

Attracting the best and brightest to careers in neurology

Donald H. Silberberg

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Widespread interest in the neurosciences has led to the development of undergraduate college majors in neuroscience so that many students entering medical school are very interested in a career in our field. Exposure to clinical neurology at the University of Pennsylvania School of Medicine (PennMed) begins with observation of real patients in the 1st year coupled with the course “Introduction to Neurosciences”. In their 2nd year the neurological examination is taught by neurology faculty, preparing students for an intensive clerkship in their 3rd year. More advanced clinical courses are available, and some students pursue a combined MD/PhD before applying for residency training. Approximately 5 or 6 students per year, in a class of 160, apply for neurology residency. Others pursue neurosurgery or psychiatry. The top students apply to the top programs nation-

ally. Our program attracts 225 applicants/year from US medical schools, for 7 places, not including Child Neurology.

Neurology residency training lasts 4 years, including 1 year of internal medicine. Penn’s residency program is highly structured, as are other top programs, combining inpatient and outpatient responsibilities, and conferences that include all of the neurology subspecialties, neuropathology and neuroradiology. Almost all Penn trainees pursue post-residency clinical subspecialty and/or research fellowships, and enter academic departments throughout the US. These factors, in addition to the opportunity to participate in the care of individuals with a wide variety of neurological illnesses under the supervision of nationally and internationally known faculty, lead to recruitment of top students.