

YOU AND YOUR PRE- PROFESSIONAL ADVISOR: AN IMPORTANT PARTNERSHIP

Reasons why students interested in a health care career should consult a pre-professional advisor

Despite the availability of advisors, some students don't take advantage of all they offer. Advisors are your advocates, who can help you:

- Make an informed choice of a career
- Evaluate your strengths
- Identify gaps in your preparation
- Gain access to more information
- Connect with community resources – health care professionals and institutions
- Assist in making your application as good as it can be

Remember:

First steps are important, but it's never too late to talk with a pre-professional advisor.

You can also find great information on the AAMC website
(www.aamc.org/students/aspiring/basics)

Pre-professional advisors can help you answer many questions: the simple, basic ones, and those that are more complex. All of these questions revolve around these related issues:

- What draws me to the career in health care I am considering?
- Am I making an informed career choice?
- Do I have the intellectual capacity to be a *really* good health care professional?
- How can I make my application as strong as possible?

Here are common questions students ask. You may recognize some of your own.

There are questions about career.

- Is the career I am considering the best choice for me? How do I know?
- Do I have the intellectual capacity to be successful in professional school and the career that follows?
- Have I narrowed my career choices too soon?
- What are the various opportunities within the career? Can one combine practice, research and teaching into one career?
- Is a career in health care really worth all the time and sacrifice?
- If I am having trouble with sciences and math, what other careers can I consider to fulfill my wish to serve and help people?

There are questions about preparation.

- What do I need to focus on as I prepare for a career in health care?
- Do I have the intellectual capacity to do the work in professional school and the career that follows?
- What major should I pick? Biology? Chemistry? History? Music?
- What are some volunteer opportunities?
- What are the best ways to use my summers?

There are personal questions.

- What's the answer to the conflicting pictures of a career in health care; one that is stimulating and satisfying versus one that is constricted by outside regulation? How much freedom do health care professionals actually have? How much do HMOs, insurance companies and the government interfere with day-to-day decisions?
- Can I actually build a career that has balance – science and the humanities, family and practice? Will there be time for other interests, such as music?
- How do I make time for family? How do I have a personal life outside of my career?
- Can I have a personal life as a student and practitioner?
- When is the best time to think about starting a family?

There are questions about the admissions process.

- How do professional schools select candidates for admission?
- How can I make myself as strong a candidate as possible?
- What are my chances of getting in?

- How important is my GPA? How important are the entrance exams like the MCAT (Medical College Admission Test), the GRE (Graduate Record Exam), and others? Will my C in introductory chemistry get in the way?
- I'm having difficulty writing a personal statement for the application. Can you help?
- How do I prepare myself for interviews?
- How many schools should I apply to?
- How do I go about deciding which schools to apply to?

And if you weren't accepted on the first try, there are other questions.

- Why wasn't I accepted? Was it my grades? My test scores? Something else?
- What can (should) I do next year?
- How can I add to my preparation, improve the quality of my application, and enhance my future chances of acceptance?
- Should I re-evaluate whether I have made the right career choice?

When you work with your pre-professional advisor, you'll get help with ...

...validating your choice of career and your ability to do the work.
...preparation for the entrance exam
...advice on how to build your credentials for the application process
...assistance with the application

First steps are important. It's never too late to talk with a pre-professional advisor. Please feel free to contact the Center to schedule an appointment with one of our Pre-professional advising team