Guide to Writing Residency Letters of Recommendation

Opening Paragraph

- Provides detailed background on the writer's relationship with the applicant including length of time known and the nature of the relationship
- Clearly states the specialty the applicant is applying to

Body Paragraphs

- Includes specific clinical examples which demonstrate knowledge, skills, and behavior, commenting on growth if applicable
- Reflects and expands on attributes mentioned in the Personal Statement (or to be mentioned if the Personal Statement has not been written)
- Discusses each of the ACGME 6 Core Competencies:
    - **Medical Knowledge:** Evaluation of applicant's knowledge of specialty being applied to
    - **Patient Care:** Effectiveness of hands-on work with patients and applicant's ability to collaborate with other healthcare professionals
    - **Professionalism:** Discussion of peer and staff interactions
    - **Communication:** Evaluation of the ability to communicate with patients, peers, and faculty
    - **Practice-based learning:** Discussion of applicant's willingness to receive and act upon feedback
    - **Systems-based practice:** Evaluation of team leadership skills, interdisciplinary team interactions, and management of transitions of care
- Highlights additional qualities/characteristics and offers exemplary stories
- Discusses any notable research/publications that are relevant to the writer's experience with the applicant and the specialty being applied to

Closing Paragraph

- Offers summative evaluation and enthusiastic recommendation for the specific specialty being applied to.
- Includes handwritten signature, author name, title, academic rank, and contact information

Additional Considerations

Styling

- Enthusiastic and positive, yet honest and not overly grandiose

- Uses concise detail: "best I have seen in X years," "truly outstanding," "excellent," "very good," "qualified"

Length

- 3-5 Paragraphs (1-2 pages MAX, 1 full page recommended minimum)

Formatting

- Uses Letterhead with official institution logo

- Includes the date created (preferably within 1 year, 2 years MAX)

- Includes institution address (optional)