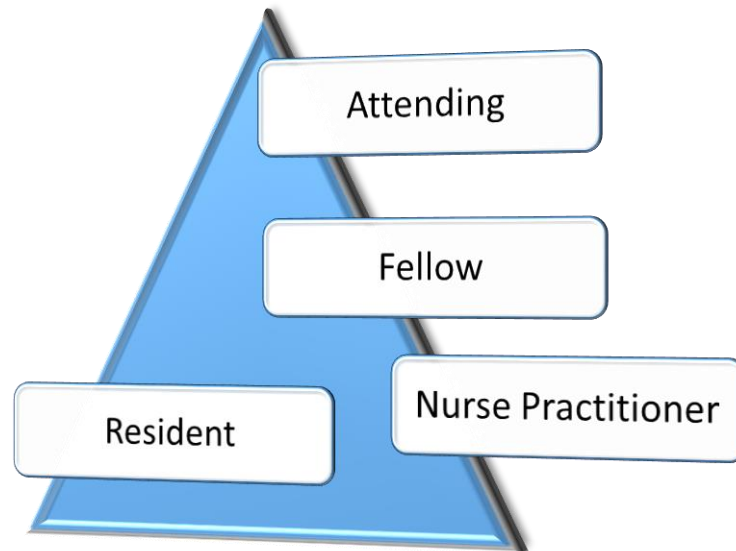




MIGHTY LIONHEARTS

HIERARCHY OF DOCTORS

When dealing with doctors, it is absolutely important you understand the position of the person you are talking to and where they fall in the hierarchy of doctors!



Attending Doctor – the doctor ultimately responsible for the care of your Mighty Lionheart (Mighty Lionhearts are defined as your son, daughter, mom, dad, friend, or anyone you are advocating on behalf of). Attending Doctors are like a head coach, they have final say as to the direction of care, but take inputs from the team (which you are a MAJOR part of). Like a head coach, they have several assistant coaches they manage. They approve decisions made by Fellows, Nurse Practitioners, and Residents. Typically, each specialty (oncology, cardiology, dermatology, etc.) will have an Attending Doctor overseeing daily care and larger hospitals may have several. The bottom line is, other than you, the Attending Doctor is most responsible for the care of your Mighty Lionheart, work closely with them.

Fellow Doctor – a medical school graduate who has also completed their internship and residency programs, but are still under the purview of the Attending Doctor. Fellows are similar to a company Vice President in that they have some power but still report to the Attending Doctor (or to keep with our analogy above, they are one of the assistant coaches). In our

experience, Fellows have been very knowledgeable (however, we highly recommend waiting until you have communicated with the Attending doctor before you decide on what actions to take).

Nurse Practitioner – obviously by definition a nurse practitioner is not a doctor, however, we see them as equivalent or even above resident doctors in some cases. Now, if you look at the definition of a Nurse Practitioner, you may get something like this “a registered nurse who has acquired the knowledge base, decision-making skills, and clinical competencies for expanded practice beyond that of an RN, the characteristics of which would be determined by the context in which he or she is credentialed to practice.” This is how the International Council of Nurses defines them. What the heck does that mean? Well, to us, they are like a resident doctor in that they can write prescriptions, but they usually have more real world experience than residents and can be invaluable. They have not been to a doctorate level medical school, however, and are not

as skilled as Fellow or Attending Doctors. They may be one of the first medical professionals you see when visiting the hospital and may be a gate keeper of sorts to the Attending Doctor.



SIDE NOTE: Let your doctors know you mean business, buy your “GOT ROUNDS?” T-shirt [here!](#)

A resident doctor has graduated from medical school and has earned the right to put “M.D.” behind their name. And that is about all you should let them do...write their name!

Bwahahahaha! I kid...but seriously, some residents are

extremely incompetent and may have book knowledge but little real world experience, which is extremely critical. Residents have completely misdiagnosed our Mighty Lionheart several times! Fortunately, the Attending Doctor eventually weighs in and corrects the diagnoses, but this may take several hours if not days. And in the mean time you are left thinking your child has a severe problem, when there may be nothing wrong. We learned the hard way to pay little attention to residents and want to foot stomp the point to **MAKE SURE THE ATTENDING DOCTOR HAS SIGNED OFF ON WHAT THE RESIDENT SAYS BEFORE REACTING!**

This said, our experience at Lucile-Packard (Stanford's Children Hospital) was a warm welcome from our experience at Cincinnati Children's. Let me just say by the time we left Cincinnati Children's we would literally send the residents out of our room because they were a complete waste of our time (harsh, but true). NOTE: many jurisdictions will NOT allow a doctor to practice until they have finished their residency (i.e. they are no longer residents!).

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Roar! The Mighty Lionhearts 

DISCLAIMER: We are not doctors and have had no formal medical training. All of our experience comes from advocating for our son through his 8 year battle overcoming Wiskott-Aldrich Syndrome (WAS) via a Bone Marrow Transplant (BMT). The above is an interpretation of what we believe to be true to the utmost of our ability, but realize some of it may be technically incorrect.