

# Choosing Your First Job

## Orthopaedic Surgery Practice Types

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## Choosing Your First Orthopaedic Surgery Job

- A decision unlike other career decisions you have made up to this point
- Very different from choosing training programs (medical school, residency, etc...)
- Not data driven
- Heavily relies on word-of-mouth, gut feelings, etc...
- We make a lot of mistakes

*50-70% of orthopaedic surgeons change jobs within the first 5 years of entering practice*

## Factors to Consider

- Location – often the primary consideration
  - Spouse/family, cost of living, quality of schools
- Mentors
- Specialty, desired scope of practice
- Compensation
  - Payer mix, local competition, tort reform
- Academic interests
- Practice Type

## Practice Types

- Solo
- Single specialty group
- Multi specialty group
- Hospital-based, employed
- Academic
- Military
  
- Supported practices
  - University, government, hospital, HMO
- Unsupported practices
  - No guarantee of compensation or expenses

*You can have a satisfying, productive career in any of these practice models*

## Solo Practice

- Autonomy on scope of practice, work hours, where you practice, etc...
- You are responsible for most of the revenue generated, which can be financially rewarding
- Some areas may have shrinking provider networks
- Negotiating power with insurance companies may be problematic
- Overhead costs are increasing (staffing, insurance)
- Regulatory requirement may be onerous (EMR, quality reporting, ICD 10)
- Administrative responsibilities

## Single Specialty Group

- Most common orthopaedic practice setting
- Practice size can vary
- Ancillary services are common
- Share overhead, call schedule
- May employ other musculoskeletal physicians (PM&R, sports medicine, etc...)
- Referrals from community, emergency departments

## Multi-Specialty Group

- Partner with other specialties
- Provides a steady referral source
- Orthopaedic surgeons may subsidize lower reimbursed specialties in the group (overhead, etc...)
- May be increased ease of practice with a common EMR, access to imaging, therapy notes etc...

## Academic Practice

- Teaching and research responsibilities
- May be on a tenure track (clinical or research)
- Models vary, often a multi specialty group practice
  - May be paid on production or may be salaried
  - Protected academic time also varies
- Can have additional overhead (e.g.. dean's tax)
- Often allows for a more narrow scope of practice

## Employed Orthopaedic Surgeons – a hot topic

A survey by the AAOS Health Care Systems Committee found the following reasons were given for considering hospital employment:

- 68% - stable or improved compensation
- 67% - lower administrative burden
- 50% - improved lifestyle
- 46% - off loading compliance and regulatory burden to hospital staff
- 28% - better contracting and referrals
- 23% - improved coordination/integration of care
- 22% - better access to capital/equipment/personnel
- 20% - access to hospital marketing staff and funds
- 16% - other
- 11% - improved location

## Challenges with Hospital Employment

- Surgeon may not be involved in OR and office staffing decisions.
- Support staff can rotate, reducing OR and office efficiency
- Surgeons have variable input in time-off, OR allocation, therapy availability, etc...

## Physician Compensation Structure

- Salary
  - May receive bonuses based on a variety of metrics
  - May or may not be paid for time on call
- Production (with or without a base salary)
  - Earned on work done
    - Relative value unit (RVU)
    - Insulates individual physician from patient non-payment
  - Earned on income
    - Billing/collections
    - Favors established physicians or physicians who do the most costly procedures

## Employment Contract

- Board certification and licensing requirements
- Length of contract
- Duties (including scope of practice, location, call obligations)
- Conditions of termination, dispute resolution
- Non-compete clause/ restrictive covenant
- Compensation structure (including compensation for call)
- Terms of partnership
- Malpractice and tail coverage
- OR block time
- Staffing, office resources
- Benefits (vacation, medical/life/disability insurance, retirement, professional dues etc...)

## Take Home Messages

- It is never too early to start looking for a job
- Talk to as many people as possible, many jobs are found through word-of-mouth
- Your interests/priorities may change during fellowship, so consider waiting to sign a contract until you are in fellowship
- Think about what you need/want in terms of practice location, spouse considerations, lifestyle, size of practice and case volume, scope of practice, and support from colleagues.
- You may do well any one of several different practice types if the above considerations are a good fit.

## AAOS Now: Life After Fellowship: Pearls and Pitfalls

- **Dr. Leesa Galatz:** That first year is very stressful. Not only are you usually moving to another community, but you are facing an entirely different level of responsibility. It is a year of tremendous learning and significant adjustment.

- **Dr. Dan Riew:** You have to have the three As: availability, affability, and ability. You've got to be around and available to anybody and everybody. You're going out and talking to referring doctors, putting yourself forward as an expert, even though you're still very green. For you to be able to come up with the optimal treatment every single time is going to be impossible.
- **Dr. Kenneth Egol:** I tell all of our residents not to worry or think about a job based on the amount of money offered. It's about the people, the situation, and the opportunity for growth. The money and the financial reward will come with quality performance.

The screenshot shows the AAOS website with the following elements:

- Header:** AAOS AMERICAN ACADEMY OF ORTHOPAEDIC SURGEONS and AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF ORTHOPAEDIC SURGEONS. Includes a search bar and user links for "My AAOS/Log In" and "My Cart".
- Navigation:** Annual Meeting, Periodicals, Education, Quality, Research, Advocacy, Membership, About, and Store.
- Breadcrumbs:** Home / Advocacy / Get Involved / Resident Information.
- Section Header:** Advocacy.
- Navigation Menu:**
  - > Federal Advocacy
  - > State Activities
  - > Orthopaedic PAC
  - > Get Involved
    - Staff & Contact Information
    - Legislative Action Center
    - Resident Information
      - Practice Resources
      - Patient Information
      - Advocacy Now Newsletter
      - Council on Advocacy
      - NOLC
      - AAOS Liaison Program

- Advertisements:** JAAOS Call for Research.
- Practice Resources:**
- Upcoming Education:** Free Webinar. Save the Date: June 21, 2016. PQRs Nuts & Bolts. Course Director: Brian McCardel, MD. Registration Opening Soon!
- Regulatory and Financial Management:** From financial management to legal matters, find the resources you need to run your practice effectively in the evolving physician reimbursement landscape.
  - Meaningful Use
  - HIPAA Compliance
  - MACRA MIPS APMS
  - Contract Negotiations
  - Medical Record Audits
- Practice Management:** Find information to help you operate and staff your orthopaedic practice.
  - Solo Practice
  - Hospital Employed
  - Principal Strategic Options for Orthopaedists to Remain Independent in our Rapidly Evolving Health Care System White Paper
  - Practice Evaluation Inventory - Find the right practice with this hands-on tool.
 Practice Management Advice Center.
- Image:** A photograph of the US Capitol building.
- Text:** BEST PRACTICE.

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