

PATH TO HEALTH PROFESSIONAL SCHOOL (HIGH SCHOOL TO COLLEGE)

HIGH SCHOOL (9TH-12TH GRADE): EARLY EXPLORATION & ACADEMIC FOUNDATION

This timeline shows academic, extracurricular, and personal milestones from high school through college to prepare for competitive health programs, including medical, dental, nursing, and pharmacy.

	ACADEMIC PREPARATION	EXTRACURRICULAR & PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT	HEALTH CAREER EXPOSURE
9 TH GRADE	Focus on a strong GPA, take algebra and biology , and begin honors coursework	Join science clubs such as HOSA or Science Olympiad and start a journal for reflection and goal-setting	Attend a health career day and talk to a school counselor about STEM careers
10 TH GRADE	Take chemistry and geometry and continue honors or AP courses	Volunteer at hospitals or health organizations and attend summer STEM camps	Shadow health professionals (if available)
11 TH GRADE	Take AP Biology , Chemistry , or Physics and excel in advanced coursework	Take on leadership roles in clubs and apply for summer research or health programs	Job shadowing (doctor, dentist, nurse, pharmacist)
12 TH GRADE	Maintain academic excellence and prepare for the SAT or ACT	Finalize college applications and request letters of recommendation	Attend pre-health programs and consider dual enrollment or community college science classes

ACADEMIC PREPARATION:

- Take community college or dual-enrollment math/science course
- Start SAT/ACT prep early
- Draft college essays/personal statements

EXTRACURRICULAR & PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT:

- Apply for pre-college or enrichment programs (UDOC, DFAD)
- Continue consistent volunteering
- Take on leadership in clubs, jobs, or camps
- Update resume/activities list

HEALTH CAREER EXPOSURE:



Shadow a physician, dentist, nurse, or pharmacist



Apply for health internship or hospital volunteer program



Do informational interviews with health professionals



Journal reflections for future essays/interviews

COLLEGE YEARS (1-4 YEAR): GENERAL HEALTH SCIENCES TRACK

	ACADEMIC FOCUS	CLINICAL/ RESEARCH EXPERIENCE	APPLICATION PREPARATION
1ST YEAR FRESHMAN	Take general chemistry and biology , meet with a pre-health advisor , and join a pre-health club	Begin clinical volunteering and attend campus health career fairs	Begin researching health profession schools and build a professional resume
2ND YEAR SOPHOMORE	Complete organic chemistry, physics, and psychology/ sociology while maintaining a competitive GPA (ideally 3.5 or higher)	Increase clinical and service hours and begin research if possible.	Identify potential letter writers and familiarize yourself with AMCAS and the AAMC MSAR database.
3RD YEAR JUNIOR	Maintain a 3.5+ GPA , take organic chemistry, anatomy, and physiology , complete upper-level sciences, and finish prerequisites	Gain clinical or paid healthcare experience, take on leadership in clubs , and present research	Identify letter writers, learn application systems (AMCAS, AADSAS, PharmCAS , etc.), and take entrance exams (MCAT, DAT, TEAS, PCAT)
SUMMER BEFORE SENIOR YEAR	Submit your AMCAS primary application early and finalize your school list using the MSAR	Continue clinical and research work	Prepare and submit secondary applications, and begin mock interviews
4TH YEAR SENIOR	Take electives to fulfill degree requirements and address any academic gaps (if any)	Finalize clinical engagement and continue participating in mentoring or community service	Attend interviews , whether virtual or in person, submit updates or letters of intent, and rank and select schools

KEY COMPETENCIES ACROSS ALL YEARS (ADAPTED FROM AAMC CORE COMPETENCIES)

- ✦ Ethical Responsibility
- ✦ Reliability and Dependability
- ✦ Teamwork and Communication Skills
- ✦ Cultural Competence and Service Orientation
- ✦ Resilience and Adaptability
- ✦ Critical Thinking and Quantitative Reasoning

ADD-ON: SPECIAL NOTES BY HEALTH PROFESSION



MEDICAL SCHOOL (MD/DO):

Requires MCAT, significant shadowing, and 1-2 years of research helpful



DENTAL SCHOOL:

Requires DAT; manual dexterity activities (e.g., sculpture, art) are valued



NURSING SCHOOL (BSN OR DIRECT ENTRY MSN):

Clinical volunteering and CNA/EMT certification can be beneficial (sculpture, art) are valued



PHARMACY SCHOOL:

Requires PCAT (some schools), strong chemistry focus, and community pharmacy experience

Please use this as a general guide but recognize it does not reflect every student's story or path. It is important to establish a relationship with a mentor and work with an advisor to tailor your approach to your specific circumstance. Even if you do things differently, it doesn't mean you won't be successful in achieving your career goals. Working with a mentor will help you navigate your specific journey into a health career.