

THE HAND OF A PHENOMENAL PRE-MED



JO PETERSON, PHD
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“I AM PRE-MED”

Every year, hundreds of thousands of college freshmen enroll in universities and declare, “I am pre-med.”

It sounds impressive. Saying it, hearing your parents tell your grandparents, and putting your best foot forward during the first semester of college is exciting.

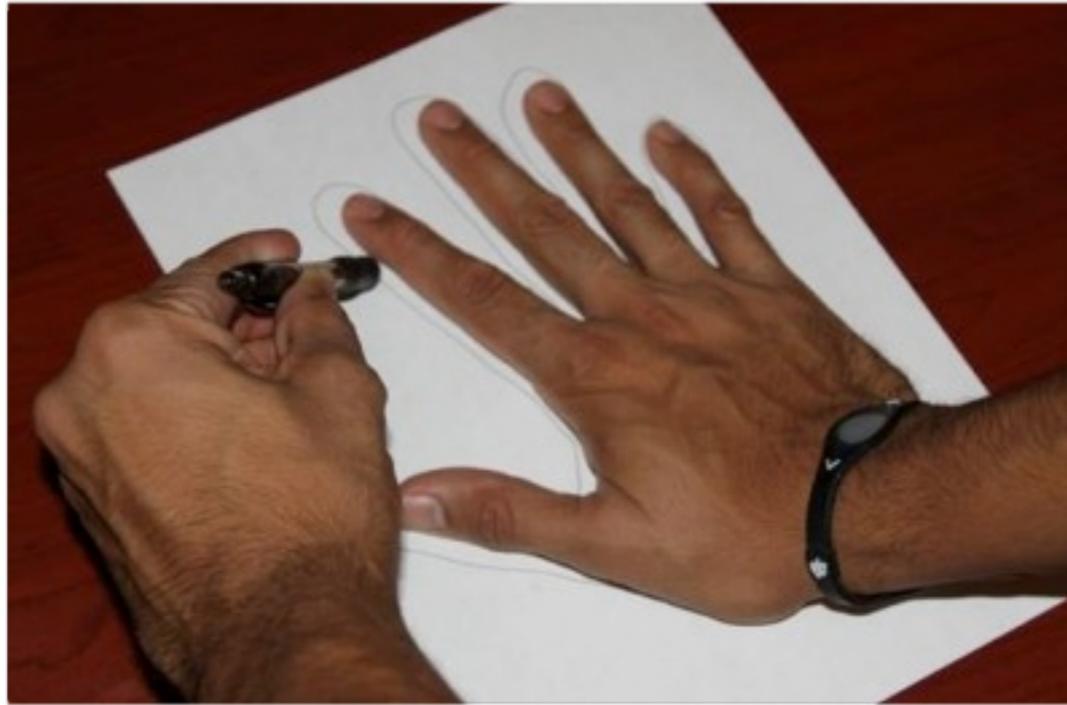
What happens after you announce it to the universe? The freakishly organized A+ students in a few of your biology and chemistry courses seem to hit the ground running. Other “pre-meds” find different areas of study more appealing and jump off the med school track.

And then...there is you. You’re smart, you’re pre-med, but you don’t have a clue. It’s OK. It’s common. Luckily the five strategies you need to follow in order to gain med school acceptance are right in your hands.

This chapter will provide insight on the hands of a high-potential med school candidate.



These pre-med scholars are demonstrating their commitment to community members by planting a neighborhood garden.



If you're an informed pre-med, you are likely gathering information from the Student Doctor Network, various pre-medical Twitter feeds, Facebook, Tumblr, and YouTube.

(If you're not informed, check out the Student Doctor Network and the Aspiring Docs section of the AAMC website.)

By now, you've discovered that the best pre-meds in the country, those who eventually receive multiple

acceptances to medical school, have a pre-medical résumé that goes well beyond great grades.

Tomorrow's physicians will need to have excellent communications skills, willingness to lead and be a part of teams, passion for serving those with limited resources, commitment to helping children and families thrive within their own communities, and an appreciation for the science of medicine.

The Hand of a Great Pre-Med

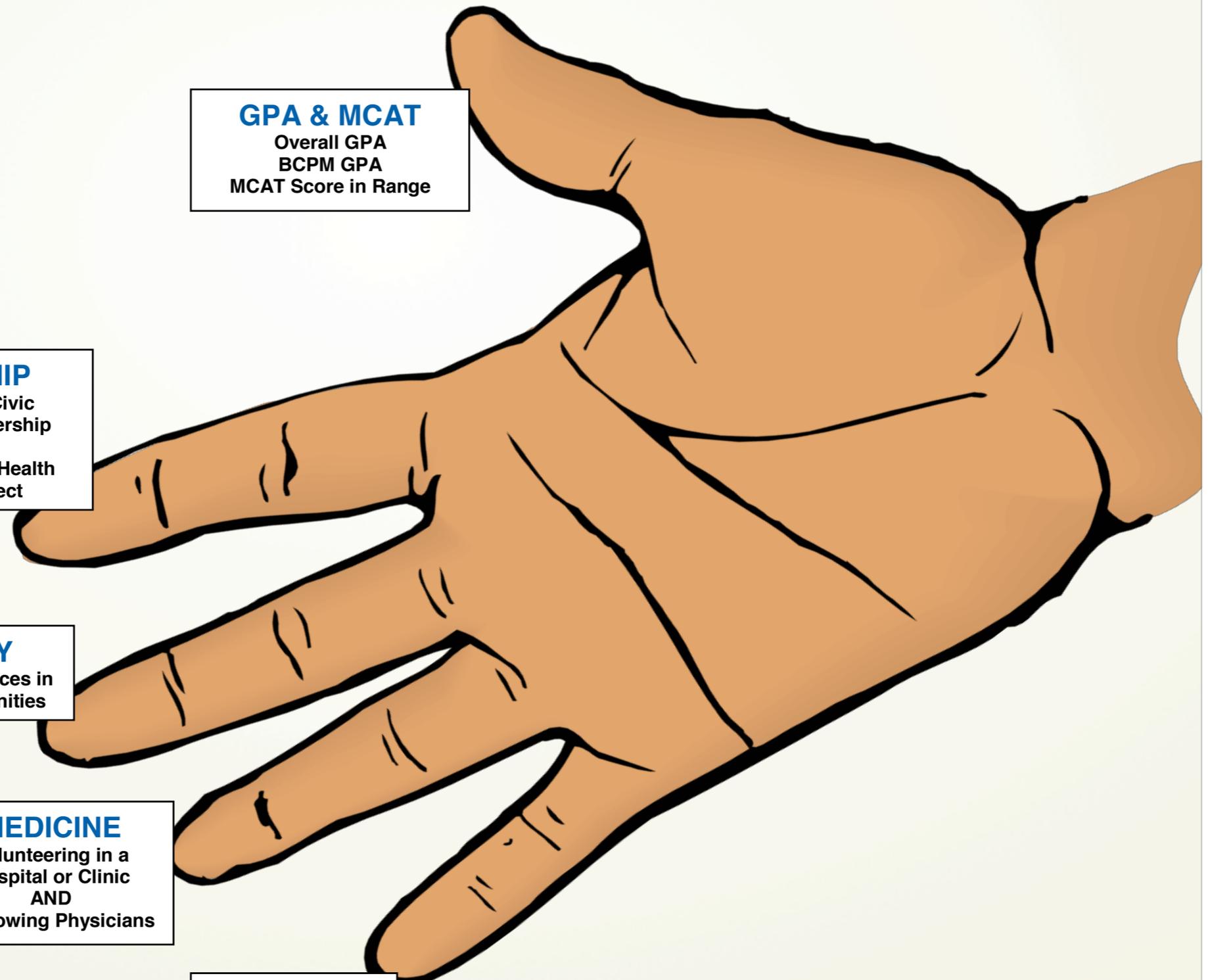
Chances are you've never looked at the inside of your own hand to notice that five proven pre-med strategies are already printed on your fingers.

Five strategies have been written, in invisible ink, since the day you ran your trike into a dumpster and received five stitches on your chin from your beloved pediatrician.

Trace Your Hand for Answers

Take two minutes to find a piece of paper and your lucky #2 pencil or favorite pen. Set your paper down and trace around your hand. Label each finger:

- * Look at your thumb. It has **GPA & MCAT** written there. You know that you need great college grades and a high MCAT score in order to be an excellent med school candidate.
- * How about your index finger? Does it have the word **Leadership** neatly printed?
- * What's written on your middle finger? Do you see the word **Community** there?
- * Your ring finger? Does it say **Medicine**?
- * Now look at your pinkie. It should have the word **Research** on it.



GPA & MCAT
Overall GPA
BCPM GPA
MCAT Score in Range

LEADERSHIP
Elected Club or Civic
Organization Leadership
OR
Leading Your Own Health
Disparities Project

COMMUNITY
Volunteering Experiences in
Underserved Communities

MEDICINE
Volunteering in a
Hospital or Clinic
AND
Shadowing Physicians

RESEARCH
Paid or Volunteer
Work in a Lab

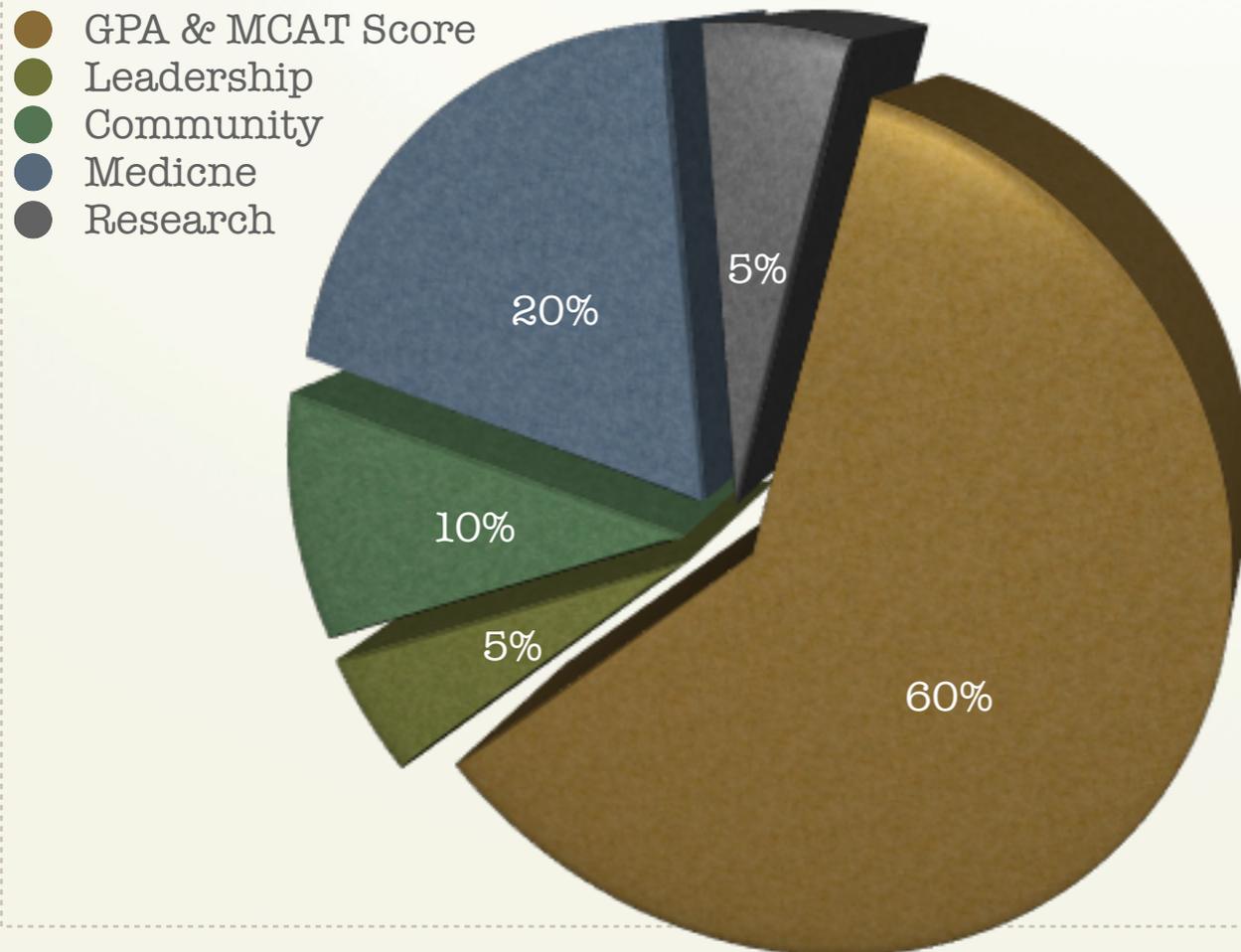
ORGANIZE YOUR TIME

Now that you have a sense of what you need in order to become an excellent pre-medical scholar, you'll need to make decisions about how to spend your time.

While focusing on your GPA should be a priority, determining how much time to spend on non-academic pre-med development is very important. Create a time chart in your next discussion with your pre-med advisor or a trusted mentor.

What percentage of time will you spend on pre-med activities?

Here's a reasonable time chart:



PLAN WITH YOUR Advisor

How much time should I spend on my “hand of a pre-med” activities? When? Which semesters?

* **GPA and MCAT Plan?**

* **Leadership?**

* Volunteering in the **Community?**

* Volunteering and shadowing physicians in **Medicine?**

* **Research?**

Ask Yourself These Big Questions Now

Now that you have the five keywords written (or tattooed) on your fingers, you should take some time to ask and answer the BHQs (Big Hairy Questions).

BHQ1: Why do I want to pursue a career in medicine?

Do I care deeply about people or do I really care about making money? If my response is about making money, I need to stop...look in the mirror...and rethink my goals. Any medical school that selects me as a student will want me there for the right reasons.

BHQ2: Do I want this?

Are my parents pushing me into medicine, or is this my own pathway? Do I like saying, "I am pre-med." Do I like volunteering in medicine or serving low income families? There is a huge difference between what I say and what I do.

BHQ3: Is becoming a physician right for me?

Have I looked at other career fields enough? Do other professions appeal to me more? Why? Which ones? How do I know? Have I looked at other professional roles inside of healthcare? Have I considered dentistry, nursing, pharmacy, technical or other roles?

BHQ4: Whom can I count on?

Will my family members and friends support me emotionally during my highly stressful pre-medical and medical school years? If not, why?

BHQ5: Can I stand the debt load?

Am I willing to take on the debt burden of undergraduate years and medical school? Have I researched how physicians pay back their loans?



Mohamed took time to answer important questions about his decision to become a pre-med scholar.

BHQ6: Can I set fun aside in order to study?

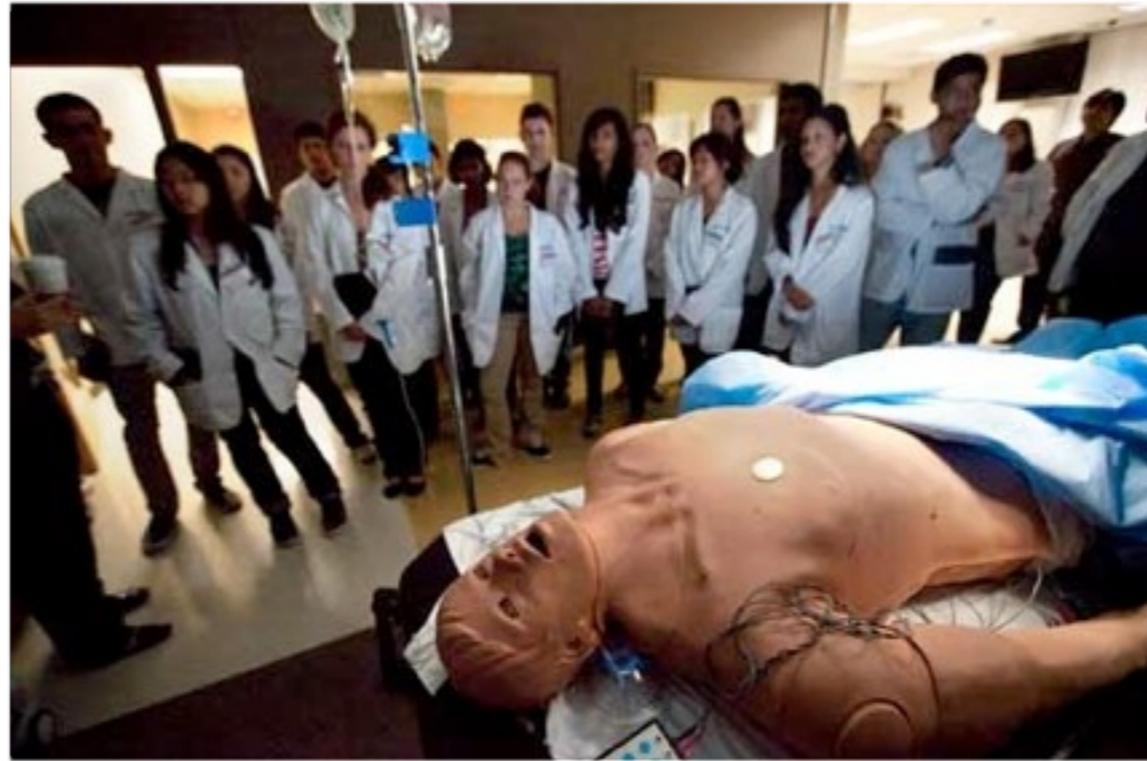
Am I willing to study alone for hours and hours when others around me are watching movies, going to parties, and having fun?

BHQ7: Do I like hardcore science coursework and lab experiences?

Do I enjoy the science of medicine (chemistry, biology, related mathematics) enough to spend many years in related undergraduate and medical school coursework?

BHQ8: Are my test-taking skills solid?

I know that physicians in training and practicing physicians take standardized tests throughout their lifetime. Do I have the ability to score well on standardized tests? If not, am I willing to put in the countless hours needed to be successful and learn how to take standardized tests?



These pre-med scholars are gaining necessary experience in medicine by spending a day with simulated patients.

BHQ9: Does my undergraduate program prepare excellent medical school candidates?

Will my biology, physics, and chemistry professors provide you with statistics on recent graduates. Where are recent graduates attending medical school now? Am I in the right university setting?

Are my fellow students willing to share study resources and course insights with me? Are my friends solidly pre-med or pre-career students? Where are the solid pre-med students and club members studying and hanging out on campus?

BHQ10: Does my campus have a pre-med advisor?

Is this advisor accessible to me? If so, when? Where? How often will I meet with him or her? Does my college have a pre-med committee? If so, can I meet with members of the pre-med committee early on to learn what they will expect from me while I am in college?

BHQ12: Do I know what the AAMC is?

Am I willing to research information on medical school applications, medical school trends, and the MCAT on my own? Or will I rely on students, advisors, and professors to do my pre-med homework for me?

I am serious about becoming a full pre-med scholar today. I will pledge to review the Association of American Medical Colleges website now and regularly.

I pledge to view the AAMC.org website today:

Your name:

Today's date:

IMPORTANT PRE-MED ACRONYMS

AAMC: The Association of American Medical Colleges is an organization of medical education institutions. The AAMC administers MCAT and AMCAS.

AMCAS: The American Medical College Application Service is the web-based application for medical school.

BCPM GPA: Biology, Chemistry, Physics, Mathematics GPA. This math/science GPA is separated out as you apply to medical school.

FAP: The Fee Assistance Program provides access to the MCAT and the AMCAS for financially-challenged students at reduced cost.

MCAT: The current Medical College Admission Test is a standardized, multiple-choice test designed to assess your problem-solving, critical thinking, and knowledge of science concepts.

In 2015, the MCAT will change significantly.

MSAR: The Medical School Admissions Requirement is an online service that details medical schools in the United States and Canada.

SMDEP: The Summer Medical Dental Education Program is free. Scholars are paid. This program provides underrepresented students with experiences in the medical field.

UIM: Underrepresented in Medicine are those racial and ethnic populations underrepresented in the medical profession relative to their numbers in the general population.

MD: Doctor of Medicine is a physician who has had many years of training in the diagnosis, treatment, and prevention of disease. An MD's training is in allopathic medicine.

DO: Doctor of Osteopathic Medicine is a physician who provides modern medicine. These physicians also utilize osteopathic principles to manipulate and heal bodies. 1/5 of all med students are in DO schools.

MY PLAN BY SEMESTER

50% of pre-meds graduate from college and move directly on to med school. Others wait a year or several years before beginning med school studies. Creating a multi-year plan will help you decide what works for you. This chapter overviews plans and semester-by-semester ideas.



Undergraduate Degree - Directly to Med School Plan

FRESHMAN	SUMMER	SOPHOMORE	SUMMER	JUNIOR	SUMMER	SENIOR	SUMMER	MED SCHOOL
<p>Focus on your classes and grades</p> <p>Join a pre-med club</p> <p>Review summer internship options during winter break, apply early</p>	<p>Attend a summer research or pre-med program</p> <p>or attend SMDEP</p>	<p>Focus on your grades</p> <p>Work on your hand activities (See Page 3): GPA, Leadership, Community, Medicine, Research</p>	<p>Intern in a summer research program</p> <p>or attend SMDEP</p> <p>Begin to work on your AMCAS</p>	<p>Continue to work on your AMCAS</p> <p>Set your MCAT study plan for spring semester, take the MCAT in the spring if you are ready</p> <p>Continue with your hand activities</p>	<p>Apply to med school</p> <p>Take your MCAT during the summer if you haven't already</p>	<p>Interview for med school</p>	<p>Enjoy this summer with family and friends</p>	<p>Start med school</p>



Five Year Plan at a Glance

Over half of pre-medical scholars take a year off (or more) between their undergraduate and medical school programs. This is called “the glide year.”

Undergraduate Degree + One Year - Then to Med School Plan

FRESHMAN	SUMMER	SOPHOMORE	SUMMER	JUNIOR	SUMMER	SENIOR	SUMMER	5TH YEAR OF COLLEGE OR WORK “GLIDE YEAR”	SUMMER	MED SCHOOL
<p>Focus on your classes and grades</p> <p>Join a pre-med club</p> <p>Review summer internship options during winter break, apply early</p>	<p>Attend a summer research or pre-med program</p>	<p>Focus on your grades</p> <p>Work on your hand activities: GPA, Leadership, Community, Medicine, Research</p>	<p>Attend a major summer research program</p> <p>Begin to work on your AMCAS</p>	<p>Continue to work on your AMCAS</p> <p>Set your MCAT study plan for spring semester, take the MCAT in the spring if you are ready</p> <p>Continue with your hand activities</p>	<p>Apply to med school</p> <p>Take your MCAT during the summer if you haven't already</p>	<p>Work on AMCAS</p> <p>Continue with your hand activities</p>	<p>Apply to med school</p> <p>Take your MCAT during this summer if you haven't already</p>	<p>Interview for med school</p>	<p>Enjoy this summer with family and friends</p>	<p>Start med school</p>

Freshman Year, Fall

Use every semester and summer as opportunities to build your pre-med résumé (AMCAS). Smart students will build their AMCAS throughout their undergraduate years, rather than rushing at application time.

ACTIVITY	FRESHMAN YEAR, FIRST SEMESTER	HOURS NEEDED
Think about a College Major	<p>Take a hard look at your declared major. Is this something you want to do over the next four (or more) years?</p> <p>Med schools don't require a "pre-med" or biology major. They do, however, require specific courses for admission.</p> <p>Become aware of the courses that are required for you to graduate in a timely way. Clearly understand what courses are needed for entrance into med school.</p>	2
Review Medical School Websites	<p>Visit ten medical school websites and read through the information. Are they places where you can see yourself in four years?</p> <p>For a full list of medical schools, go to www.aamc.org and search member medical schools.</p> <p>Check out 10 medical schools to understand fully what courses are recommended and required. This will help you understand needed courses and complete your undergraduate course plan accurately.</p>	2
Make a Four-Year Course Planning Sheet	<p>Compare the courses required by your major, medical schools and those that will prepare you for the MCAT. When will each course fit into your four-year plan?</p> <p>Your four-year college/university course plan should also include a variety of courses that interest you .</p> <p>Register for a wide range of courses for spring semester. Include a mix of science, mathematics, fine arts, social and behavioral studies, English, and foreign languages.</p>	2
Visit your Academic or Pre-Med Advisor	<p>Meet with a pre-med or academic advisor to discuss your interest in medicine.</p> <p>Take your course planning sheet, the required coursework for your major, and a list of the required courses for application to med school to your advisor. What course plan will your advisor sign off on?</p> <p>Meet with your advisor at least once every semester to discuss your grades, courses, financial aid, and any concerns that you may have.</p>	1

Freshman Year, Fall

ACTIVITY	FRESHMAN YEAR, FIRST SEMESTER	HOURS NEEDED
Develop a Study Plan	<p>If you spend one-hour in a lecture or lab, you should spend at least two hours studying. If you don't set this study plan, you will not earn the grades you need to be attractive to most med schools.</p> <p>If your extra activities don't allow for you to have two hours of study time for each hour in class/lab, rethink your priorities. Choose one activity that you find rewarding.</p> <p>If you are working or taking care of family members, create a weekly calendar that allows you enough study time and sleep.</p>	2
Determine Your Interest in Studying Abroad	<p>Make a plan now that includes studying abroad in your sophomore year or the fall semester of your junior year.</p> <p>Why then? You need freshman year to acclimate to college. Sophomore year would be an excellent time to travel. The first semester of junior year is also excellent. The spring of junior year, you'll be studying for your MCAT exam. Who wants to do that abroad? Senior year is a difficult year to travel - because you will likely be interviewing for medical schools between October and March of your senior year of college.</p>	2
Find Pre-Med or Science (or Community Service) Extracurricular Activities	<p>Look for campus activities/clubs that support pre-med, chemistry, or biology students.</p> <p>If you can't find the clubs you're looking for on the web, ask your academic advisor for insight.</p>	1
Familiarize Yourself with Minorities in Medicine Information (if applicable)	<p>If you are a minority pre-med student, go to the AAMC Minorities in Medicine web information located at: www.aamc.org/students/minorities/start.htm</p> <p>Review Aspiring Docs at www.AspiringDocs.org.</p> <p>Ask your advisor for the names and email addresses of students who have recently graduated from your campus who are now attending med school. Contact them and ask for their strategies.</p>	1

Freshman Year, Fall

ACTIVITY	FRESHMAN YEAR, FIRST SEMESTER	HOURS NEEDED
Volunteer One to Four Hours Per Month in a Multicultural Medical or Health Setting	<p>Start to explore the field of medicine by volunteering or working at least one to four hours per month at a hospital, clinic, or nursing home. Do this during your first year in college and continue to do it until you graduate. This small effort will pay off heavily when you are applying for medical school.</p> <p>Consider looking for volunteering roles within the medical community that will expose you to persons from different ethnic and cultural backgrounds. Individuals who pay attention to the diversity in their own communities are attractive medical student applicants.</p>	2
Look at dual degrees in medicine. MD/PhD, MD/JD, MD/MPH,	<p>Start looking at options in healthcare that blend two types of interests: medicine and law, medicine and public health, medicine and research. What is needed? Look at one college and analyze what both degrees require.</p>	2
Look at the Medical College Admissions Test (MCAT)	<p>Look at the AAMC website and search for the Medical College Admissions Test. During your first year of college become familiar with the subjects covered. Take courses that prepare you throughout your undergraduate career.</p> <p>Go to this website and the MCAT exam pages every month.</p> <p>Challenge yourself by taking the mock MCAT test online at least once per semester throughout your college career. Find a friend on campus with similar goals. Set an MCAT study plan.</p>	1
Search for “Pre-Med” Summer Opportunities	<p>At the end of your fall semester, do a web search of programs that will be available to pre-meds and science-focused undergrads in the summer.</p> <p>Another option is SMDEP, offered at campuses throughout the country. They accept freshmen and sophomores.</p> <p>Many programs will require you to apply and have a recommendation letter by the end of February. Do not be the last to apply.</p> <p>Early summer program applicants always get much more attention from program staff. Feel free to email or call program staff early in the application process to make your name known to them. Staff will remember you fondly if you are interested in their program and ask your questions with professionalism.</p>	10

Freshman Year, Spring

ACTIVITY	FRESHMAN YEAR, SECOND SEMESTER	HOURS NEEDED
Meet with your Academic Advisor	<p>Meet with your academic advisor when you return from winter break. Discuss your fall semester grades.</p> <p>If you are not maintaining a GPA of 3.5 or higher in the sciences, work with your advisor to create a balanced plan that includes time in class/lab, study, volunteerism, work (if needed), and extra activities.</p>	2
Apply for Summer Opportunities	<p>Apply for summer employment or volunteer activities in medically-related settings. Consider a mix of paid and volunteer opportunities.</p> <p>OR</p> <p>Make plans to attend summer school if needed.</p>	5
Continue to Volunteer Monthly in Cross-Cultural Healthcare Settings	<p>Volunteer at least one to four hours per month in a healthcare setting. This is critical for your medical school application.</p> <p>Look at hospitals and clinics in your area. Many have volunteer websites and applications. Complete yours. If they ask you to come in for an orientation, accept that offer and know this time will be extremely rewarding to you as a person and as a potential med school applicant.</p>	2
Research Scholarship Opportunities for Pre-Meds	<p>Take one Saturday afternoon to research scholarship opportunities online every semester. Look for funds that help rural, economically disadvantaged, minority, immigrant, and other students pay for college.</p> <p>The average student receives 1 in every 5 scholarships for which he or she applies. Set time aside to apply for scholarships. It is worth your time and energy.</p>	5
Look into Early Acceptance Programs at Specific Med Schools	<p>Determine if your campus has a pre-med Early Acceptance relationship with a med school. Typically, this only occurs if your undergraduate campus has a med school physically connected to it.</p> <p>You may be eligible to attend an undergraduate program designed specifically for pre-med students.</p>	2
Shadow a Doctor	<p>Find one doctor in your community. Ask that doctor for a half day (or even two hours) when you will shadow him or her at work. Ask for a monthly shadowing opportunity, or perhaps an event every other month.</p> <p>Shadowing doctors is critical for med school applications and during the med school interviewing process. You must be able to discuss when and where you have experienced medicine in action.</p> <p>Finding shadowing opportunities may be a difficult task, but it is critical to your success.</p>	3

Sophomore Year, Fall

ACTIVITY	SOPHOMORE YEAR, FALL SEMESTER	HOURS NEEDED
Update Your Academic Plan with Your Advisor	<p>Discuss your grades and coursework from year one. Discuss the benefits and pitfalls of your summer experience.</p> <p>Discuss your current course load, financial concerns, and extra activities.</p>	1
Participate in Pre-Med Activities	Take time to attend one pre-med or health-related presentation or club meeting each month.	3
Continue to Volunteer Monthly, Exploring Diversity in Your Community	Continue participation in volunteer/paid medically-related activities.	4
Maintain Excellent Grades	<p>Your GPA is important. Make certain you are studying enough and understand the material presented in every class.</p> <p>Start making appointments with professors you enjoy. You will eventually need letters of recommendation for summer activities, scholarships, and med school. You will need these relationships.</p>	Ongoing
Spend a ½ day at the AAMC Website	<p>Review the American Association of Medical Colleges website.</p> <p>Do a web search on the American Association of Colleges of Osteopathic Medicine Application Service (AACOMAS)</p>	2
Shadow and Meet with a Doctor in Your Hometown	<p>Take one-hour to meet with a doctor in your community or your hometown. Ask him or her to discuss a community health concern. Get insight on his or her road through med school.</p> <p>Talk about the different areas of medicine and what is required to serve in those areas.</p>	1

Sophomore Year, Spring

ACTIVITY	SOPHOMORE YEAR, SPRING SEMESTER	HOURS NEEDED
Update Your Course Schedule with your Advisor	<p>Meet with your academic or pre-med advisor to discuss your coursework, pre-med goals, volunteering, and work activities.</p> <p>Update your course schedule if needed to ensure that you are meeting all major coursework requirements and pre-med course requirements.</p>	1
Apply for Summer Opportunities in Medicine	<p>Apply for summer experiences that will add to your pre-med experiences. These may include, but not be limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Working in a lab as a technician • Working in a hospital, clinic or nursing home • Working in a cross-cultural clinic or service organization related to healthcare • Participating in a summer pre-med program 	10
Develop Your Leadership Skills	<p>Ask your advisor for assistance in developing your leadership skills on campus. Make a point of bringing a healthcare speaker onto campus, developing health-related opportunities for your fellow students, or leading a major community health service event.</p>	1
Attend Student Healthcare “Pre-Med” Conferences	<p>Look for student-focused conferences related to healthcare.</p> <p>If the conferences you’ve identified are expensive or are located out-of-state, ask your student senate or academic advisor if there are funds to cover your travel expenses. You may be pleasantly surprised about what funds are available to students.</p>	1
Volunteer Monthly	<p>Change your volunteering or working activities, if needed. Start to look for medically-related volunteering activities that allow you to interact with doctors, patients, and other healthcare workers.</p> <p>These opportunities will give you excellent insight as you develop your personal statement for med school applications. Having a well-rounded view of medicine is necessary to your application.</p>	4
Make a Purchase	<p>Purchase the <i>Medical School Admissions Requirements</i> online through the AAMC. Start to more fully understand the similarities and differences among medical schools.</p>	1

Junior Year, Fall

ACTIVITY	JUNIOR YEAR, FALL SEMESTER	HOURS NEEDED
Review the AAMC Website for Any Changes in Pre-Med and Med School Pathways	Review the AAMC website. Make certain you are aware of all updates related to MSAR, MCAT, and AMCAS.	1
Review Your Six to Ten Choice Med Schools by Visiting them Online	Go to three med school websites and look at the admissions requirements, data regarding the types of applicants that have been accepted to the program, and any changes that the med school may have made related to the admissions process.	2
Know Your Standing with Your Academic Advisor and a Trusted Professor	<p>Discuss your third-year plans with your academic advisor and a trusted instructor or professor.</p> <p>Make certain you are comfortable with this advisor and professor. You will need letters of recommendation for medical school applications. You must create relationships with individuals who will give you excellent letters of recommendation. Do not wait to form these important relationships.</p>	1
Make Your MCAT Study Plan	<p>Set a study plan for the MCAT that includes six to ten hours of study time per week throughout this academic year.</p> <p>Select a study friend on campus and make a commitment to meet, study, gather information, and meet with professors who can help you.</p> <p>Consider attending an MCAT study prep program. These programs are expensive: ½ of med students find them helpful, while other succeed without a prep program. Again, look to the AAMC for updated tests and information on the exam.</p>	6 to 10
Register for a Spring or Summer MCAT	<p>Study regularly; but, remember to take care of yourself.</p> <p>Set a goal of taking your first MCAT no later than July 15. That will give you time to take it again by the first week of September if needed.</p>	Ongoing

Junior Year, Fall

ACTIVITY	JUNIOR YEAR, FALL SEMESTER	HOURS NEEDED
Maintain an Excellent GPA	Keep your grades up. Consistent studying - done on a daily basis - is the key to excellent grades.	Ongoing
Continue Your Volunteering or Find Paid Work in Medicine	Continue participation in volunteer/paid medically-related activities.	4
Meet with Your Advisor to Ensure that You are On Track to Graduate	Schedule for completion of school-specific requirements for advisor/committee evaluation.	1
Look for Paid Summer Experiences in Medicine	<p>Select a new summer opportunity that will broaden your understanding of the medical profession.</p> <p>Consider working in a hospital setting, doing unique research, or serving a specific population with healthcare concerns.</p>	10
Look at the Required Elements of the AMCAS	<p>Learn what is needed to apply to medical school using the AMCAS. Feel free to open your account online at the AAMC website. Note: If you enter information in, make certain to save it elsewhere. The system switches over in May of each year.</p> <p>If you are cutting and pasting information into AMCAS, Only place it into AMCAS from a text-Only format. You cannot cut and paste from a Word document that is not saved as text-Only. This will cause irregular type as medical schools print out your application. You won't see the gibberish, but medical schools will!</p>	1
Make a Purchase	Purchase <i>Medical School Admissions Requirements</i> online through the AAMC. Start to more fully understand the similarities and differences among medical schools.	1

Junior Year, Spring

ACTIVITY	JUNIOR YEAR, SPRING SEMESTER	HOURS NEEDED
Take the Spring MCAT	<p>Take the Spring or Summer MCAT. Your goal should be a minimum 32 score. If you aren't ready in the spring, make certain that you plan to take the MCAT in the early part of the summer, no later than July 15. Taking the MCAT before July 15 will allow you time to take the exam again if needed.</p>	200 to 400
Review the AAMC Website for Updated Information on Medical Schools	<p>Know which schools are particularly interesting to you. Visit them if you have the time and money.</p> <p>Review the AAMC Curriculum Directory website (http://services.aamc.org/currdir) for information about medical school curricula and joint, dual, and combined-degree programs offered throughout the country.</p> <p>Select several (6) medical schools that you find interesting. Visit two of them, if possible.</p>	20
Know the Responsibilities for Applying to Med School	<p>Review the Applicant Responsibilities document. The essays are essential, especially for those scholarships where a family awards the funding.</p> <p>Review the AAMC Recommendations Concerning Medical School Acceptance Procedures for First-Year Entering Students document at www.aamc.org/students/applying/policies</p>	3
Find Work in the Medical Profession	<p>Expand your med school experiences by securing rewarding work within medicine for the upcoming summer.</p>	10

Junior Year, Summer

ACTIVITY	SUMMER AFTER JUNIOR YEAR	HOURS NEEDED
Use AMCAS to Apply to Several Medical Schools	<p>Mark June 5 on your calendar. You should submit your AMCAS on the first day that you are ready. Most applicants apply to 13 schools, with the range being 12 to 20.</p> <p>Expect to receive supplemental essay requests from various medical schools after you submit your AMCAS.</p>	40
Work in the Medical Field	Participate in research or medically-related work this summer.	120+
Take the MCAT Again if Needed	<p>If you did not get a 32 score or you feel you can do better, take the MCAT again.</p> <p>Study for the MCAT daily. Spend time with those areas where you can improve your score.</p> <p>You must take the test in early September.</p>	120+

Senior Year, Fall

ACTIVITY	SENIOR YEAR, FALL SEMESTER	HOURS NEEDED
Keep Track of Your Med School Application Materials and Supplemental Requests	<p>Keep a central file of all applications and supplemental material that you have sent.</p> <p>Complete supplementary application materials for schools to which you applied in a timely way. Punctuality counts.</p>	40
Review AAMC Procedures	<p>Review the AAMC Recommendations Concerning Medical School Acceptance Procedures for First-Year Entering Students document at www.aamc.org/students/applying/policies</p>	1
Maintain your GPA	<p>Your coursework does matter to the med schools of your choice. Make certain you are maintaining an excellent grade point average.</p>	Ongoing
Continue to Volunteer or Work in the Medical Field	<p>Continue participation in volunteer and medically-related activities.</p>	Ongoing
Prepare for Medical School Interviews	<p>Ask trusted advisors and mentors to conduct mock interviews with you. Listen carefully to their feedback. Your handshake, smile, tone of voice, and manners are exceptionally important.</p> <p>Stay current with medical discoveries and issues in the national spotlight. Pay particular attention to global health, research that is being conducted at the institutions where you are interviewing, and reflect on the medical experiences (paid and volunteer work) that you have done.</p> <p>Create a suitable wardrobe for interviewing. Most admissions staff will tell you to dress conservatively in black or blue business attire.</p>	4
Find Some Balance in Your Academic Coursework	<p>Take advanced science coursework within your undergraduate plan. Balance that coursework with non-science requirements for graduation.</p>	3

Senior Year, Spring

ACTIVITY	SENIOR YEAR, SPRING SEMESTER	HOURS NEEDED
Continue to Interview with Med Schools	<p>See every interview as an opportunity to build on your interviewing skills.</p> <p>Accept offers for medical school interviews graciously. Remember that kindness toward staff at every level is appreciated and discussed within the med schools.</p>	100+
Consider Your Medical School Offers	<p>Make interim and final decisions about your medical school choices.</p> <p>As you make decisions, notify medical schools that you will not be attending.</p>	5
Review Financial Aid Planning on the AAMC Website	<p>Find the financial aid planning documents on the AAMC.org website.</p>	2
Work with the Financial Aid Team on Your Med School Campus Early	<p>Complete all financial aid forms required by your med school.</p> <p>Ensure that all IRS forms are submitted as early as possible.</p> <p>Ask your financial aid liaison for all information on scholarships related to their med school.</p> <p>Give yourself a full day to research scholarships related to med school. The essays are essential, especially for those scholarships where a family awards the Funding.</p>	15
Stay on Track with Your Coursework	<p>Successfully complete second-semester elective science and non-science coursework and other degree requirements.</p>	1
Graduate	<p>Enjoy your success as a college graduate.</p> <p>Consider using this summer as an opportunity to relax and see the world.</p>	Ongoing
Prepare for Med School	<p>Attend orientation programs.</p> <p>Prepare for medical school enrollment. Make living arrangements. Understand the parking and commuting patterns, and purchase supplies and materials.</p> <p>Email current medical students to ask specific questions about logistics, coursework, and instructors.</p>	40

GPA & MCAT

Imagine how you'll look to admissions committee leaders and staff as you apply to medical school. What will your overall GPA, BCPM GPA, and MCAT look like? How will you stack up against your peers?

Every year, thousands of med school applicants don't receive interview invitations due to their grades and MCAT score. As a future applicant, it's your job to know what grades and scores will get you a second look, an interview, and medical school acceptance.

You'll always want to measure yourself against those individuals whom were accepted and started medical school rather than those who applied and may not have been accepted.

This chapter details GPA and MCAT insights related to medical school matriculation.



These pre-med scholars are demonstrating their love of science in labs, classrooms, and at home.

Your GPA

Pre-medical scholars ask medical schools why the GPA and MCAT are such an important parts of the application process. Data find students with higher overall and BCPM GPAs and MCAT scores have a higher pass rate in medical school and higher scores on future medical licensure board examinations.

Medical schools review recent cumulative AAMC data on race and ethnicity to better understand how various groups of applicants and matriculants score on the MCAT and compare academically.

Applicants should always know where their national cohort stands in terms of grades and MCAT scores. The grids (upper right) details summative information collected by medical schools from 2007 to 2012.

RACE & ETHNICITY	APPLICANTS (2011 AAMC DATA)	MATRICULANTS
American Indian	3.3 BCPM 3.5 Overall	3.4 BCPM 3.6 Overall
Asian	3.4 BCPM 3.5 Overall	3.6 BCPM 3.7 Overall
Black	3.0 BCPM 3.3 Overall	3.3 BCPM 3.4 Overall
Latino	3.3 BCPM 3.4 Overall	3.5 BCPM 3.6 Overall
White	3.5 BCPM 3.6 Overall	3.7 BCPM 3.7 Overall

Common GPA Questions

My first semester in college was a complete failure. I transferred to a different institution. Do I need to submit the grades from my first college to AMCAS? **Yes.**

I failed a class in college. The second time I took it, I received a much better grade. Do I need to show both courses in AMCAS, with the second one as a repeated course? **Yes.**

I have taken courses at multiple college campuses. They all transferred to my final campus. Do I need to submit transcripts to AMCAS from every campus? **Yes.**

My BCPM GPA is significantly lower than my overall GPA. I've read that the BCPM GPA is the first GPA to be shown on AMCAS to admissions leaders. Is that true? **Yes.**

I took college courses in high school, received a grade and have a transcript from a college or university. Will AMCAS count those on my GPA? **Yes.**

I took AP in high school. I received college credits, not grades. Will my high school grades for those courses be included on AMCAS? **No.**

Your MCAT

The 2013 and 2014 versions of the MCAT will consist of a 45-point multiple choice exam.

The Verbal Reasoning, Physical Sciences, and Biological Sciences have a possible 15 points each.

Future MCAT versions will have four sections:

1. Molecular, cellular, and organismal properties of living systems.
2. Physical, chemical, and biochemical properties of living systems.
3. Behavior and social sciences principles.
4. Critical analysis and reasoning skills.

RACE & ETHNICITY	APPLICANTS (2011 AAMC DATA)	MATRICULANTS
American Indian	25	28
Asian	29	32
Black	22	26
Latino	26	28
White	29	32

Common MCAT Questions

My professors and advisor tell me to take the MCAT early so I can apply to med school at the beginning of the med school application cycle. Is that smart?

Applying earlier in the cycle is smart. However, if you are not ready to take the MCAT, study more and wait. This may add an additional year to your timeline. A great MCAT score is worth the wait.

How many times should I take the MCAT? **Many applicants take the MCAT twice. Three times is less common. Rarely does a person with four scores receive admittance.**

I did not score well on my first MCAT.

However, my experiences as a pre-med are stellar and should demonstrate my commitment to medicine. Should I apply without taking the MCAT again? **No. Your MCAT score is an essential piece of your application.**

I am not a good test-taker. Should I take a \$2000+ course to develop enhance my MCAT score? **Perhaps. Many scholars do take a prep course, which may offer excellent web-based question banks and full-length tests. However, the equivalent number of hours spent studying on your own will likely yield the same results as an expensive course.**

LEADERSHIP



These pre-med scholars are working within the inner-city to develop health education programs.

All medical schools are looking for young leaders to bring in new ideas and energize students.

Excellent pre-medical scholars bring unique leadership experiences with them. While there are many ways to develop your leadership skills, three surefire ways that catch the eyes of medical school admissions leaders include:

1. Leading an undergraduate club in which your club members contribute to medicine and the greater community.
2. Leading a simple project that aids the community in a specific way (off campus).
3. Leading a health disparities project that serves the needs of under-resourced adults and children (off campus).

This chapter details how to lead an efficient student club and develop a health disparities project.

Leading a Club

Every campus has a range of clubs to join. From pre-med to biology to minority organizations, find your passion. After regularly attending a few clubs as a freshman or sophomore, consider selecting the one you are most passionate about. Then, run for office.

Help Your Peers Succeed

Smart college students join clubs for two reasons: to make new friends and to build their resumes. As a leader, you'll want to give your club members an opportunity to make friends and an opportunity to serve locally and globally.

Most students want to serve within their own communities. Many students also want an opportunity to provide global service. You can do both with your club.

Twice-Monthly Club Meetings

Consider hosting two meetings per month, one that meets the social needs of your group and one that meets the pre-professional development needs of your club members.

Focus on two major projects each academic year: one global and one local project.

WHEN	SEPTEMBER	OCTOBER	NOVEMBER	DECEMBER
First 1/2 of Month	No meeting, start school	Membership & goal setting fun event	Fun event	Local service project work
Second 1/2 of Month	Membership event	Local service planning with possible guest speaker on subject	Global service planning with possible guest speaker on subject	No meeting, allow students to focus on finals and enjoy their break

WHEN	JANUARY	FEBRUARY	MARCH	APRIL
First 1/2 of Month	No meeting, allow students to return to campus and focus	Local service work	Complete local service work	Hand off club to next year's leaders
Second 1/2 of Month	Global service project work	Global service work	Complete global service work	Fun event

What does this schedule accomplish?

- * Fun, opportunity to make new friends
- * Local service resume building
- * Global service resume building

What club positions are needed?

- * President
- * Chairperson of local service project committee
- * Chairperson of global service project committee
- * Social committee chairperson

Why is this plan attractive to medical schools?

- * Demonstrates your commitment to local adults and children in need
- * Details your understanding of global health and human service concerns
- * Shows your creativity
- * Allows opportunities for many to lead (local chair, social chair, global chair, president)
- * Provides study time by allowing you to delegate major decisions and tasks

SIX TIPS FOR LEADING STUDENT ORGANIZATIONS

Leave Campus to Serve Locally

Medical schools will want to see your commitment and understanding of communities that need medical care.

You won't be able to sit knee-to-knee with people who are severely under-resourced by staying on campus. Take your club members off campus to serve local children and families.

Delegate Tasks

Excellent leaders will delegate decisions and tasks to a range of individuals. Ask for help at all meetings and events.

Never take on any event or function by yourself. It isn't expected and others want the leadership experience.

Go Global

Medical schools will expect you to have a perspective on healthcare in developing countries. Develop an opportunity for your members to serve hospitals and clinics abroad by traveling to serve or by creating an awareness of global care concerns.

Find Success in Quality, Not Quantity

Too often, club leaders will base the success of a club on the number of members who regularly attend events or guests who attend special events.

As a leader, look for the quality of service within your membership, rather than the quantity of people who attend. Do you want a load of people with you who lack a real commitment to the cause? No.

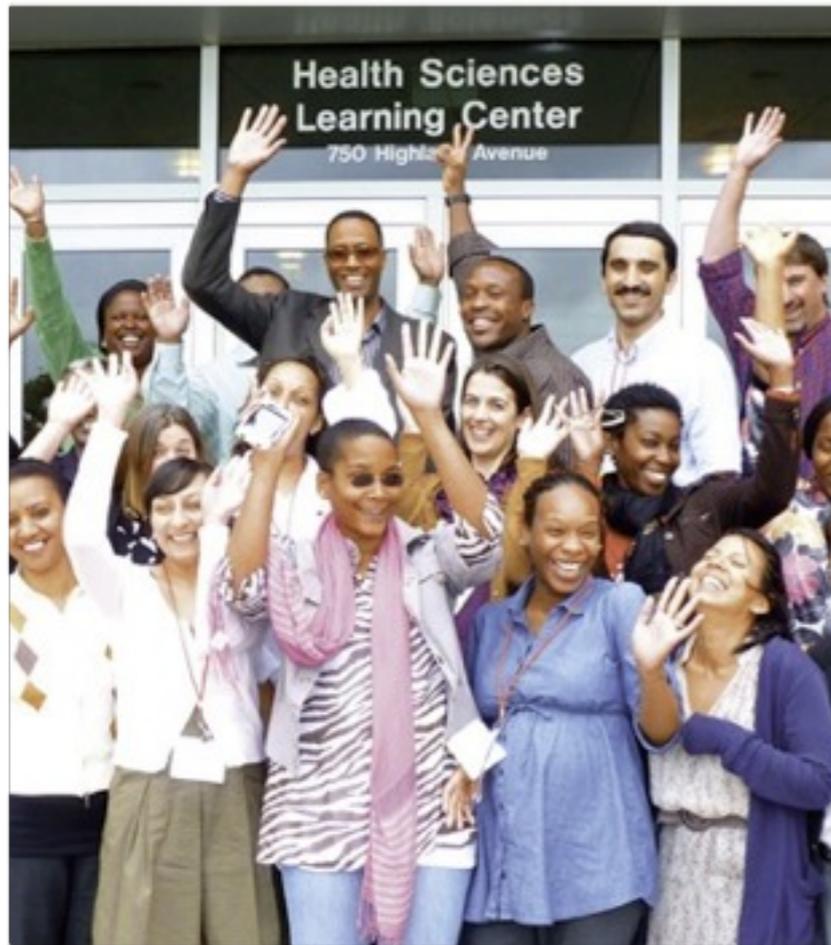
Never Fundraise for Non-Profits (or Limit Fundraising)

Great pre-medical students want to solve problems locally and globally. However, becoming a source of funds for programs isn't your job as student leader. As a student, you should learn about organizations and support their causes.

You should never fundraise. Or you should limit fundraising. Why? Many students struggle to pay their tuition, housing, and book fees. These students feel threatened by having to fundraise for non-profit organizations locally and abroad.

Manage Your Time

Great young leaders will spend countless hours on club activities. Be certain that these activities do not impact your grades. If they do, you must pull back on your time commitment.



Many pre-med scholars collaborate with professionals from their communities to develop health disparities projects and related research.

Creating and Leading Your Own Health Disparities Project

Today's medical schools are looking for applicants with unique leadership experiences that demonstrate commitment to serving the most under-resourced communities.

Imagine sitting across from a physician during a medical school interview. You're asked to discuss a time when you served in a leadership role and what you learned from it. Envision answering the question with a world-class response, rather than a typical response.

Leadership: That "WOW" Med School Interview Moment

Now see yourself detailing a health project that you created, launched, and ultimately discussed with the larger community. You have a medical leadership response that has a "WOW" factor to it. Can you see yourself sharing:

- * How you learned about the health disparity
- * What you read about the health disparity
- * Who you talked to about the health disparity concern
- * What you did to inform underserved communities about the health disparity
- * The project you undertook to help your targeted community move toward better health
- * How you shared your ideas and findings with physicians and community leaders

That leadership discussion would make a positive impact on your interviewer and his or her decision to select you for medical school.

Understanding Health Disparities

Health disparities are well-documented in minority populations such as African Americans, Native Americans, African and Asian immigrant groups, and Latinos.

Rural Americans and all adults and children in lower economic status families have poorer health outcomes than white families with higher incomes and excellent healthcare access.

When compared to white populations, minority groups have higher incidence of chronic disease, higher mortality rates, and poorer healthcare outcomes.

Health Disparities Around You

Do all students on your campus have health insurance? Do you? Why would insurance and healthcare access impact health?

Are there homeless persons near your campus? If so, how do they receive healthcare?



Many pre-med scholars work with children and families to develop a greater understanding of health disparities.

Undergraduates Address Health Disparities

- * Mohamed became concerned that African immigrant adults were sharing their prescription medication. He decided to create an awareness training program within the community to help elders and nearby pharmacists understand the dangers of medication sharing.
- * Samantha and Justin noticed that many economically challenged and minority kids in their rural community were obese. They created an After-school nutrition and physical education program.
- * Sheila found that the Hmong immigrants in her community did not understand blood pressure. She set up a monthly blood pressure screening and education table at the local farmer's market where many Hmong families shop.

Increasing Awareness Among Somali Elders Regarding the Dangers of Prescription Medication Sharing

Mohamed Hassan

University of Minnesota Medical School

Introduction

After years of civil war and famine, many Somali families immigrated to the United States, specifically Minneapolis, Minnesota in the 1990's. While in Africa, adults pooled resources in order to ensure survival. This sense of community sharing is still a core value among those elders living in the United States.

Due to language barriers, cultural beliefs, and a general lack of understanding regarding prescription medication, countless Somali elders share their medication with each other. While many within the community view this practice as a continuation of survival strategies, health care providers recognize prescription sharing as a deadly concern.

Research and educational programs are needed to educate Somali elders on the health concerns related to prescription medication sharing.

Somalis and Medication Sharing

- Elders believe there is no harm in sharing prescribed medication
- Long standing cultural traditions lead many individuals to share all medication
- Language barriers impact elder's ability to understand the use and function of medication
- Abuse of prescription medication is common
- Economic limitations prevent many from securing their own prescriptions

Research and Awareness Methods:

1. Research prescriptions sharing among Somali elders, analyze current data and findings on prescription sharing within immigrant communities
2. Interview physicians and pharmacists, focusing on medication sharing within target audience
3. Develop surveys, asking Somali elders and families to share perspectives regarding medication sharing practices, known/unknown dangers
4. Develop a bilingual fact sheet in English and Somali which details medication sharing dangers and solutions
5. Distribute information among Somali elderly and families within the Brian Coyle Community Center, at neighborhood Mosques and within Ross Pharmacy
6. Host three , one hour long educational classes at neighborhood mosques detailing dangers of medication sharing
7. Follow up with selected members of the target audience to gauge their increased understanding on the subject of the dangers of medication sharing



Mohamed Hassan
Somali-American
University of Minnesota

Discussion

There is an increasing need to educate Somali elderly about dangers associated with sharing prescription medication . More culturally appropriate training programs are needed to raise awareness of this issue.



Researchers and professional health educators must the respect core value of sharing among Somalis, historical survival strategies, religious convictions, and economic indicators when developing new medication/training programs.

Future Concerns

As Somali adults and children become accustomed to Americanized diet and exercise, new health risks will unfold. More data is needed to understand emerging health trends within this immigrant community.

Thursday's Mind & Body Project

Preventing Childhood Obesity in Rural Minnesota

Samantha Calvin & Justin Pierskalla Pre Medical Scholars

Introduction

Our aim was to create a multi-week program where children, living in poverty within rural Minnesota, could develop strategies for sustaining a healthy body and mind.



Research

According to a 2012 study, 11% of children are obese in Minnesota.

International studies find higher rates of obesity in rural versus urban areas.

Research suggests poverty has an affect on obesity and diabetes rates.

Methods

Goal: To promote healthy mind and body among 20 targeted, rural Caucasian and minority school age children in Minnesota. The program took place between December 2012 and May 2013.

Steps

1. Researched the prevalence of obesity among rural children living in Minnesota. Found common causes of obesity and health risks associated with it.
2. Identified a population of at-risk children and a program site. Selected rural school in Minnesota, with many children living at or below the poverty line.
Partnered with elementary school principal
Recruited 20 students, 5th and 6th grade
Secured written permission from parents
3. Surveyed participants to help them evaluate overall health.
4. Created multi-week curriculum plan focused on healthy eating, bullying, peer pressure, physical activity, and decision making.
5. Held sessions twice per month from 4:00 to 5:30 p.m.
Program: Healthy snack
 Physical activity
 Educational component

Discussion

New and inspiring means for preventing obesity among rural children is essential. Our program sparked children to become more excited about eating healthy and incorporating daily physical activity.



Children, families, schools, medical care providers, and communities must work together to create long-term programs which support healthier lifestyles in rural communities.

Children and their families must become more aware of how childhood obesity impacts heart disease, stroke, high blood pressure, and diabetes over time.

Causes of Health Disparities

As a future physician, you'll want to understand your patients and the barriers they face. Read through federal healthcare law to understand more.

Most health disparities result from three main factors:

1. Personal, socioeconomic, and environmental characteristics of different ethnic and racial groups.
2. Barriers certain racial and ethnic groups encounter when trying to enter the healthcare delivery system.
3. Differences in quality among racial and ethnic groups.



Minority children are dramatically impacted by health disparities and limited healthcare access.

What Limits Equality in Healthcare?

Lack of insurance coverage.

Without health insurance, patients are more likely to postpone or forego medical care and go without prescription medications. Minority groups in the United States lack insurance coverage at higher rates than whites.

Language barriers.

Language differences restrict access to medical care for minorities in the United States who are not English proficient.

Legal barriers.

Access to medical care by low-income immigrant minorities can be hindered by legal barriers to public insurance programs.

Lack of financial resources.

Although the lack of financial resources is a barrier to healthcare access for many Americans, the impact on access appears to be greater for minority populations.

Additional Limitations to Healthcare Access

Scarcity of providers.

In inner cities, rural areas, and communities with high concentrations of minority populations, access to medical care can be limited due to the scarcity of primary care practitioners, specialists, and diagnostic facilities.

The healthcare financing system.

Racial and ethnic minorities are more likely to be enrolled in health insurance plans which place limits on covered services and offer a limited number of healthcare providers.

Lack of a regular source of care.

Without access to a regular source of care, patients have greater difficulty obtaining care, attend fewer doctor visits, and more difficulty obtaining prescription drugs. Compared to whites, minority groups in the United States are less likely to have a doctor they go to on a regular basis and are more likely to use emergency rooms and hospitals as a source of care.

Health literacy.

This is where patients have problems obtaining, processing, and understanding basic health information. For example, patients with a poor understanding of good health may not know when it is necessary to seek care for certain symptoms.

Lack of diversity in the healthcare workforce.

A major reason for disparities in access to care are the cultural differences between white healthcare providers and minority patients.

Structural barriers.

These barriers include poor transportation, an inability to schedule appointments quickly or during convenient hours, and excessive time spent in the waiting room, all of which affect a person's ability and willingness to obtain needed care.

• Develop Your Own Health Disparities Project Plan •

	STEP	ACTIVITIES
1	Identify	Identify a health disparity concern that interests you
2	Research	Research information posted on Google and popular community sites. Research information posted through trusted medical journals.
3	Listen	Talk to community leaders and community members. Discuss your concerns and project idea. Ask them to explain to you how your health disparity concept impacts the people around them. Ask physicians about your proposed project. Is it a need?
4	Summarize	Summarize your findings from research and listening to community members, physicians, and others.
5	Plan	Plan your project by setting goals, a clear timeline, and objectives. Ask a trusted mentor what he or she thinks of your project. Is it a reasonable project that you can do in a few months? Do you have a reasonable number of people in mind to serve (ideally 20)?
6	Implement	Identify a health disparity project and get moving. Use four hours each month to work on it.
7	Implement	Continue working on your project.
8	Implement	Finish your project.
9	Evaluate	Evaluate your findings and your project. What did you do? What did you learn? What did your targeted audience learn or how did they change as a result of your work? What was successful and not successful?
10	Share	Share your findings and information with healthcare providers and community leaders
11	Return	Take some time to reflect on your project. Return to the community where you did your project. Analyze the impact that you made.

Identify Your Health Disparities Project

Most pre-med students want to serve their communities and build their leadership profile. Finding a place to start is hard. The most difficult task typically is figuring out a project. Start by answering these questions:

1. What's happening to a group of people that I care about? How is their health being negatively impacted by their own behaviors or lack of health knowledge?
2. What happened to a friend or family member that appears to be a concern among all people in my community?
3. How are the health concerns of people in my community changing? What is causing these changes?

Next, Turn Your Concern into a Project:

• Project Example #1 •

Concern:

Many immigrant boys in my town play soccer. We seem to have an increased rate of concussions among children who don't have the ability to play regulation games or receive proper coaching.

Project:

Developing Concussion Awareness and Prevention Strategies within Economically Challenged Families

Actions:

Meet with school principal and local PTA president at selected elementary school to discuss concern.

Mini-presentations at a table located within the elementary school during fall and spring parent teacher conferences.

Presentations at upcoming parent teacher conference and a paragraph briefing in the elementary school newsletter.

• Project Example #2 •

Concern:

A large number of elders in my mosque seem depressed due to isolation and continued cultural misunderstandings. We don't talk about mental illness in my community.

Project:

Promoting Depression Screenings and Mental Health Awareness Among Muslim Elders

Actions:

Meet with local mental healthcare provider to discuss concerns.

Meet with mosque leaders to share concerns, request time to present.

Host one-hour sessions on overall men's and women's health to targeted groups. Insert discussion on mental health as a part of the overall presentation.

Ask physicians to serve on panels for follow up discussions on areas of health discussed in the training. Ensure that a mental health provider is on that panel.

• Project Example #3: Rural Teen Pregnancy Prevention Project •

	STEP	ACTIVITIES
September	Identify	Economically challenged teen girls have high rates of pregnancy in my small hometown
October	Research	Research information posted on popular sites and within medical journals. Learn trends, historic and current views of teen pregnancy, prevention, family dynamics in economically challenged homes/rural communities.
November	Listen	Talk to community leaders and community members. Discuss concerns and project idea. Ask physicians about your proposed project. Determine the need for outreach and awareness.
December	Summarize	Summarize findings from research and various meetings.
January	Plan	Plan project by setting goals, a clear timeline, and objectives. Determine how to reach out to 20 girls in my community.
February	Implement	Ask my former science and health instructor for one-hour lunch forums, twice per month over two months. Secure approval from high school principal and parents for discussions ranging from college to health.
March	Implement	Start a circle of 20 targeted girls talking about goal setting, college planning, general health and sexual health.
April	Implement	Complete the fourth talking circle with personal planning sheets on goals, college, and health.
May	Evaluate	Evaluate project. What will be covered? Will girls actively participate? Will girls share their thoughts on pressures of teen life? What will be successful and what will need to be revised?
June	Share	Share findings and general information with healthcare providers and community leaders
October	Return	Reflect on my project. Return to the community, talk to the girls again, and analyze the impact.

• Project Example #4 Hmong Immigrant Blood Pressure Awareness •

	STEP	ACTIVITIES
September	Identify	Hmong immigrant adults don't understand their blood pressure numbers, dangers of high blood pressure.
September	Research	Research information posted on popular sites and within medical journals. Learn how to take blood pressure readings, discuss blood pressure numbers with adults in community.
October	Listen	Talk to community leaders and community members. Discuss concerns and project idea. Ask physicians about your proposed project. Determined the need for outreach and awareness.
October	Summarize	Summarize findings from research and various meetings.
November	Plan	Plan project by setting goals, a clear timeline, and objectives. Determine how to reach out to 20 to 40 Hmong adults on a monthly basis.
December	Implement	Ask for a table at the Hmong Village shopping venue. Create information about high blood pressure in Hmong language. Purchase or borrow blood pressure cuff. Create signage for blood pressure table.
January, February, March	Implement	Take blood pressure readings from 20 to 40 adults once per month at Hmong Village. Discuss blood pressure readings and provided literature based on findings.
April	Implement	Complete monthly blood pressure readings and discussions.
May	Evaluate	Evaluate project. Determine trends in blood pressure levels and awareness of blood pressure.
June	Share	Share findings and general information with healthcare providers and community leaders.
July	Return	Return to the community, talk to various individuals who will take part in the program to determine how they understand blood pressure information, if they will make appointments with primary care physicians.

COMMUNITY



Exceptional pre-meds work with a range of children, adults, and older people to understand their communities.

Many physicians are excellent citizens, both globally and locally. Most physicians can be counted on to serve in local, free, or reduced-cost clinics or to provide time to international locations.

Medical schools will expect you to have community service, service learning, or international service work on your AMCAS. Use your time as an undergraduate to demonstrate your commitment to a wide range of families. Completing a few hours each month throughout your undergraduate career will help inform you about adults and children with limited housing, meals, educational access, and transportation needs.

This chapter details local and global service concepts to build your AMCAS.



Volunteering Builds Understanding

Every medical school admissions committee member will tell medical school applicants that volunteering within the community is essential.

Despite already packed schedules, it seems that most pre-med students understand and are even enthusiastic about serving the community. For many it is simply a part of their lifestyle. Great pre-meds know that the best physicians are smart, but also show compassion toward people.

Volunteering opportunities vary widely. While having volunteering experience in hospitals, elder care facilities, and clinics is an essential part of your application, serving in the community is an expectation too.



Many pre-meds volunteer globally to understand the healthcare needs of people in developing countries.

BUILD YOUR AMCAS THROUGH VOLUNTEERING

Volunteer where you have opportunities to:

1. Interact with individuals. Do not solely volunteer doing office work that doesn't afford you opportunities to interact with clients
2. Learn about new cultures, religions, and persons of varied socio-economic status
3. Leave campus. Provide service to non-college age adults and children living throughout your community.
4. Develop yourself early in your college career. Start volunteering as a freshman, not just before you apply to medical school.
5. Stay for a while. Don't jump from one volunteering activity to another. Those types of volunteers are known as "tourists."
6. Serve locally. Look in your own backyard for people who need your support and assistance. You should never need money to serve as a volunteer in your own community.
7. Serve globally. If you have the financial resources and time, leave the country to serve. If you don't have the resources or time, stay local.

Social Determinants of Health

Volunteering in local and global communities can help you understand the social determinants of health.

Examples of the social determinants of health include:

1. Availability of low-cost, healthful foods
2. Social norms and attitudes such as discrimination
3. Exposure to crime, violence, and social disorder
4. Availability of solid job opportunities that provide livable wages and health and dental benefits
5. Social support and social interactions
6. Availability of technology including internet and mobile phone access
7. Socioeconomic conditions such as concentrated poverty
8. Quality preschools, K-12 schools and postsecondary options
9. Transportation options
10. Public safety
11. Residential housing equity, non-segregated housing

Local Volunteering

Enjoy working with children and teens?

- * Tutor children at an After-school program
- * Coach summer Latino soccer league
- * Lifeguard at a summer camp for special needs children
- * Talk with homeless kids at shelters
- * Become a Big Brother or Big Sister

Enjoy working with adults?

- * Prepare adults for their GED or citizenship test
- * Serve meals at homeless shelters
- * Develop opportunities for veterans to meet up
- * Lead regular classes on health and wellness

Enjoy working with the elderly?

- * Set up weekly game night or serve as Bingo night caller at care facilities
- * Visit with elderly persons in their homes, through hospice, or in eldercare or memory care facilities
- * Grocery shop and run errands for home-bound adults
- * Deliver Meals on Wheels

Benefits of Global Volunteering

Volunteering internationally requires time and money. Some pre-meds have those resources and others do not. When asked, those who have volunteered internationally acknowledge a wide range of benefits from their experience.

These benefits include:

1. Appreciating new cultures and attitudes toward life
2. Meeting like-minded people
3. Gaining self-confidence by maneuvering through international systems and locations
4. Learning a new language
5. Clarifying life goals
6. Living off the beaten path
7. Taking time to recharge
8. Promoting a cause
9. Applying skills learned in college
10. Building lifelong relationships with host families and physicians

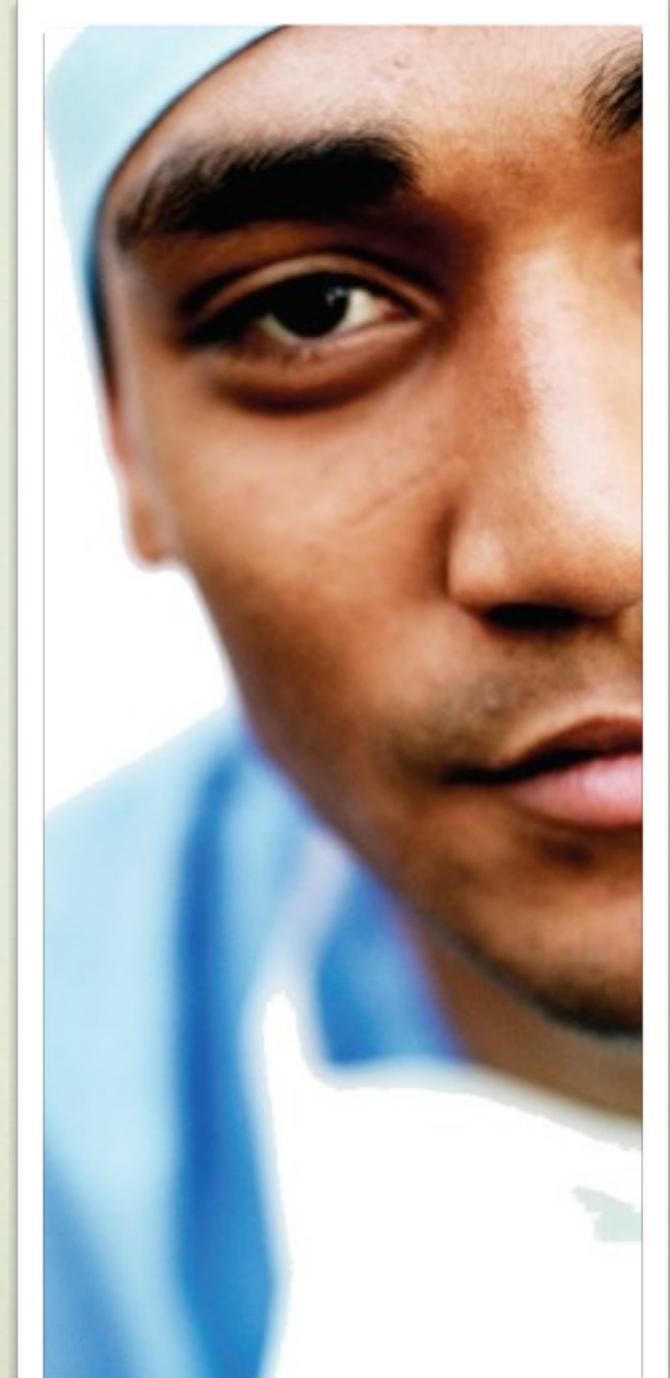
MEDICINE



Pre-meds must demonstrate their understanding of medicine through physician shadowing/clinical observation and medically-related volunteering.

All medical school admissions leaders will expect you to have the ability to discuss the daily lives of physicians.

This chapter details how to pursue an understanding of medicine through volunteering, paid work, and physician shadowing/clinical observation.



Understanding Medicine

Every applicant to medical school must have familiarity with physicians. Your ability to detail how physicians interact with patients, patients' families, and the overall healthcare team is essential.

While no medical school will have a formula that requires a specific number of hours for shadowing physicians, volunteering or working in medicine, it is reasonable to expect applicants to have 24 to 40 hours of shadowing and 100+ hours of experience with patients through volunteer or paid work.

Every medical school will want to see your long-term commitment to volunteering. Having a range of opportunities in hospice, clinics, hospitals, and elder care facilities is optimal.



VOLUNTEER & PAID WORK IN MEDICINE

Volunteer where you have opportunities to:

- * Interact with patients and their families
- * Learn about how patients' culture, religion, and socioeconomic status influence their perception of care and where they receive care
- * Develop your understanding of medicine early in your college career. Start volunteering as a freshman, not just before you apply to medical school.
- * Stay for a while. Stay with an organization for a full academic year or summer.
- * Take the entry-level paid work or volunteering, realizing that all work with patients, families, and patient visitors will provide you with needed experience.
- * Be mindful of the number of hours spent volunteering. Be careful that your volunteering is continual, but that it doesn't impact your ability to perform well in classes, labs, and on tests.
- * Serve locally. Look for hospitals, clinics, and related organizations that serve patients within a few miles of your home or college campus.
- * Serve globally. If you have the financial resources and time, leave the country to provide global volunteering.

SHADOWING PHYSICIANS

Shadowing physicians is an essential element of your application to medical school. While some pre-medical students have access to physicians through their family or alumni network on campus, other students find the idea of connecting with physicians for shadowing to be a monumental task.

Step 1: WHO

Take some time to think about the types of physicians you wish to shadow. Are they general practitioners, pediatricians, oncologists, surgeons, or other types of providers? Do they conduct the type of research you may be interested in doing?

Step 2: HOW

Think about your transportation options and where the doctors that you have an interest in shadowing are located. Do you rely on a bus or have a car?

Step 3: WHERE

Research the hospitals or clinics in your area. Is there a high number of pre-meds around these clinics or hospitals that may already have relationships with doctors? Can you go further out into the community to find other hospitals and clinics?

Step 4: WHEN

Think about blocks of time that you have available. Do you have time every Tuesday Afternoon? Only during winter and spring break? Only next summer?

Step 5: WRITE

Based on the information above, create a list of 10 specific physicians that you want to shadow. Ensure that you have an interest in each physician, that you can travel to his or her location easily, and that you have time to shadow.

Finally, create a letter about your interest in shadowing 10 physicians. Write and mail letters (yes, envelope, stamp and mail) or email your 10 targeted doctors.

The following page shows a template that you may wish to redraft in order to gain shadowing experience. Physicians always want to understand your commitment to community service and medicine before they take you on as a shadow.

In your shadowing request letter (or email), provide a description of your volunteering in the community, and service in medicine. Include your reflections on volunteering or paid work, research, and leadership.

DOCTOR SHADOWING TEMPLATE LETTER

Month 00, 2014

Name Name, MD
Address
Address
City, State and ZIP

Dear Dr. LASTNAME:

Over the past several years, I have become increasingly interested in pursuing a career in medicine. Recently, I have been researching the types of physicians that work in areas that match my interests. I have found your practice to be very exciting and wonder if you may consider having me as a student shadow or clinical observer within your practice. My name is NAME HERE. I am a pre-medical student at NAME OF COLLEGE/UNIVERSITY HERE. I am a FRESHMAN/SOPHOMORE/JUNIOR/SENIOR studying MAJOR.

My volunteering within the community, volunteering in medicine, and leadership skills are emerging. I am currently volunteering with NAME OF COMMUNITY ORGANIZATION as a DESCRIBE POSITION. The volunteering provides me with excellent insight into underserved communities within our area. As a volunteer with NAME OF HOSPITAL OR CLINIC, I have learned more about teamwork and the process of caring for patients and their families. Recently, I have taken on a leadership role in INSERT NAME OF ORGANIZATION/PROJECT HERE. This leadership activity has helped me build my communications skills. Together, I believe these volunteering and leadership development opportunities have prepared me well to become a solid pre-medical scholar and student shadow.

Under the direction of my research mentor, DR. NAME HERE, I have come to appreciate the interplay of science and medicine. Our research project details GOAL OF RESEARCH HERE. This project has taught me a great deal about teamwork, basic science, and how bench research can be translated to the bedside.

Would you consider hosting me as your shadow or clinical observer once per month between NEXT MONTH AND 10 MONTHS FROM NOW? Please let me know your thoughts and if there is a staff member with whom I might connect to launch any needed clinical observer paperwork. You may reach me via email at name@yahoo.com or via phone or text at xxx xxx xxxx.

Thank you for your consideration,

Your Name Here

Shadowing Letters

Sending letters to 10 physicians will likely yield one response. While many scholars want to shadow a continuum of physicians, current data privacy laws and local policies may prevent a young scholar from jumping from one physician to another.

Many hospitals and clinics have a large collection of paperwork that you must complete in order to shadow. This may include information on the timeline of your shadowing, your understanding of patient data law, and your immunization record. Complete the paperwork in a timely fashion and submit it to the contact listed on the paperwork.

After you have completed your shadowing, write a thank you note or email to your physician mentor. Detail what you have learned in that letter and save that information to include in your AMCAS.

What should I wear during shadowing?

Men: Dark pants, button-up dress shirt with a white t-shirt underneath it, tie, shined dress shoes. No scent of any kind.

Women: Dark pants or skirt below the knee, dress shirt with a high neckline, and flat dark shoes. No scent, limited makeup, and no costume jewelry.

Bring a small notebook and pen.

What should I do during shadowing?

Some physicians have had a number of shadows. They will guide you through the day. For others, this may be new to them and they may be nervous too.

All doctors must introduce you as a student to his or her patients. The patient has the right to ask you to leave the room. If the patient prefers that you leave, quietly exit the room and stand outside the door (around five feet away).

What should I say during shadowing?

Nothing at first. Wait for the physician to address you. Some physicians will be very talkative and include you in the patient discussion. Others may prefer a quiet day with you. Do not ask the doctor or patient a question during an examination. If you have questions, wait until the patient exam is over and you are out of hearing range of others.



Shadowing physicians is an excellent way to build your understanding of medicine and the daily interactions of physicians.

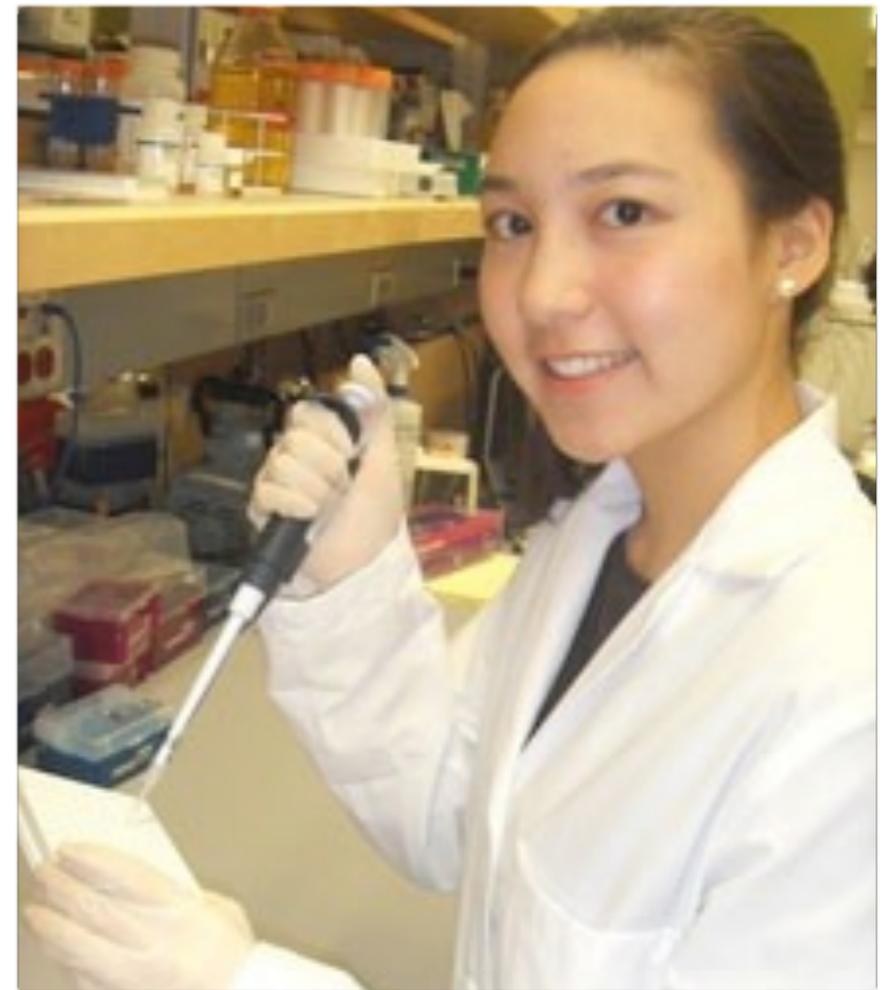
RESEARCH

Today's physicians take on exciting leadership roles in scientific discovery. Countless doctors are working hand-in-hand with leading research scientists to bring new discoveries to the bedsides of their patients.

Undergraduate scholars who have laboratory experiences on their AMCAS have a competitive advantage during medical school application review and interviewing. In addition, having research experience gives you paid work opportunities and helps you determine if lab-based research is a life-long interest.

This chapter details strategies for pursuing research on your campus and beyond.

Many pre-meds develop their understanding of medicine through undergraduate research.



Strategies for Securing On-Campus Research

Request to visit a lab, show your interest.

Discuss your interest in participating in research during your next pre-med advising or academic advising meeting.

View your campus website for student worker or work study positions in laboratories.

Stop by the office of your favorite bio or chem professor and ask for ideas.

Read about labs and researchers on your campus. Demonstrate your interest by emailing targeted researchers.

Review bulletin boards in the biology and chemistry departments.

Connect with upperclassman in your major. Ask them about their research experiences and request a tour from those students. Contact those research labs that interest you early in your academic career.

Attend pre-medical club meetings. Ask club officers to have upperclassmen present their research experiences or posters as a part of a meeting.

Attend research presentations by faculty members and students, pursue those labs that interest you.

Strategies for Landing Summer Research Internships

Conduct a web search of summer research internships in areas of your interest. There are thousands of paid internship options. Narrow the focus to types of research of interest to you. Don't be afraid to travel across the country for the best opportunities. Do this web search during your winter break and apply for internships before mid-February.

Determine if research facilities or medical manufacturing companies that are unaffiliated with college campuses have research interns. Apply to summer programs early.

Look at national programs with the National Institutes of Health and other governmental organizations for internship options. Many state-run health departments also have internships.

Develop your own internship. Analyze your own research interests and pursue researchers who are conducting similar projects. Ask to be a part of a current project or to create a spin-off project.

Consider volunteering for researchers on your campus during the academic year. Ask to be considered for paid work during the summer.

YOUR MED SCHOOL APPLICATION



Creating a well-rounded AMCAS requires time, creativity, and one trusted editor.

As you write your AMCAS, think about each experience will be perceived by practicing physicians, medical students involved in the admissions process, and professional medical school admissions staff and leaders.

This chapter will provide you with insight on how to create excellent experience narratives using common buzz words. You'll also explore how to write a simple, yet colorful personal statement using the burger method.



Pay attention to the buzz words or common key words and phrases found on medical school websites. Reflect those words and phrases in your AMCAS.



Your 15 Experiences: The BUZZ

You're ready to write your 15 experiences within your AMCAS. Where should you start?

Let's start with the basics with your hand and a few bees. You'll want to review the experiences you've gathered through:

- 1) Research
- 2) Volunteering in the community
- 3) Understanding medicine through volunteering, paid work, or shadowing physicians
- 4) Leadership

Every medical school looks for the buzz words to determine if you're a fit for their medical school. If you have 10 to 12 medical schools in mind now, review their web pages to determine if they have essential or desirable qualities listed for their applicants. After you begin to see buzz words on their websites, craft the 15 experiences of your AMCAS around their words.

When an admissions leader looks at your AMCAS, your 15 experiences come before your personal essay and personal statement. While many students focus their hearts and souls on the personal statement, those same people do not spend enough time developing the 15 experience explanations. This is a mistake! Make a great impression as you expand on your 15 experiences. You'll be glad you did.

Knowing the Buzz Words

The aim of your 15 AMCAS experiences is to tell the reader that you are a well-rounded person who understands medicine.

12 of your 15 experiences are allotted 700 characters to describe.

Up to 3 of your 15 experiences may be selected as your “most meaningful.” When you designate an activity as being most meaningful, you will be given an additional 1325 characters to explain why.

When writing your response, you might want to consider the transformative nature of the experience, the impact you made while engaging in the activity, and the personal growth you experienced as a result of your participation

Your response to the 15 experiences explanation should be in two parts:

1. Overview for the reader what you did.
2. Reflect on how this experience helped you build essential or desirable qualities that every great medical school candidate needs.

What are the essential and desirable qualities of ideal medical school applicants?

An exceptional medical school applicant:

- * Cares about the human condition and the underserved
- * Understands medicine
- * Commits to community and global care
- * Demonstrates honesty and integrity
- * Discusses strengths and weaknesses and is self-aware
- * Demonstrates moral standards and conduct
- * Communicates well orally and in writing
- * Displays leadership and teamwork
- * Respects values and belief systems of others and enjoys diversity
- * Displays intellectual curiosity through research, teaching
- * Understands how to apply science to medical practice
- * Is academically successful: displays time management and motivation
- * Displays reliance: has the ability to cope with stress, deal with sacrifice and delayed gratification
- * Uses creativity to address problems, understand people

USING BUZZ WORDS TO WRITE YOUR 15 AMCAS EXPERIENCES

	BUZZ WORDS	EXAMPLES
1	Demonstrates honest and integrity	Serving as a board member for the Pre-Med Scholars Chapter required a great deal of honesty and integrity. I was entrusted with a large amount of cash, which was used for our local and global outreach programs.
2	Has self awareness, understands strengths and weaknesses	While shadowing Dr. Mim Ushifa, I learned how to prepare myself to see children impacted by cardiovascular conditions. I read countless journal articles in order to appreciate the range of chronic conditions. I now realize that one of my strengths is in understanding medical journals and discussing findings with others. I've also worked on my personal weaknesses, which are not finding a healthy balance between my work/academic life and maintaining my own wellness.
3	Communicates well: Oral and Written	Working as a scribe at the Regional Hospital Emergency Department honed my oral and written communications skills within a healthcare setting. After having such a wide range of discussions regarding my note taking with physicians, I communicate more succinctly. My written skills, specifically related to medical terminology, have also become more advanced.
4	Displays leadership and teamwork	During the week-long event where I worked alongside my peers, I demonstrated my leadership skills and interest in working with large, diverse teams. While at the Vietnamese Center events, I delegated tasks effectively while my table and project was showcased and help others launch effective programs throughout the health conferences.
5	Respects others values and beliefs, enjoys diversity	Throughout my adventures in India, I grew to respect the values and beliefs of those around me. companions. The diverse methods for discussing health equity issues, social justice concerns, and educational access gave me a greater appreciation for my Indian host family and the care providers with whom I met.
6	Understands how to apply science to the practice of medicine	During the summer of 2013, I worked as a lab technician with the Dr. Grace Front Simulation Center. My time spent there helped me apply my basic science coursework, specifically in genetics and biochemistry, to medical practice. I enjoyed how Dr. Front would discuss issues concerning melanoma with me. I also found it extremely important that she was working closely with a research team at the university to translate her findings for patients in the oncology unit.

Your Personal Statement: The Burger



So, you're ready to write the personal statement for your application to medical school.

Some medical school admissions leaders will tell you that you should write about anything that demonstrates your passion.

Others will let you in on a secret: they read as many as 40 applications to medical school each day between the months of July and February. While your personal statement and entire medical school application (AMCAS) should be unique, it is smart for you to be clear about why medicine is your passion. What experiences have formed your passion?

Theme: Medical Hardship or Grand Adventure?

Many pre-medical scholars believe a major medical crisis has formed their passion for medicine. This may be a personal illness or injury or the medical illness or injury of a loved one. This is one approach to an essay. However, MOST applicants take this route. MOST will tell the reader why medicine was transformational because it saved a life. This is interesting, yet very common.

Think instead about the BEST day of your life, the grand adventure, the best memory. Giving the readers a unique story that is engaging, and even non-medical, is a relief for the reader. It will give insight into your unique personality and point-of-view.

Goal of Your Personal Statement

Before you build your personal statement burger, it's important to realize that this essay should do two things for you. It should make the reader like you AND realize that you are suitable for a position within their medical school.

Likability *The reader likes me.*

Suitability *The reader thinks I am suitable for his or her medical school.*

Your Five-Layered Burger

Medical School Personal Statement

- = 5 Part Essay
- = 5 Part Burger
- = 5 Paragraphs
- = 5,000 characters (or so)
- = 5 Paragraphs @ 1,000 Characters Each

Imagine waiting in line at your favorite fast food joint. You're ordering a burger. What's on it? The burger has a top and bottom bun, meat, a piece of cheese, and a leaf of lettuce. Can you form a personal statement just like a burger? Yes!

Your Personal Statement = Five Layered Burger

Paragraph 1: Top of Bun

Your Introduction

Here your grand adventure comes to life
It introduces you and your theme

Paragraph 2: Lettuce

Experience in Pre-Medicine 1

Examples of experiences:

Volunteering in medicine

Shadowing a physician

Research

Ties to your theme

Paragraph 3: Cheese

Experience in Pre-Medicine 2

Ties to your theme

Paragraph 4: Meat

Experience in Pre-Medicine 3

Ties to your theme

Paragraph 5: Bottom of Bun

Your Summary

Your summary should loop back to your first sentence in paragraph one

You must summarize the theme

You should end with a clear statement about why you want to be a physician

Theme of Your Essay

Is your burger a chicken ranch, a cheese and bacon, or a vegan burger? When you step up to the counter of your favorite fast food restaurant and order your burger, it has a theme or a name. Your essay needs a theme too.

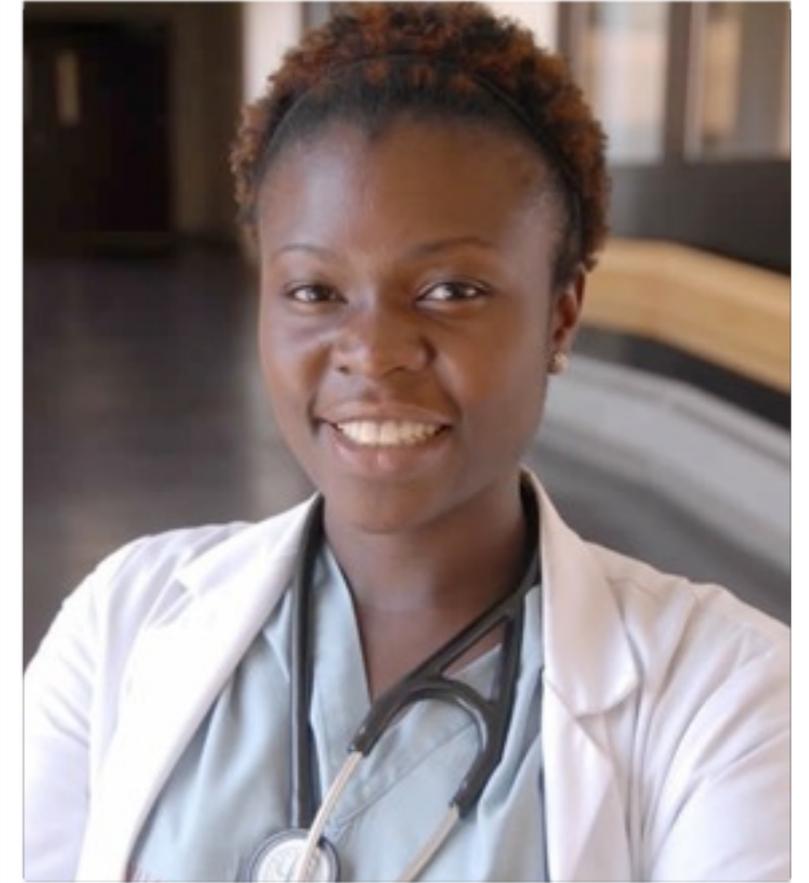
What should the theme of your essay be?

All great essays have a theme. Your theme should focus on one of the qualities of an excellent physician.

What are the qualities of an excellent physician?

Excellent physicians demonstrate their qualities while treating patients, solving problems, and working with a health team.

Your personal statement should reflect the best parts of you. Readers want to appreciate your unique nature and experiences.



Qualities When Treating Patients

- * Compassion
- * Empathy
- * Sensitivity
- * Integrity
- * Communication skills

Qualities When Solving Problems

- * Creativity
- * Initiative
- * Independence
- * Curiosity
- * Critical thinking skills

Qualities When Working on a Team

- * Perseverance
- * Dedication
- * Maturity
- * Honesty
- * Sincerity
- * Motivation
- * Energy
- * Diversity



Take five minutes to focus on the best day of your life:

You: On the Best Day of Your Life

Many writers focus on the worst day of their lives as a theme for a personal statement. Countless young people focus on a day with tragic endings, where physicians stepped in but could not save a loved one. Why?

Think about your favorite mentor or physician. Do you define that individual by the tragedy in his or her life? No! You define that mentor or physician by his or her qualities and experiences.

Does Tragedy Define Your Essay?

Step away from the medical or personal losses in your life that have influenced you. Wouldn't you rather have the reader of your personal essay see you as a strong, compassionate, and smart young leader rather than a tragic figure? Wouldn't you rather have your future patients see you as a confident and creative healer? Certainly.

Focus on the best day of your life. Then, craft an essay based on the strength and empowerment you gained from your favorite memory, perfect day, or a noteworthy figure in your life.

Who helped you see yourself as a smart and useful young leader?

- What characteristics did he or she have?
- What did he or she look like?
- How old were you?
- Where was this person living? Working?
- How did you know this person?
- What lesson did she or he teach you?

What is your favorite memory?

- How did it define you as the person you are today?
- Who was there with you?
- Why did it make you happy, fulfilled?
- When was it?
- What does your memory smell, look, sound like?
- Where was it?

Where did you spend a day that changed your life for the better?

- How did spending time there help you grow?
- Who was with you?
- When was it? How old were you?
- Why did your life or perspective change?
- Did you help someone? Who was it?

Your Personal Statement = A Childhood Baseball Example

Paragraph 1:

Your Introduction:
Your Best Memory:

Your Theme:

Paragraph 2:

Experience in Pre-Medicine 1:
Ties to your theme:

Paragraph 3:

Experience in Pre-Medicine 2:
Ties to your theme:

Paragraph 3:

Experience in Pre-Medicine 3:
Ties to your theme:

Paragraph 5:

Your Summary:

Top of Bun

Love of baseball
Creating a baseball field in
the basement in winter
Creativity

Chicken Patty

Volunteering
A creative hospital volunteer
ignites your passion for
listening to elderly share
their life stories

Lettuce

Research
A creative researcher
develops new techniques,
igniting your appreciation
for innovation

Tomato

Shadowing Physician
A creative physician
demonstrates how
technology and compassion
can serve a chronically ill
patient

Bottom of Bun

Baseball and medicine
spark your creativity

Medicine is a creative
profession

Your Personal Statement = Grandma's Garden Example

Paragraph 1:

Your Introduction:

Your Best Memory:

Your Theme:

Paragraph 2:

Experience in Pre-Medicine 1:
Ties to your theme:

Paragraph 3:

Experience in Pre-Medicine 2:
Ties to your theme:

Paragraph 3:

Experience in Pre-Medicine 3:
Ties to your theme:

Paragraph 5:

Your Summary:

Top of Bun

Grandma listened to me in the
garden, garden was a place to
discuss and organize life
Summer of my 9th year,
grandma's garden was
the hub of our neighborhood
Communication (listening)

Beef Patty

Research
Your grad student "boss"
held daily team meeting, listened
to new ideas, encouraged you

Cheese

Shadowing Physician
Your physician mentor listened to
a nurse and used the nurse's
insight to change the care plan

Ketchup

Volunteering
An After-school program leader
listened to the children attending
the program and created new
program options as rewards for
completing homework

Bottom of Bun

Grandma listened to her
community and you as she worked
in garden
Great physicians listen, so will you

Your Personal Statement: Do

Stay positive. You are an educated, interesting person. Why would you want to have a statement about something unfortunate that happened in your life? 90% of those who apply to medical school tell a sad story about life or medicine. Stand out from the crowd by making a positive impact.

Transition your paragraphs clearly. What is the theme of your essay? Dedication? Critical thinking skills? Use a transition statement in every paragraph. Use the word or words that are your theme in every paragraph.

Your Personal Statement: Don't

Don't give a chronological version of your life story from childhood to yesterday. No reader wants to hear that you were inspired by medicine at age five and took AP science and mathematics courses in high school. NO ONE.

Don't write negatively about a hospital, doctor, or healthcare provider. Most readers of your essay are going to be physicians. They NEVER want to have their profession bashed by a student who hasn't worked in the field. Would you want to read an essay about how rotten college students are? NO! While some of your experiences in medicine may be negative, the personal statement/essay for AMCAS is not the forum to air your concerns.

Don't try to fix healthcare, health insurance, or the way doctors behave. You do not have the experience to try and fix a medical provider, hospital or clinic, or healthcare plan. So, don't go there. Your essay should NEVER tell the reader that you are going into medicine to fix it. You are going into medicine because you have a passion for healing people.

Don't come across as angry in your essay. Angry people are hard to be around. Why would a medical school want to invite an angry person to interview?

Don't share stories about mental illness within your family, especially your mental illness. While discussions about mental illness are important to have, this may not be the time to discuss them freely. Physicians who read your essay will wonder if you are mentally ill, how you manage it under times of stress, and if you are seeking treatment. And while mental illness is never a bad thing, your AMCAS personal statement may not be the forum for it.

Don't use "I" "I" "me" "me" in every sentence. Be careful. Talk about the fine qualities of others and what you've learned from them. Detail your relationships with physicians, researchers, and community stewards. Discuss how they have fueled your quest to understand medicine.

FIVE BUCKET INTERVIEWING STRATEGY

Preparing for medical school interviews is an exciting and stressful time. All of your pre-medical experiences have helped you arrive at this important time in your career. You need to prepare.

Nearly every pre-medical website in the country has a long list of the most common interview questions. Developing answers for every possible question is nearly impossible.

There is an easier way to prepare for interviews. It's called the "Five Bucket Strategy." By recalling and detailing the five best pre-medical experiences that you've had, you'll likely be able to answer most medical school interview questions.

This chapter will help you prepare for medical school interviews using the simple, yet effective "Five Bucket Strategy."



The bucket strategy will help you prepare for your medical school interviews.

Medical school admissions leaders and interviewers invite only the most qualified students to their campuses for interviews. If you've been invited for an interview, you are academically qualified.

In reality, interviewers aren't necessarily looking for the right or wrong answer to any question. Rather, interviewers are looking to better understand your past experiences. Your previous experiences will likely predict the way you will study, behave, and serve in medical school and throughout your medical career.

Prospective physicians must have the ability to:

1. Communicate with patients from a range of cultures
2. Absorb scientific knowledge and use it in medical settings
3. Discuss the working lives of physicians
4. Problem solve
5. Give and receive feedback
6. Lead and work on teams
7. Behave ethically.
8. Resolve conflict professionally
9. Persevere during difficult times, long days

Too often, great med school candidates get nervous during interviews. As they are asked to give examples of experiences that have helped them understand themselves or medicine, many will focus on Only one or two experiences. Candidates who don't discuss a range of experiences are often seen as as "one notes" with limited applicable experience.

While it is smart to review the most common interview questions, start to think about the key experiences you've had as an undergraduate or After. How have these experiences transformed and prepared you for med school?

Having five buckets, or five key experiences in your head, will help you give examples for a wide range of questions during the interview.

What are your five buckets? They should include experiences:

1. Volunteering in medicine
2. Volunteering in the community with people who are new to you
3. Shadowing a physician
4. Leadership
5. Research



Bucket 1: Volunteering in Medicine

Think about your most engaging volunteering opportunity while serving in a hospital, clinic, eldercare facility, or hospice setting.

Write it down here:

What experience buckets have you filled during your undergraduate years?

Medical schools will want to learn about your buckets.

How has this medical volunteering experience enhanced your ability to:

Communicate with diverse patients?

Absorb and use science in medical settings?

Problem solve?

Understand the working lives of physicians?

Give and receive feedback?

Lead teams or work as a member of an effective team?

Behave ethically or reflect on your own values?

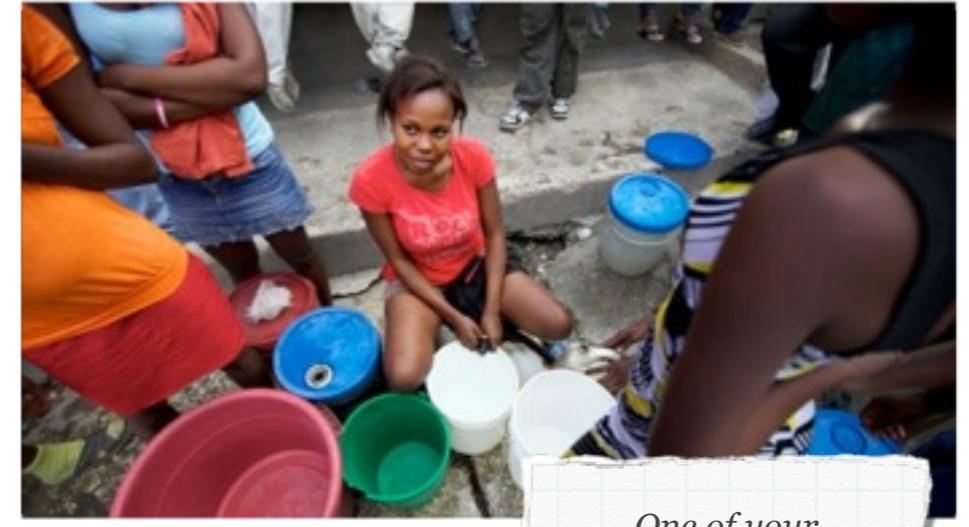
Resolve conflict?

Persevere?

Bucket 2: Volunteering in the Community

Think about a time when you volunteered locally or globally. Why did it have meaning? Describe the one person whom you found most compelling and why the relationship with him or her transformed your way of thinking.

Write down the volunteering experience here:



One of your interview buckets must be filled with volunteering experiences.

How has this community volunteering experience enhanced your ability to:

Communicate with people or serve in diverse settings?

Understand the complex social and health needs of diverse populations?

Problem solve?

Discuss the working lives of physicians (who volunteer)?

Give and receive feedback?

Lead teams?

Work as a member of an effective team?

Behave ethically or reflect on your own values?

Resolve conflict?

Persevere?



One of your interview buckets must be filled with medical exploration. What “tools” did your physician mentors use to care for their patients?

Bucket 3: Shadowing a Physician/ Clinical Observation

Draw on the days that you spent shadowing physicians. What did you enjoy most about the way the physician interacted with patients, families, and the healthcare team? How were you included in conversations? What types of cases were most interesting to you?

Write down the physician shadowing experience here:

How did your favorite physician shadowing experience build your understanding of:

Communicating with diverse patients?

How basic science is used in everyday medical settings?

Problem solving?

How physicians work?

Leading and working on healthcare teams?

Behaving ethically?

Resolving conflict?

Persevering during long days?

Bucket 4: Leadership

Think about a time when you led a group of individuals to serve others.

Tip: Keep in mind that physicians who interview you have not been on college campuses for many years. Recall leadership experiences where you left your college campus.

Write down your best off-campus leadership experience here:



Is your leadership bucket full?

What great leadership experiences do you have to share during your med school interviews?

How did this leadership experience build your skills in:

Communicating and resolving conflict with diverse teammates?

Communicating with diverse community members?

Problem solving?

Giving and receiving feedback?

Understanding your leadership style?

Behaving ethically?

Persevering while multitasking?

Setting goals and managing time?

Bucket 5: Research

Examine your role in a research project. How did it prepare you to become an excellent medical school candidate?

Write down that experience here:



What did your research tell you about your goals and love of science?

How did your research team work together to solve problems and create new information?

How has this research experience enhanced your ability to:

Communicate with diverse patients/teammates?

Absorb and use science in medical settings?

Problem solve?

Understand the working lives of physicians who conduct research?

Give and receive feedback?

Lead teams or work as a member of an effective team?

Behave ethically or reflect on your own values?

Resolve conflict?

Persevere?

Set goals/timelines/manage time?

• Your Hands Have the Answers •

Congratulations pre-med.

You're on your way to making your dreams come true. Declaring yourself as a phenomenal pre-medical student, putting your science discovery interests to the test, and showing compassion for people will send you in the right direction.

Challenge yourself with:

- * A high GPA, BCPM GPA, and MCAT score
- * Excellent leadership
- * A clear understanding of medicine
- * Service in your community
- * Research

Then create a first-rate AMCAS and interviewing strategy.

I know you can do this. Now get moving.

Jo Peterson, PhD



Preparation = Med School

