150 I PRACTICAL MEDICAL HALACHAH

Subject: Training in hospitals without Sabbath obligations.

Question: Is a physician obligated, to seek training, employment, or attending physician status at a hospital where there is a minimum or no conflict between hospital policy and Sabbath observance?

Should a house officer seek training at an inferior quality hospital where he is "guaranteed" not to have to work on the Sabbath or should he seek training in a hospital where training and overall patient care is far superior, but where there may be interference with the Sabbath spirit but not with the observance of halachic restrictions?

Must one compromise one's medical education in order to simplify Sabbath and kashrus observance?

Answer: A physician must seek association with the most reputable and prestigious hospital possible to ensure excellent training and continuing education.

Comment: Jewish law requires that the physician acquire maximum skill and competence to practice his chosen profession. Therefore, he should forego the personal comfort and convenience of training in a hospital that is sympathetic to his religious needs in favor of the hospital that will provide him with the best possible training provided that he is certain of his fortitude in maintaining all halachick requirements, despite the less favorable environment. If the superior training is to be acquired at the price of Sabbath desecration, even of rabbinic ordinances only, the student-physician must forego the educational advantages of the prestigious hospital. It is important to emphasize that residents in non-"Shomer Shabbos" programs have often found themselves under great stress from hospital administrations and mentors who are unsympathetic to their religions convictions. Open discussion with the training hospital administration must be initiated before accepting such an appointment.

Taken from: Practical Medical Halacha by Fred Roser, MD and

Rabbi Moshe Dovid Tendler, 3rd revised edition, 1990.