

Possible Interview Questions for Medical School

Specifically, the interviewers will try to determine the following:

- What has motivated you to pursue a career in medicine?
- How well do you communicate with others? This includes listening skills as well as skills in transmitting information to others.
- Can you put yourself in the place of a patient; are you empathetic?
- What do you know about the practice of medicine and issues in delivery of health care?
- How well do you think “on your feet” to analyze problems and present alternative solutions?

Biographical Medicine

1. What brings you here today?
2. Why medicine?
3. How do you know you want to be a doctor?
4. What makes you think you are ready to be a doctor?
5. Tell us your story of deciding on medicine.
6. Who has influenced your decision to study medicine and how?
7. Why do you want to change from your current career field into medicine?
8. Why not social work? It is said that with medicine you help individuals, but with social work, you help populations, so why not social work?
9. Why not research?
10. Why not a PA or nursing program?
11. Why ____ school of medicine? If you are not accepted here, but accepted to another school, would you defer the acceptance to reapply here?
12. What qualities were you looking for in the schools you applied to?
13. Have you interviewed anywhere else yet?
14. What have you been doing since you applied?
15. What would you do if you don't get into medical school no matter how hard you tried?
16. Where do you see yourself practicing? Do you plan on practicing in the WWAMI region?
17. What specialty are you interested in? Why do you want to do this particular specialty?
18. In what setting do I envision myself practicing medicine?
19. What type of community do you want to work with?
20. Where will you be in 15 years? How do you intend to achieve those goals?
21. How do you think you will be remembered in medicine?
22. When you think about being a doctor, what scares you most?
23. Do you think family practice will be challenging enough?
24. What is the most significant experience you have had that made you want to become a physician?
25. How has your major prepared you for a career in medicine?
26. Have you shadowed doctors and what have they told you/advised you?
27. How has your experience after school made you a better candidate?
28. Who has guided you in this process?
29. Tell us about some of the experiences you've had that made you want to go in to medicine; give specific examples of how people inspired you to want to become a doctor.
30. Why should we pick you over other equally qualified candidates? What makes you stand out from the other applicants? What do you have to contribute to this year's medical class?

31. For the final question, is there anything you would like to tell us, or would you like to tell us why we should accept you?
32. How should I sell you to the executive committee?
33. Do you have anything you would like to add? Do you think that your application, letters of recommendation, and our discussion here represent you well?
34. If we had to narrow it down to one quality, what one thing qualifies you to entrance to UW?

Analytical Thinking/Problem Solving

35. How would you change the current medical school curriculum to teach students more empathy and subjectivity?
36. How can we recruit medical students interested in primary care?
37. How do you propose we recruit and retain more physicians in underserved areas?
38. Do you believe that someone with affirmative action status, i.e. any minority, should have first grabs at admission?
39. What would you personally do to increase the number of primary care physicians in the United States?
40. Do you think that medical students should be required to participate in rural medicine for a period of time, to experience practicing medicine where they are not interested?
41. How would you tell a woman with young kids that her husband just died of a heart attack?
42. You give a Medicare patient a much-needed Rx, and she immediately tosses it in the trash saying she can't afford it. What do you do?
43. What would you do if you could only give ten tests every month to your patients, and you were out of tests for the month and a patient came in that needed a test?
44. What would you say to someone who wanted antibiotics for a viral illness?
45. How would you break the news of a child's fatal illness to the child and their family?
46. How do I deal with difficult people at my job?
47. Role-play: Get a person to stop smoking.
48. What do you do with a patient who disagrees with you?
49. I am the governor, and my wife wants to spend millions on an anti-meth campaign. What do you think about that? I encouraged him to spend it on alcohol programs instead, because it affects more people, and got several follow-up questions on what I would do specifically.
50. If you received money for a clinic, how would you decide where the money would go?
51. If you were on the administrative board of a hospital and were asked to cut certain procedures because of their high cost per patient, what would you do?
52. If you were tasked to find out why there were high levels of alcoholism in a rural town, how would you go about doing so?
53. If you had to choose, would you choose a lifesaving treatment for someone or prevention for many?
54. How would you deal with a diagnosis that had no treatment?
55. What is health?

Biographical Personal

56. Tell me about yourself.
57. How would your friends describe you? Two positives and two negatives
58. Imagine you are on trial and we are the jury. Try to convince us that you are compassionate and empathetic.
59. What are your weaknesses?
60. Describe a conflict you were involved in and how you lead it to resolution. Describe the last conflict you were in.

61. What is the most important feedback you've ever received, and what did you do with it?
62. What is the most important lesson you have learned from someone?
63. What is your greatest achievement? What is your greatest struggle/challenge?
64. What else would you like to share about yourself that we have not touched on?
65. Who inspires me?
66. How would I feel about my life looking back on it 20 years from now?
67. Have you been misjudged before in the past, and how did you deal with it?
68. Name three characteristics about yourself.
69. Tell me about your family.
70. How did your parents influence your decision to pursue medicine?
71. Tell me about your fiancée.
72. If your fiancée were here during the interview, what would he want us to know about you?
73. Who is your favorite artist?
74. What books have you read recently that you would recommend?
75. Tell us about the best books you've read in the past year.
76. Do you feel that your favorite author is a tolerant person?
77. What is the last book that you have read that you felt had significant meaning in your life?
78. What are your hobbies?
79. What do you do for fun?
80. What do you do to relax?
81. What are your plans for the rest of the day?
82. Say today was a sunny May 15th, how would you spend your day?
83. What types of activities did you do in high school?
84. What activities did you participate in at college?
85. How will I deal with the stress of medical school?
86. How will you handle the suffering that you will encounter in medicine?
87. Explain a time in your life where you were completely overwhelmed, but overcame such difficulties. Also what strategies did you employ?
88. What was the biggest disappointment you've faced in your life thus far?
89. What was the most difficult situation that you've faced, and how did you deal with it?
90. How will you balance things in your personal life when you are going to be putting this much time and effort into medicine?
91. Tell me about a major failure in your life and how you got over it.
92. Do you feel the same passion for science that you do for Art History?
93. How did you choose your undergraduate school?
94. Why did you pick Art History or English as a major?
95. What have you learned since starting college?
96. You said that returning to school to biology courses was "fascinating." Can you remember a time when you just thought to yourself, "wow?"
97. You went to a Junior College. Do you think that will help or hurt your chances of getting into medical school?
98. What was your favorite class in college? What was your least favorite class in college?
99. Describe your academic record.
100. Who is better, Batman or Spiderman?

Application-based questions

101. Tell us about your Minor in Possession and what you learned from it.
102. Tell us about ___ experience and a patient you remember from that experience. What was her name? How old was she? What was her diagnosis? What do you know about the disease she had? Did you follow up on her after she left your care? What did you learn from her?
103. Tell me about a challenging patient you've worked with at X clinic.
104. Please tell us about a clinical experience that touched you emotionally.
105. Was X experience your longest shadowing experience? Is there a patient that still stands out to you?
106. What negative things have you seen while shadowing?
107. Describe a medical error that you've observed during your work, what was done about it?
108. What did you learn about the challenges of primary care from your shadowing experience?
109. Describe each of your clinical experiences and tell us what you learned about medicine from them.
110. How have experiences with patients shaped your desire to practice medicine?
111. During your shadowing/volunteer experiences have you ever come across disgruntled patients and if so how did you handle the situation?
112. How has _____ experience prepared you for medical school/a future in medicine?
113. How did X experience make you think differently?
114. Can you tell us about a meaningful volunteer experience? And another one?
115. You have an interest in "X", as evidenced by your experiences earlier this year and last year. Have you done anything since involving those interests?
116. What volunteering experience has stood out in your mind? What did you learn/what impacted you most?
117. During your experience as a volunteer, what was something that impacted you in a negative aspect? How would you remedy that?
118. Tell us about a person in your volunteer program.
119. Why did you decide to (pick an activity off your AMCAS)?
120. Why didn't you do more volunteering?
121. Do you have anything you'd like to say about your grades before we take your application to the admissions committee? (I have a few C's)
122. What's the story with these withdrawals and with this incomplete?
123. Name some cancer drugs and their targets.

Health care Policy

124. Do you think health care policy should be decided by the people, the government, by doctors, etc.?
125. With unlimited resources, how would you reform Seattle's public drug rehab programs?
126. What is the healthcare system like in your hometown?
127. What are the top three most pressing healthcare issues in this state?
128. If you had a limited amount of money to spend on health care services across the state, how would you go about deciding how to spend it?
129. If you were Christine Gregoire, what would you do to remedy Washington State's current health care issues?
130. What did you think of the recent malpractice insurance reform bills in Washington?
131. What are the two most powerful lobbies in Washington?
132. How has the economic downfall in Washington State affected the healthcare community?
133. What are your thoughts on the current healthcare system?

134. What do you think of the current 'health care reform environment'?
135. What do you like and do not like about the health care reform?
136. What are the three biggest problems in medicine? What can be done at the national level to improve these issues?
137. What are three ways you would improve our health care system?
138. Is there a particular health care policy plan that you like?
139. Tell us three ways you want health care improved from a physician's standpoint and three improvements you want from a patient's point of view, then defend your choices.
140. What do you think is responsible for the U.S. healthcare dilemma?
141. Where do you see healthcare in 20 years?
142. What does the Secretary of Health and Human Services do?
143. Our government is not making changes to our health care system, so who do we turn to in order to improve health care?
144. What one proposal would you suggest to fix healthcare in this country?
145. How would you personally address some of the major healthcare issues as a practicing physician (e.g. healthcare disparities)?
146. What do you know about the presidential candidates' health plans? Which of the candidates' health policies do you support?
147. Why do you think that there is a problem with access to health care in this country? How can you improve access to all patients?
148. Why was managed care formed? Did it succeed?
149. What kinds of alternatives would you propose to improve healthcare in the US?
150. What does the surgeon general do? If you were the surgeon general of the United States, what problems would you address, and how would you try to fix them?
151. What do you think will be the biggest problem in health care in 10 years? Possible solutions?
152. How would you change the current health insurance system in the US?
153. If mental health care was suddenly cut from health care insurance (if medicine was socialized), what would happen? What would you suggest patients experiencing mental health crises do?
154. How would you solve the uninsured problem in the United States?
155. Why do HMOs cut off services?
156. If the government cannot adjust their budget to try to insure the 43 million uninsured Americans today, what other solutions do you suggest for this problem?
157. Why is health care so expensive in the United States and how would you fix it?
158. You have been appointed as one of Barack Obama's advisers. With economic conditions as they are, how would you improve the healthcare system and expand medical coverage while cutting costs?
159. How should we balance the desire to have health care for all people with the financial realities of providing such care?
160. Where is all the money being spent in US healthcare going?
161. Do you know what percentage of the gross domestic product is spent on medicine?
162. How do the cost and lack of accessibility to health insurance affect our health care system?
163. Compare and contrast your idea for universal health care with Medicare and Medicaid.
164. Why do you think that the elderly are confused about the new Medicare drugs program and what would you do to relieve this confusion?
165. What is Medicare?
166. What is Medicaid?

167. What are the differing positions between Democrats and Republicans in regards to Medicare prescription drug benefits?
168. Why do you think so many doctors don't take Medicaid patients? Are they just in it for the money?
169. Do you see a universal, single-payer healthcare system working in the US?
170. Who would negatively benefit from socialized medicine?
171. Why do you think it is that the U.S. is the only industrialized country to not have universal health care coverage? With that, who do you think has a longer life expectancy, Canadians or Americans?
172. If healthcare was universalized, what would physicians lose and what would patients lose?
173. Why do you think so many Americans are opposed to a national health insurance?
174. What do you think is not working with Canada's Single Payer system, or what negatives have you heard? What are the disadvantages in the Canadian and UK systems?
175. Why does the US spend so much money and get such poor results compared to other countries?
176. Is it preferable to weed people out at the entry level of healthcare (not being able to see a doctor at all) as in US or at the exit level (having to wait to get operations and procedures (as in Canadian system)?
177. What do you think we can learn from other countries' health care systems to improve our own?
178. Costa Rica has elected to spend the majority of their health care dollars on the young vs. elderly--what do you think of this policy?
179. Name 3 significant problems with healthcare in developing countries.
180. What are some other countries' health care policies and how could we use them to better our system?
181. What percentage of healthcare costs can be attributed to overhead? What about in Canada?
182. Some people are worried that National Health Insurance will result in rationing of care. What about specialist fees? I'm an oncologist and new cancer treatments are extremely beneficial but expensive, what about them?
183. You mentioned rationing in your personal statement. What place do you think rationing has in the US health care system?
184. Did you know that over half of healthcare spending occurs in the last 2 months of peoples' lives? What do we do about that? Should we ration their care? As health czar, how would you control healthcare costs in the last 6 months of life?
185. What do you think of the CDC limiting flu vaccines to at risk populations (the elderly, young, and immune-suppressed) and then ending up with thousands of unused vaccines?
186. How would you feel if the federal government decided to stop paying for dialysis for patients over the age of 75 and use that money instead to provide medical insurance for all children in the United States?
187. Let's say the US is switched to a Universal Health Care system like Oregon State, where everyone got basic health care, but certain procedures were not covered. For example, a 40 year old man, regardless of situation/health, will be refused a kidney transplant. Is this fair?
188. What do you think of the vaccinating the entire US population against smallpox? Does it seem like a waste of resources?
189. If you got to determine the way the American healthcare system was to make your job easier as an underserved doctor for the benefit of your patients, how would you change it and why? What are the barriers to achieving such a system?
190. Do illegal immigrants deserve to get free health care?
191. Where does the funding come from for health clinics in underserved areas?
192. What do you think about using a junk food tax to help out with the obesity problem in America? Do you think that taxing junk food would end up taxing those who can least afford the taxes on junk food?
193. Do you feel that cosmetic surgery should have a tax to benefit community clinics?

194. How do you address the problem of healthcare in a region that is extremely poor?
195. How would you fix the problems of rural medicine's lack of technology?
196. What is your position on tort reform?
197. What is the impact of medical malpractice cases on the cost of medicine?
198. We were talking about having a limit on malpractice award payment. A situation: your wife's both breasts were removed mistakenly. How would you feel and what is your position on malpractice lawsuit?
199. How would you be able to fund or create an incentive for pharmaceutical companies to continually produce drugs if you cut down on their profit margins?
200. Discuss the impact of pharmaceutical companies upon the medical field, the medical field upon the government and the population, as well as the relationship between the government, pharmaceutical companies and medical field.
201. What kind of relationship should exist between pharmaceutical companies and physicians?
202. What would you say to pharmaceutical companies weighing the options of developing new drugs versus new vaccinations, when they are also taking into consideration profit?

Health Care Observations and Awareness

203. What was a challenge (not personal) that faced one of the doctors you shadowed?
204. Why do you think some patients do not follow through with their prognosis?
205. What are some of the limitations of being a doctor? What are some of the drawbacks?
206. Is there any physician you admire? What qualities does he/she embody that you would like to emulate?
207. What do you see yourself doing on a day-to-day basis as a physician?
208. What are some of the challenges in primary care medicine that you've seen/experienced? Did the doctors you shadowed think you were crazy for wanting to go into primary care? Why do you think I am asking you this?
209. Have you shadowed any doctors? What are their lives like? What hours do they work?
210. What are some of the frustrations/complaints you have heard from physicians?
211. Why are physicians in the US increasingly dissatisfied? Why are primary care physicians dissatisfied with their jobs?
212. Why do rural areas have a hard time attracting doctors? Why would doctors not want to practice in a rural area? How could a physician in a rural area make the transition/experience more positive?
213. Do you think family practice is dying away in America?
214. Do you think Canadian doctors care less about their patients than American doctors?
215. What are three major healthcare problems a physician has to deal with?
216. Why do people specialize when there is primary care shortage?
217. Do you know how doctors function in developing countries?
218. Why should doctors be paid such high salaries?
219. What percentage of family doctors has their own practice? Do you think that number will go up or down?
220. Name five essential qualities of a physician. List them in order of importance.
221. What is the most important lesson you can teach a patient?
222. The patients in the US often have chronic conditions as a result of poor lifestyle choices. Do you think you will be an effective doctor despite forces like the barrage of McDonald's commercials?
223. Can you tell us about a time where you either really liked or disliked the way a physician treated a patient?

224. How can you establish good physician-patient dynamics when you work in free clinic settings where you may only get to see the patient once in their lifetime? What do you do to encourage successful dialogue in order to treat the patient?
225. What challenges do rural communities face regarding both primary and psychiatric care? I thought it was interesting to address the psychiatric component.
226. What systems are in place to help kids in underserved communities get access to adequate healthcare?
227. Why don't people in underserved communities have equal access to healthcare?
228. Define underserved.
229. Where do uninsured people go to receive medical care?
230. What do you not like of what you have seen in medicine?
231. What are the three most important things you observed at the family practice clinic?
232. Tell us about your shadowing experience-what moment had the biggest impact on you?
233. Do you think that the current trend in healthcare where physicians are given less autonomy and more paperwork will continue?
234. What is the most challenging aspect of providing health care in the US?
235. What are some of the issues facing medicine today?
236. Why do you think HIV/AIDS is so prevalent in Africa?
237. Why do you think the US has such a high infant mortality rate?
238. What do you think are some of the issues of people living to 150?
239. What is the leading cause of death in the world?
240. Is health care a right or a privilege?
241. How do we face the challenge of an aging population?
242. What's the difference between a rural practice and an urban practice?
243. Which states have socialized medicine? (Hawaii)
244. How do you eliminate the need for affirmative action?
245. Are primary care and preventative care the same thing?
246. What do you think is the main cause of obesity in America?
247. A lot of emergency rooms are being forced to shut down, why do you feel that is the case?
248. Tell us about what you've read in the news recently that you think is a significant advancement in science.
249. Tell us about 3 science/technology headlines.
250. Who won the Nobel Prize in medicine this year and what did they win for?
251. Where do you go to get your medical news?
252. What was the most important event of 2011?
253. Who would you pick as Time's Person of the Year?

Motivation

254. What excites you about a career in medicine?
255. What concerns you about a career in medicine and how do you get past your concerns?
256. How did you decide that being a doctor was the right career for you?
257. How have your experiences prepared you for a career in medicine?
258. What personality characteristics do you have that will make you a good doctor?

Communication Skills

259. Can you express an idea or thought concisely? (in less than 1-2 minutes)

- 260. Do you rephrase what someone has just told you to make sure you understood it correctly?
- 261. Do you look for body language signifying emotional reaction such as agreement, disagreement, annoyance, happiness, fear, anger, excitement, disappointment, or despondency?
- 262. Do you interrupt someone when they are speaking to you?

Empathy

- 263. Can you imagine yourself in someone else's position?
- 264. Do you consider how someone else might feel about a situation given their experience, culture, and/or social context?
- 265. Can you replace your hopes and plans for someone with their own hopes and plans?
- 266. Can you understand, accept, and value someone else's opinion when it is different from yours?

Knowledge of the Field of Medicine

- 267. What personal attributes do you consider most important for success in research?
- 268. What do you consider markers of success for a physician?
- 269. What personal attributes do you consider most important for success as a physician?
- 270. What attributes do you feel are necessary to elicit hope and trust in patients?
- 271. What medical error(s) have you seen and what did you learn?
- 272. Why do you think community service is a category on the AMCAS application?
- 273. If you were putting together a health care team, who would be on it?
- 274. How is the role of the physician changing?
- 275. What does it mean to be a professional?
- 276. Choose one of the issues facing health care today and describe how you might go about addressing it.
- 277. What do you think people in the US are most concerned about? How might this affect their health (or not)?

Analytical Thinking/Problem Solving

- 278. If you had all the money in the world and could snap your fingers, what problem would you solve? How?
- 279. You are on a committee to solve a particular issue. You disagree with the direction being set by the chair of that committee, and strongly feel that it is incorrect. What would you do?
- 280. How do you resolve conflict at work, home, in the classroom?
- 281. A patient brings you a very expensive gift. What would you do?
- 282. A patient writes you a love letter. How do you handle this situation?
- 283. You are called to the ER to see a patient that has a problem supposedly in your area of expertise. When you arrive it becomes obvious that this patient has a completely different type of problem. What do you do?
- 284. You catch a fellow student cheating on an exam. What do you do?
- 285. Describe a moral or ethical dilemma that arose out of an interpersonal relationship. How did you handle it?
- 286. There is a new drug to cure a certain type of cancer, but it is extremely expensive. How do you decide who should get the drug?