

This Expedition created in collaboration with the Association of American Medical Colleges (AAMC) highlights medical careers by sharing stories, tips, and activities to inspire you to consider becoming a physician or physician-scientist.

The inspiration behind this Expedition is intended to help support young students in their pursuit of a career in medicine. Physicians work to help prevent health problems, heal sick and injured people, and engage in research to help find cures and new medical treatments.



In this Expedition, you'll learn about the experiences of medical students as they progress through medical school and residency to begin their careers. We hope it encourages you to learn more about different high-impact medical careers.

Throughout this Expedition, you will *LEAD YOUR LEARNING* as you:

- **REFLECT** on your skills, learning goals, and purpose
- **STRETCH** your knowledge and skills through active learning
- **INNOVATE** and iterate solutions for real-world challenges
- **SHOWCASE** your innovations and learning in a dynamic way

We also encourage you to utilize our [Expeditions Student Idea Book](#) as you navigate this Expedition to get your creativity flowing, organize your ideas and research, and share your innovations and reflections.



WHEN YOU SEE THIS BRIEFCASE ICON, IT INDICATES AN OPPORTUNITY FOR A WORK-BASED LEARNING ACTIVITY, LIKE HAVING A CONVERSATION WITH A MENTOR OR LOCAL INDUSTRY LEADER TO DISCUSS TRENDS IN MEDICINE, IDEATE SOLUTIONS, SOLICIT FEEDBACK, AND/OR PRESENT YOUR PROJECT. (SPEAK TO YOUR EDUCATOR IF YOU NEED SUPPORT MAKING CONTACT.)

REFLECT

As you watch our medical student interviews, think deeply about the following questions:



- What did you learn about the path to medical school?
- What are some goals you create to support you on your path to a medical career?
- What is "your why" for wanting to explore a career in medicine?



WHY A CAREER IN MEDICINE?

There are numerous rewards for pursuing a medical career! Below we list some opportunities it provides and ways this career makes a significant impact on society.



MAKING A DIFFERENCE

Being a doctor means you have a direct impact on people's lives every day. Whether it's healing a patient, comforting families, or spreading awareness, your work is incredibly meaningful.



CONTINUOUS LEARNING

Medicine is a field that constantly evolves. As a doctor, you're always learning and adapting, which keeps things exciting and intellectually stimulating.



EMOTIONAL FULFILLMENT

There's a unique joy in knowing you've helped someone during their most vulnerable moments. The gratitude you receive from patients and their families is incredibly rewarding.



SUPPORTS WORKFORCE NEEDS

With a growing population and advancements in healthcare, the need for healthcare professionals is increasing, especially those with diverse backgrounds. Choosing this career path contributes to meeting that demand.



FINANCIAL STABILITY

Doctors generally earn a comfortable living. While it varies by specialty, the pay is often competitive and allows for a comfortable lifestyle.



JOB SECURITY

Healthcare is a stable field. Additionally, many healthcare institutions offer attractive benefits and opportunities for growth.



PATIENT CONNECTIONS

Doctors form unique bonds with their patients. It's a privilege to be trusted with someone's health, and the relationships formed are often cherished.



TEAMWORK AND COLLABORATION

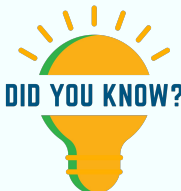
Healthcare is a team effort. Working with other healthcare professionals fosters a sense of camaraderie and the chance to learn from diverse perspectives.

FIND “YOUR WHY” — “———
IN MEDICINE

Seeing physicians helping patients and tackling disease really inspired me to pursue medicine. - Richard Piszczatowski, medical student, Albert Einstein College of Medicine ([see more here](#))

I was aware of the public health obstacles faced by Native American populations and wanted to raise awareness of these issues on campus and raise funds to support public health projects that improve the health, education, and well-being of Native Americans. Following graduation, I stepped up my commitment to Native American health by performing public health research amongst indigenous and medically underserved populations. - Erin Vigil, medical student, University of Texas Southwestern ([see more here](#))

I entered high school with the mindset of becoming a future doctor. A few months into high school I met my first African American female pediatrician and was in complete awe. I admired her connection with her patients; it was an experience I wanted everyone in my community to have. Increasing the underrepresented physician workforce is very important to me. I am proud to be a part of organizations like the Student National Medical Association (SNMA) that strive to achieve this. - Sotonye Douglas, medical student, University of Texas Southwestern ([see more here](#))



MEDICAL CAREER MYTHS VS FACTS



- Myth 1:** Everyone with a medical career works in a hospital.
- Myth 2:** There are only a few types of doctors you can become such as pediatrician, surgeon, and emergency medicine doctor.
- Myth 3:** All doctors care directly for patients.



- Fact 1:** Doctors work in varied settings, from offices, to hospitals, to battlefields, and more.
- Fact 2:** There are dozens of specialties, sub-specialties, and new medical fields developing each decade. (See the next page.)
- Fact 3:** Some doctors are diagnosticians, and work reading images like x-rays and MRIs, while others primarily do research. There are many options available.

DISCOVER THE POSSIBILITIES IN MEDICINE



Another benefit of the medical field is that you can choose from many ways to practice. From clinical practice to biomedical research, from public health to medical education – the choices are plentiful. Most students change or refine their specialty preferences as they gain experience and knowledge in medical school. Your interests will probably change with time and experience, which is fine, because it has an emphasis on lifelong learning, and research and developments in technology. This means you'll have opportunities to hone your skills and change throughout your career.

Here are some examples of possible specialties you might choose:



Primary care physicians treat a range of illnesses and regularly provide preventive care and include pediatricians, family practitioners and general internists.



Surgeons perform necessary operations for patients recovering from illnesses, injuries or health complications.



Psychiatrists diagnoses and treats mental, emotional, and behavioral disorders.



OB/GYN is a doctor of obstetrics and gynecology and specialize in pregnancy, childbirth, and the female reproductive system.



Pediatricians are concerned primarily with the health, welfare, and development of children.



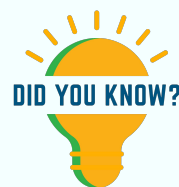
Radiologists specialize in diagnosing and treating injuries and diseases using medical imaging (radiology) procedures (exams/tests) such as X-rays.



Dermatologists specialize in conditions that affect the skin, hair, and nails.

REFLECT

- What about medical careers interest you?
- Which specialty (or area of medicine) intrigues you most and why?



Most students say they knew they wanted to become a doctor while in high school or even middle school!

FIND "YOUR WHY" IN MEDICINE

It was hard watching loved ones suffer without having the ability to directly help their condition. That experience from high school and well into college is what solidified my desire for medicine. I may not be able to cure everything, but I at least wanted to be able to help where I could,

- Lihlenz Saint-Louis, medical student at University of Central Florida College of Medicine

HAVE A CONVERSATION (INFORMATIONAL INTERVIEW) WITH A DOCTOR IN A SPECIALTY AREA IN WHICH YOU'RE INTERESTED.



HEALTH PROFESSIONALS ARE NEEDED IN EVERY INDUSTRY!

Do you have a passion for health, but aren't interested in becoming a doctor?

IF YOU LOVE THESE INDUSTRIES...

SPORTS

LAW

NONPROFITS

DESIGN

SERVICE

CONSIDER TAKING ON A CAREER IN MEDICINE

Physical Therapists focus on helping patients recover from muscle, nerve or joint injuries, regain strength and range of motion and resume an active lifestyle.

Medical Legal Counselors provide legal advice to medical facilities to ensure their practices comply with the law.

Education Program Managers are responsible for overseeing the delivery of effective educational products and experiences.

Medical Illustrators create illustrations and models of medical subjects to be visualized in different scenarios.

Emergency Medical Technician - EMTs provide emergency medical services and are often found in ambulances.

REFLECT

To learn more about different paths and health professions, [click the link here!](#)

- > What are you passionate about, or what brings you joy?
- > What do you see your future self doing?
- > How can you combine your different interests for a career in medicine?



A ROADMAP TO PREPARE FOR A FUTURE CAREER IN MEDICINE

Learn what you can do now to prepare for college and future career in medicine.



It's important to build a good foundation in science and math coursework and, if available, take advanced classes. You may be able to receive Advanced Placement (AP) credit that could allow you to get college credit and/or move you into upper-level coursework once you begin college.



Use this time to develop solid skills in how to study, time management, test-taking, and written and verbal communication. English classes are a good place to practice these communication skills, since the curriculum often includes writing multiple styles of essays, analyzing literature, giving live presentations, and taking comprehension exams.



Pursue or continue meaningful medically related activities, including volunteer roles, work in medical research, and/or leadership opportunities in student clubs/organizations like HOSA: Future Health Care Professionals or the Student National Medical Association.



The AAMC provides a database of summer opportunities and programs for students (middle school through college-level). Search the Summer Enrichment and Pipeline Programs database and/or apply to the Summer Health Professions Education Program (SHPEP).



Develop relationships with teachers, your guidance counselor, and potential mentors. This will be helpful if you are struggling, and they will push you to be your best, and teach you strategies to use throughout your education.



When applying to different colleges or universities, try touring the lab facilities and science department classrooms. Also, speak with pre-health advisors, members from pre-health clubs, or faculty that teach science courses.



MANY MEDICAL SCHOOLS AND HOSPITALS OFFER PUBLIC EVENTS (GUEST SPEAKERS, WORKSHOPS, ETC.) THAT YOU CAN ATTEND. YOU CAN USUALLY FIND THESE IN THE EVENTS SECTION OF THEIR WEBSITE. FOLLOW UP WITH SPEAKERS AFTER THE EVENT TO LEARN MORE AND BEGIN BUILDING CONNECTIONS. YOU CAN ALSO REACH OUT TO YOUR LOCAL COLLEGE/UNIVERSITY THAT OFFERS HEALTH SCIENCES OR PRE-MED PROGRAMS.

STRETCH

Now that you have learned more about different medical careers and tips to optimize opportunities, expand your knowledge and skills:

- Explore the [AAMC's Aspiring Docs](#) program and begin thinking about how this relates to your journey.
- Discover what you can do now to prepare for a future career in medicine with [this fact sheet](#).
- Apply for summer research, internship, or other enrichment programs, such as the [Summer Health Professions Education Program](#) and [Summer Enrichment and Pipeline Programs](#)
- View upcoming virtual and in-person [medical career fair](#) events for aspiring health professionals.
- Check out [AAMC's pre-med competencies](#) and develop a plan to hone both your professional, science, and problem-solving skills, then review the [Anatomy of an Applicant](#) self-assessment guide with the [Premed Competency Experience Worksheets](#).
- View the [AAMC Today](#) YouTube library of videos for information on tons of premed and med-student-related topics.
- Investigate [BS-MD programs](#) that combine undergraduate school with medical school to award you both a bachelor's degree and medical degree
- Learn more about [EMT training](#). Students who are at least 18 years old can get trained and certified as a certified nursing assistant (CNA) or emergency medical technician (EMT), which is a great application and resume builder.

CONTACT LOCAL CHAPTERS OF [MEDICAL PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATIONS](#) TO SEE WHETHER YOU CAN CONNECT WITH MEMBERS TO LEARN MORE ABOUT THEIR CAREERS.



Using [this guide](#) and the suggestions, roadmap, and resources within this Expedition, develop a plan, set of goals, or vision board to keep you motivated throughout your journey.



INNOVATE

What can you create to support your medical career aspirations while also encouraging others to consider this profession? Choose one below or generate your own idea, as well as a dynamic way to share your ideas and work (see the [Showcase menu](#) on the next page).

CHOICE 1: Think about the type of doctor you may be interested in becoming (working with children, fixing broken bones, doing surgery, etc.). Create a plan how you would set up your office. Consider the number of patients you would see daily, the equipment you'd need to help diagnose and treat them, and the number of staff you would need to hire to help run your practice.

CHOICE 2: Identify skills and interests you already possess. How do you think this might influence which type of doctor you'd be interested in? List what kind of medicine (working with children, in an emergency room, or operating room, for instance,) might be of interest, and why. Research how long might it take for you to train before you were ready to work on your own.

CHOICE 3: Reach out to professionals in the medical field, from a nearby hospital or medical research center, and ask them to share their insights about their career and path to medicine. Learn about the diverse roles and opportunities available in your area and create a fact sheet for others considering a career in medicine.

CHOICE 4: Invite local colleges or nonprofit healthcare organizations to highlight medical or health programs, scholarships, etc., in a live or virtual setting for an audience of your peers.

CHOICE 5: Collaborate with fellow students to host an information campaign for your community that promotes awareness and information for a medical condition. Create flyers with information about the condition, how it affects people in the community, information on prevention or treatment and how the community can support those with the condition. Your efforts could inspire others and lead to more information, compassion, and visibility.

AS YOU COME UP WITH YOUR PROJECT AND BEGIN WORKING ON IT, SEEK FEEDBACK. THIS COULD BE FROM A TEACHER, A MENTOR, AND/OR AN ADVISORY BOARD MEMBER. THEY CAN HELP YOU REFINE YOUR PROJECT AND SUGGEST RESOURCES TO EXPLORE.





SHOWCASE

Share your learning and creation with the world in one (or more) ways. Choose one of the options below or create your own:

CHOICE 1: Share your story by addressing one (or more) of these prompts on social media, by recording a video, or putting it in the post caption:

- Why do you want to pursue a medical career?
- Give a shout-out to someone who supports your aspirations!
- How do you help your peers learn about health careers?

We'd love it if you tagged @nafcareeracads and included @AAMCtoday

(Before you post, however, be sure to get your educator's permission on the content and the platform you plan to use.)

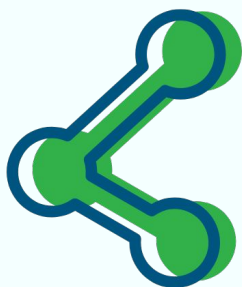
CHOICE 2: Share what you learned or created in this Expedition in your digital portfolio, website, or blog (like [Bulb](#) or [Google Sites](#)), then share it with an audience.

CHOICE 3: Present your project to an audience of:

- community or family members, aspiring medical professionals , or your mentor for feedback and insight
- local middle school students to encourage them to join your academy and pursue a medical career

(Regardless of your choice, provide time for a Q&A session.)

One of the best ways to find out what AAMC is doing is to follow them on social media. Click on the icons to check out their resources and content:



STUDENTS, SHARE YOUR INNOVATION!

NAF would love to see your creation! After you get your educator's permission, submit yours [HERE](#). We may highlight you on social media!

(We WILL NOT share your work without your educator's and your approval.)