2019 and concluded a 5% attrition rate compared to 3% in the original workforce study.² Furthermore, as we continue to advance patient care, our patients are likely to live longer with increasing complexity, necessitating more physicians to take care of them. At our residency programs, we were excited to learn that the seniors were able to find positions across all areas of the specialty. As is true of all predictive models, the results are dependent on the variables' input and the pandemic has significantly impacted these variables. SAEM's Workforce Committee, with [SAEM RAMS'](#) representation, is looking at updated analysis of the workforce prediction and will continue to keep our members informed. We are collaborating with many other groups in our specialty to proactively monitor and mitigate any issues that may arise.

Over the past five years, there has been a significant increase in the number of residency positions available. This is multifactorial. It is in part due to the merging of osteopathic and allopathic into a single accreditation system. Existing residencies have also expanded their residency positions to account for increasing patient volumes. Over the same time period, EM has had more than a 10% drop in applicants, with the majority coming from allopathic seniors.³ [SAEM RAMS](#) has partnered with our specialty's other national organizations in dialogue with the ACGME to provide evidence-based updated requirements of what it means to train a quality EM physician. We are hopeful that our recommendations will be taken into consideration with the goal of raising the standards of our specialty even higher and ultimately improving patient care.



What is [SAEM RAMS](#) doing to address these issues? We are launching the [SAEM RAMS](#) Regional Ambassador Program to reach out to local emergency medicine interest groups (EMIG) to provide support from our organization and specialty. We will be providing mentorship opportunities and avenues for students to get involved with [SAEM RAMS](#) so that they may learn more about academic EM. [SAEM RAMS](#) is an integral part of a multiorganizational task force that is analyzing factors that led to the large number of initially unfilled residency spots and working towards practical strategies to address them. Our board members also have a seat at the table within the SAEM Workforce Committee critically appraising more recent workforce data since the pandemic. We are working to understand the factors that led students to not apply into EM so that we can better inform and advise future students. We hope to message our findings and share what we love about EM through a variety of marketing strategies so that students are better informed when it comes to choosing a specialty.

What can you do? **Advocate** on behalf of your specialty on the issues that are important to you. **Get involved** with [SAEM RAMS](#). **Serve as mentors** to your medical students so that they can make a truly informed decision about what it means to be an EM physician. Lastly, **be an ambassador** for our amazing specialty and **share what you love** about EM with your students. Emergency Medicine remains a fulfilling career full of creative and diverse opportunities. [SAEM RAMS](#) is certain that the **future is bright for our specialty**.

Thank you for all you do.

¹ [https://www.annemergmed.com/article/S0196-0644\(21\)00439-X/fulltext](https://www.annemergmed.com/article/S0196-0644(21)00439-X/fulltext)

² [https://www.annemergmed.com/article/S0196-0644\(22\)00280-3/fulltext#%20](https://www.annemergmed.com/article/S0196-0644(22)00280-3/fulltext#%20)

³ <https://www.nrmp.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/03/2023-Advance-Data-Tables-FINAL.pdf>