



cacsw profile

Ellen Weber, M.D.

Training: Dr. Weber began medical school a bit later than most, after a brief career as a freelance writer. Although she had never planned to be a doctor, she was drawn to writing about health and science, and during her freelance years, volunteered in medical settings. She attended Harvard Medical School and trained in Primary Care at UCSF. In medical school and in training, she gravitated towards emergency medicine, and during her primary care residency, chose (or created) several electives to prepare her for a career in that field. After passing boards in internal medicine, she worked in the emergency departments (EDs) at California Pacific Medical Center and SFGH. Soon she took a part-time position at UCSF in the Division of Emergency Medicine, later becoming full-time and passing the emergency medicine boards.



Department and Position: Professor of Clinical Medicine at UCSF

Career Profile: During her first years as faculty member at UCSF, Dr. Weber volunteered for committees and projects that would improve the delivery of care in the ED. As a result of these efforts, Dr. Weber was appointed Assistant Clinical Director, and later, Clinical Director, of the Emergency Department. She stepped down from this position after 15 years in order to pursue research interests and take on a new leadership role in faculty development in the newly formed Department of Emergency Medicine.

Two themes emerge from her career and advancement history: the significant role of mentorship, and the need to take advantage of, and follow through on, opportunities that are offered to you. Early in her career at UCSF, (and actually, during her third-year in primary care training), she began developing expertise in the management of animal bites and prevention of rabies. She sought out the advice of Dr. Michael Callaham, the Chief of Division of Emergency Medicine, and nationally-known expert on these topics. Several years later, after Dr. Weber had herself become a member of the Division, Dr. Callaham gave her the opportunity to co-author with him several book chapters written for the premier textbook in EM. Dr. Weber also developed lectures and spoke on these topics for residents and medical students, and in a number of CME courses at UCSF, as well as Grand Rounds at other hospitals. As her expertise grew, Dr. Callaham suggested she be sole author on these chapters. She is now co-authoring these chapters with junior faculty in her division in order to pass on this legacy.

Although in a purely “clinical” track, Dr. Weber began doing (unfunded) clinical research in asthma. She joined an interest group in asthma in her professional society and conducted several additional studies with them. Also, and once again with the help of her mentor, she became involved in research on publication bias and peer review, and then authored several of her own articles on this topic. As a result of this research, she has attended two International Peer Review Congresses and has been invited to speak on this topic nationally. Again at the suggestion of her mentor, she began to do peer-review for the *Annals of Emergency Medicine*, and has since advanced to take the role of Decision Editor and a member of the Editorial Board.



During a career planning session early in her career, her mentor also suggested she become active in the national organization. She applied for membership in the Program Committee of the Society for Academic Emergency Medicine and was given the opportunity to serve. After only two years on the committee, (and as a result of an unexpected vacancy), she was offered the chairmanship, a highly visible position in the organization. She performed this job for two years and was asked to stay on for an extra year. Subsequently she was elected to the Board of Directors of the society and she is now in her second three-year term.

The combination of her research, teaching and national service and recognition allowed her to change series and become a Professor of Clinical Medicine.

As a result of her position as Clinical Director of the ED, Dr. Weber became interested in the larger picture of how emergency care fits into the health care system, and has led three studies on ED utilization, collaborating with several epidemiologists and statisticians. Dr. Weber realized that to continue working in the health policy arena, she needed additional research training. She therefore applied for, and was awarded, a "Scholarly Sabbatical Grant" by the Society for Academic Emergency Medicine. The grant allowed her to take classes in the TIGR program at UC and spend 5 months in the United Kingdom studying how they have approached emergency department crowding.

Personal Profile: Dr. Weber is married to a UCSF faculty member who has been very supportive and helpful in her career. She has two step-daughters, both obtaining advanced degrees. She and her husband have a yellow Labrador retriever, their second career-change dog that they adopted from the Guide Dogs for the Blind.

