





# PATH TO MEDICAL SCHOOL (HIGH SCHOOL TO COLLEGE)

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

This timeline outlines key milestones from high school through college to prepare for medical school, guided by AAMC and NAAHP.

	ACADEMIC PREPARATION	EXTRACURRICULAR & PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT	MEDICAL CAREER EXPOSURE	
9 <sup>TH</sup> GRADE	→ Focus on GPA, start algebra and biology, begin honors courses	→ Join science clubs such as HOSA or Science Olympiad and start a journal for reflection and goal-setting	→ Attend local or virtual medical panels, talk with counselors	<b>ACADEMIC PREPARATION:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Take community college or dual-enrollment math/science course</li> <li>Start SAT/ACT prep early</li> <li>Draft college essays/personal statements</li> </ul> <b>EXTRACURRICULAR &amp; PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Apply for pre-college or enrichment programs (UDOC, DFAD)</li> <li>Continue consistent volunteering</li> <li>Take on leadership in clubs, jobs, or camps</li> <li>Update resume/activities list</li> </ul> <b>HEALTH CAREER EXPOSURE:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li> Shadow a physician, dentist, nurse, or pharmacist</li> <li> Apply for health internship or hospital volunteer program</li> <li> Do informational interviews with health professionals</li> <li> Journal reflections for future essays/interviews</li> </ul>
10 <sup>TH</sup> 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 <sup>TH</sup> 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 <sup>TH</sup> 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	

# COLLEGE YEARS (1ST-4TH YEAR): FOCUSED PRE-MED TRACK

	ACADEMIC FOCUS	CLINICAL/ RESEARCH EXPERIENCE	APPLICATION PREPARATION
<b>1ST YEAR FRESHMAN</b>	Take <b>general chemistry</b> and <b>biology</b> , meet with a <b>pre-health advisor</b> , and join a <b>pre-health club</b>	Begin <b>clinical volunteering</b> and attend <b>campus health career fairs</b>	Begin <b>researching health profession schools</b> and build a <b>professional resume</b>
<b>2ND YEAR SOPHOMORE</b>	Take <b>organic chemistry</b> , <b>anatomy</b> , and <b>physiology</b>	Begin <b>shadowing</b> , explore <b>undergraduate research</b> , and join <b>health-related organizations</b>	Identify potential letter writers and <b>learn about application systems</b>
<b>3RD YEAR JUNIOR</b>	<b>Maintain a 3.5+ GPA</b> , take <b>organic chemistry</b> , <b>anatomy</b> , and <b>physiology</b> , complete upper-level sciences, and finish prerequisites	Gain clinical or paid healthcare experience, <b>take on leadership in clubs</b> , and present research	Identify potential letter writers, learn application systems ( <b>AMCAS, AADSAS, PharmCAS</b> , etc.), and take entrance exams ( <b>MCAT, DAT, TEAS, PCAT</b> )
<b>SUMMER BEFORE SENIOR YEAR</b>	<b>Finalize</b> your personal statement and <b>submit</b> primary applications early	<b>Prepare</b> for secondary applications and interviews	<b>Practice</b> mock interviews
<b>4TH YEAR SENIOR</b>	<b>Finish</b> advanced coursework and <b>address</b> any academic gaps.	<b>Finalize</b> your clinical and <b>research</b> experiences	<b>Complete</b> interviews, <b>choose</b> schools, and <b>finalize</b> your decisions

## AAMC CORE COMPETENCIES FOR ENTERING MEDICAL STUDENTS

- Service Orientation
- Social Skills & Cultural Competence
- Teamwork
- Oral Communication
- Ethical Responsibility to Self & Others
- Reliability and Dependability
- Resilience and Adaptability
- Capacity for Improvement
- Critical Thinking & Scientific Inquiry
- Written Communication & Quantitative Reasoning

## SPECIAL NOTES FOR MEDICAL SCHOOL APPLICANTS



**MCAT:** Plan for 300–500 hours of study. Test early enough to retake if needed.



**SHADOWING:** Aim for 40 to 100 hours across multiple specialties.



**CLINICAL EXPERIENCE:** Volunteer or work (e.g., EMT, scribe, CNA, MA).



**RESEARCH:** Not mandatory but highly valued.



**LETTERS OF REC:** At least 3–5 letters including one from a science faculty and one from a physician (MD or DO).



**APPLICATION SYSTEMS:** AMCAS (MD), AACOMAS (DO), TMDSAS (Texas schools).

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 different 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.