

## Consults

Pediatricians and pediatric residents are primary care managers. Effective use of subspecialty consultants is a goal of residency training, especially in military medicine where a subspecialty referral often means taking a Soldier, Airman, Sailor or Marine off station. In consulting subspecialty services it is important that you:

- Carefully consider why you are consulting the subspecialist.
- State the issue why you're consulting up front, just like one would present the chief complaint of an acute visit. Examples are: "I have a patient whom I think has long QTc and I would like you help managing it"; "One of your patients, Joey X, who has pulmonary hypertension, was admitted with RSV, and I'd you're your advice on how to manage his respiratory issues in the face of the pulmonary hypertension."
- Have specific questions or advice you are seeking from the subspecialist
- Provide the subspecialist with as much information as you can about your patient.
- Indicate how the subspecialist can reach you after the evaluation (pager, phone number, etc).
- Indicate whether you would like to continue to follow the patient after the consultation.
- Ask for explanation of why tests, procedures, treatments are recommended if you do not understand.

The better questions you ask of a consultant, the better answers you will get. Your patients will get more timely appropriate care, and it will be easier for you to manage your patients when a consultant is not immediately available.