

dear residents

A Different Kind of Wild

May 17, 2026

Dear Residents,

The graduation event never ceases to remind me of the time I dropped my older daughter off at college. It felt like I was leaving her in the wild. I had no frame of reference because I had lived with my parents until I graduated from medical school.

I know that your graduation from residency is very different. You are much further along in life. You have seen much of it: the rawness of illness, the codes, the deaths, the cancer, the sepsis, the wounds, the bleeding. You have been hungry, tired and sleep deprived. You have felt the weight of making critical decisions.

But there are still guardrails in residency.

The guardrails of residency, however, are complicated. Training protects you in important ways. There are attendings, co-residents, nurses, pharmacists, consultants and systems that help carry the weight with you. There is supervision, structure and a kind of containment that exists because you are still learning within a community. At the same time, residency often asks you to surrender agency in ways that can feel difficult and exhausting. Your schedules are controlled by others. Your time rarely feels fully your own. You may lead a code overnight and still have limited control over prescribing a controlled medication. Residency asks you to carry immense responsibility while still living within a highly regulated system.

Leaving residency means entering a different kind of wild. Some of the guardrails become fewer. The containment changes. There is more freedom, but also more exposure. I worry that there will not be a weekly Fuel Gauge checking on you. That EROC may simply not exist where you are headed. That you will push through exhaustion quietly because that is what physicians often do. That money, loan repayment and obligations to others will begin to weigh on you differently.

Accordingly, I worry about you much in the same way I worried about my daughter.

I know that you are prepared for the next step. You are more than competent. You are superbly trained, confident and trustworthy physicians. But I still worry.

Perhaps that is simply what happens when you have watched people grow for years, watched them dip, recover, mature and become the physicians they hoped to become. Part of you never stops feeling responsible for them, even after they leave.

And so, as you graduate, I hope you remember something important: independence does not mean isolation. Stay connected to one another. Continue to ask for help. Continue to check on your colleagues.

Continue to make space in your lives for rest, friendship, reflection and joy. The habits you build now around caring for yourselves and one another will matter enormously over the next decades of your careers.

You leave residency with remarkable clinical knowledge and skill. But I hope you also leave with something quieter and equally important: the ability to remain humane in a profession that can sometimes pull people away from themselves.

We are very proud of you.

Dino Kazi