



WILDERNESS MEDICINE INSTITUTE
an institute of the
NATIONAL OUTDOOR LEADERSHIP SCHOOL



June 9, 2009

Dear Medical Student Deans,

Thank you for the opportunity to introduce *Medicine in the Wild*, a unique course in wilderness medicine. I hope you will find this offering an excellent elective opportunity for your students.

As the Director of Wilderness Medicine at Massachusetts General Hospital (MGH), I have taught wilderness medicine to Harvard Medical School students and MGH residents over the last eight years. My students consistently request more advanced coursework in a true wilderness setting. To fulfill this need, I led the Harvard Affiliated Emergency Medicine Residency to partner with the National Outdoor Leadership School (NOLS) and their Wilderness Medical Institute (WMI) to develop *Medicine in the Wild*, a month-long, world-class, wilderness medicine course.

I chose NOLS with a clear reason. Prior to becoming an attending emergency physician and leading research expeditions across the world, I had the good fortune to be both a student and then an instructor at NOLS. NOLS is recognized around the world for being uniquely effective in their educational mission. Their graduates include world-class mountaineers, educators, space shuttle crews, and physicians.

Medicine in the Wild offers an unparalleled experience in learning diagnostic and therapeutic skills in a true wilderness setting through the use of small groups, well-crafted simulations, and moulage. While living and traveling in a wilderness area, students learn the intangibles of good clinical and wilderness judgment from expert instructors. Beyond tangible clinical skills, NOLS students develop leadership experience that will be of great importance in their future careers as medical leaders. I have routinely found my NOLS leadership experience to be invaluable in my daily work as the attending physician commanding a busy, urban Level I trauma center and emergency department.

The Harvard Affiliated Emergency Medicine Residency will proudly provide a resident for the entire length of each course. These senior residents will provide longitudinal teaching and student assessment to augment the impressive field experience of the WMI instructors. In addition, as I did with the first course in April 2005, I will personally lead medical and research seminars for a number of days during the course. I will remain an active participant in the ongoing development of this course into the future.

Unlike many courses we experienced as medical students, *Medicine in the Wild* has immediate and durable application: whether on the hospital floors, in personal travel, or through professional or research experiences in the developing world. Recognizing this, our first group of students consistently described their *Medicine in the Wild* course as one of the very best of their entire medical undergraduate education. Please see <http://www.nols.edu/wmi/courses/medicineinthewild.shtml> for additional details.

I am proud and confident in recommending this course to your students. On further exploration, I am certain you will find this course exceeds any reasonable criteria to be granted full academic credit. I ask you to please be in touch with any questions whatsoever.

With best regards,

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