

# Applying to Medical School 101

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1. My Journey
2. MCAT Preparation
3. Creating a School List
4. Financial Aid
5. Key Takeaways & More

# My Journey

# My Timeline

## 4 years of undergrad

*August 2019 – May 2023*

- BS Biology
- Minor in Chemistry
- Minor in Medical & Health Humanities
- Took MCAT Sept 2022



## 1 gap year

*May 2023 – June 2024*

- Patient Care Technician at DaVita Dialysis
- Applied to medical school!



## 4 years of medical school

*July 2024 – May 2028*

- Case Western Reserve University School of Medicine
- MD Candidate in the University Program



# Application Timeline

1. Took MCAT – **September 2022**
2. Started drafting personal statement – **December 2022**
3. Requested letters of recommendation – **February 2023**
4. Submitted AMCAS primary application – **May 30, 2023**
5. Submitted secondary applications – **June to July 2023**
6. Interviews – **September to November 2023**
7. School decisions – **October 2023 to April 2024**
8. Started medical school – **July 2024**

# AMCAS Application

- |                                                                                                                |                                                     |                                           |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------|
| <b>1. Identifying Information</b>                                                                              | •Artistic Endeavors                                 | •Other                                    |
| <b>2. Schools Attended</b>                                                                                     | •Community Service/Volunteer - Medical/Clinical     | •Paid Employment - Medical/Clinical       |
| <b>3. Biographic Information</b>                                                                               | •Community Service/Volunteer - Not Medical/Clinical | •Paid Employment - Not Medical/Clinical   |
| <b>4. Coursework</b>                                                                                           | •Conferences Attended                               | •Physician Shadowing/Clinical Observation |
| <b>5. Work-Activities</b>  | •Extracurricular Activities                         | •Presentations/Posters                    |
| <b>6. Letters of Evaluation</b>                                                                                | •Hobbies                                            | •Publications                             |
| <b>7. Medical Schools</b>                                                                                      | •Honors/Awards/Recognitions                         | •Research/Lab                             |
| <b>8. Essays</b>                                                                                               | •Intercollegiate Athletics                          | •Social Justice/Advocacy                  |
| <b>9. Standardized Tests</b>                                                                                   | •Leadership - Not Listed Elsewhere                  | •Teaching/Tutoring/Teaching Assistant     |
|                                                                                                                | •Military Service                                   |                                           |

# My AMCAS Application

## **Paid Employment – Medical/Clinical**

Patient Care Technician – DaVita Dialysis (**2000 hours**)

## **Paid Employment – Not Medical/Clinical**

Student Assistant – Chem/Bio Departments (75 hours)

## **Community Service/Volunteer – Medical/Clinical**

\*HELP Volunteer (**360 hours**)

## **Community Service/Volunteer – Not Medical/Clinical**

Blue Chip Leader – Campus Ministry (100 hours)

## **Research/Lab**

SURF Program – MU (**610 hours**)  
\*Undergraduate Bio Research (**1200 hours**)

## **Presentations/Posters**

Undergrad Research Posters & Talks (0 hours)

## **Physician Shadowing/Clinical Observation**

Shadowing Experiences (**75 hours**)

## **Teaching/Tutoring/Teaching Assistant**

Peer Tutor - SCC (200 hours)

## **Intercollegiate Athletics**

\*MU Softball Team (3000 hours)

## **Honors/Awards/Recognitions**

## **Leadership – Not Listed Elsewhere**

TriBeta President (60 hours)  
AMSA Leader (90 hours)

## **Other**

CAS Dean Search Committee Member (50 hours)  
Honors Program – MU (0 hours)

\*Most meaningful experience

# How to make your app stand out!

**Stick to a story & tell it!**

**Well-rounded experiences**

**Consistency is key**

**Demonstrate strong commitment**

**Be yourself! :)**

# Interview Process

## **Interview Format:**

- All virtual
- Open vs. closed format
- Traditional vs. MMI
- Faculty & student interviews
- Group interviews

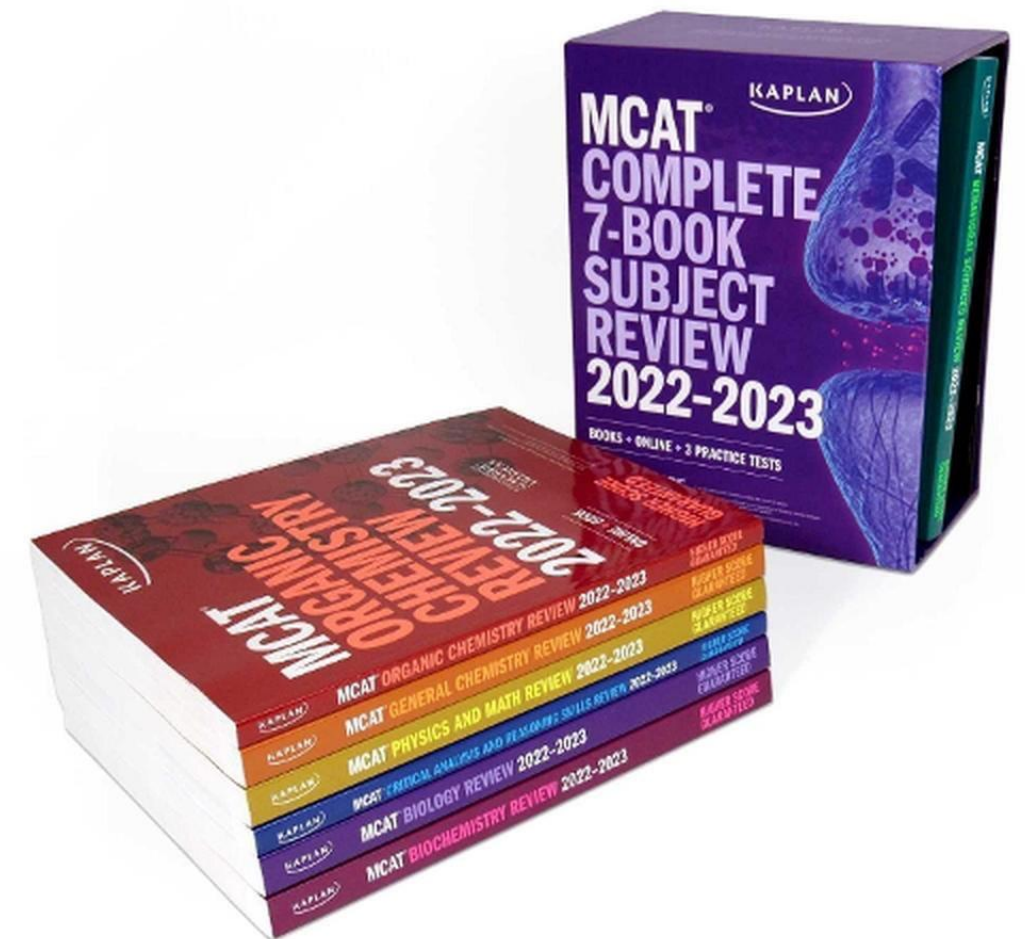
## **Most Commonly Asked Questions:**

- Tell me about yourself.
- Why medicine?
- Why not another career in healthcare?
- What is your greatest strength/weakness?
- Tell me about a time when...
- How do you maintain work-life balance?
- Why do you want to come to our school?

# MCAT Preparation

# Overcoming the MCAT

1. Start studying as early as possible!
2. MCAT Test Date: **September 10, 2022**
3. Summer 2021: Watched Khan Academy videos
4. [Kaplan 7-Book Set + 3 Practice Tests \(2022-2023 version\)](#) - **\$250**
5. [UWorld MCAT Qbank 90-day Access](#) - **\$329**
6. [MCAT registration fee](#) - **\$345**
7. Total MCAT costs = **\$924**



# Creating a School List

# Why MD vs. DO?

| MD                                        | BOTH                            | DO                                                        |
|-------------------------------------------|---------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------|
| Allopathic medicine – emphasis on Dx & Tx | 4-year program                  | Osteopathic medicine – more holistic, OMM (200-300 hours) |
| Recognized internationally                | Basically learn the same things | Less opportunity to practice globally                     |
| Average MCAT: 510-515                     | Match into any specialty!       | Average MCAT: 500-505                                     |

# Be strategic.

**Apply BROADLY**

**Use MCAT score as a guide**

**“Safety” vs. “Target” vs. “Reach” Schools**

**Determine whether school mission aligns with values**

**Location, cost/financial aid, clinical/research opportunities, etc.**

# Financial Aid

# Application Costs

1. Total MCAT costs = **\$924**
2. AMCAS primary application (25 schools) = \$170 + \$43 (24) = **\$1202**
3. Secondary application fees = **\$2,620** (ranged from \$80-140)

**TOTAL = \$4,746**

# Financial Assistance

- **AAMC Fee Assistance Program**
- **<https://students-residents.aamc.org/fee-assistance-program/fee-assistance-program>**
- **MCAT registration fee: \$345 → \$140**
- **Waives AMCAS application for up to 20 schools**
- **And more!**

# Key Takeaways & More

# My takeaways as a proud MU grad!

## Highly recommended courses:

**Biochemistry I & II**

**Biostatistics**

**Christian Health Care Ethics**

**Death and Dying**

**Endocrinology**

**General Physiology**

**Gross Anatomy**

**Immunology**

**Start early!**

**Take advantage of your resources**

**Maintain strong connections with  
faculty**

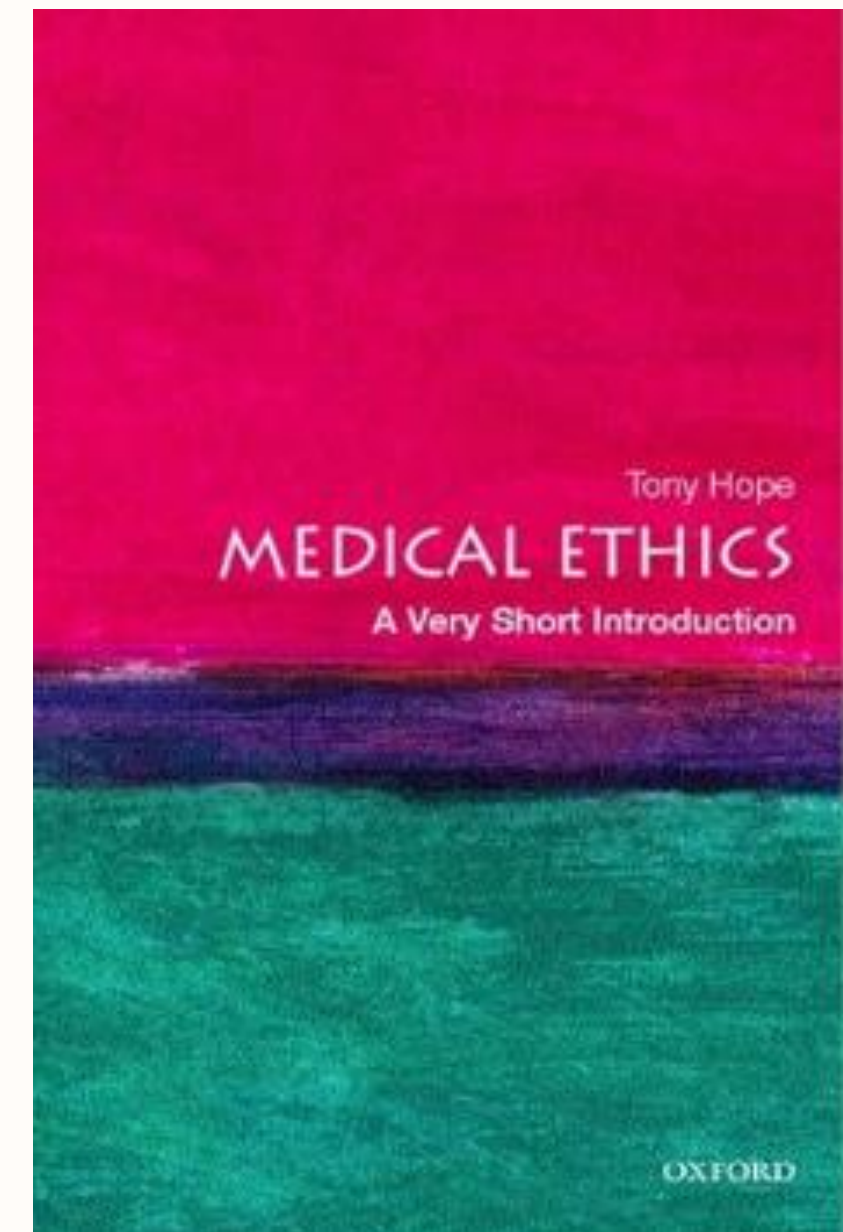
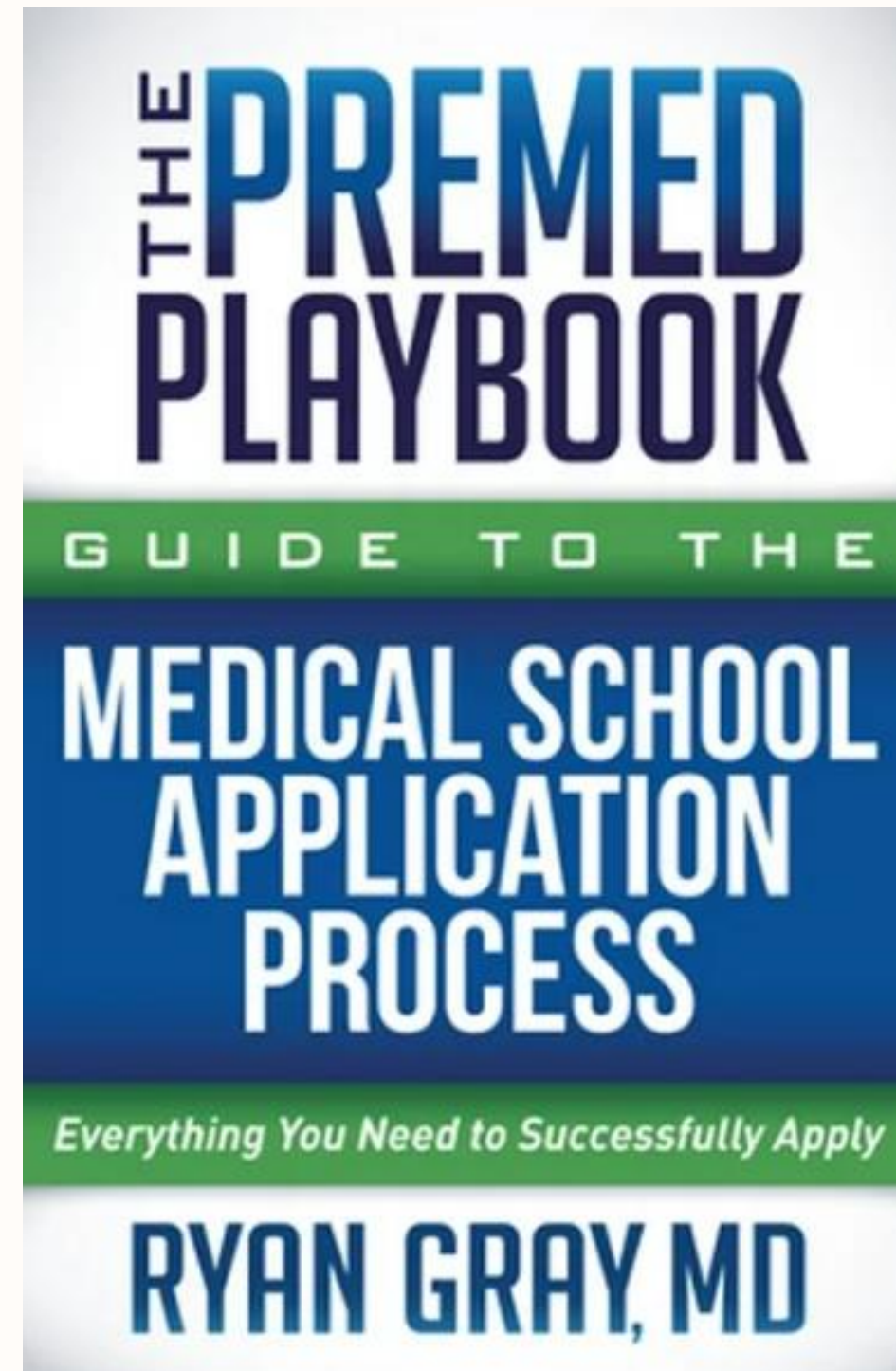
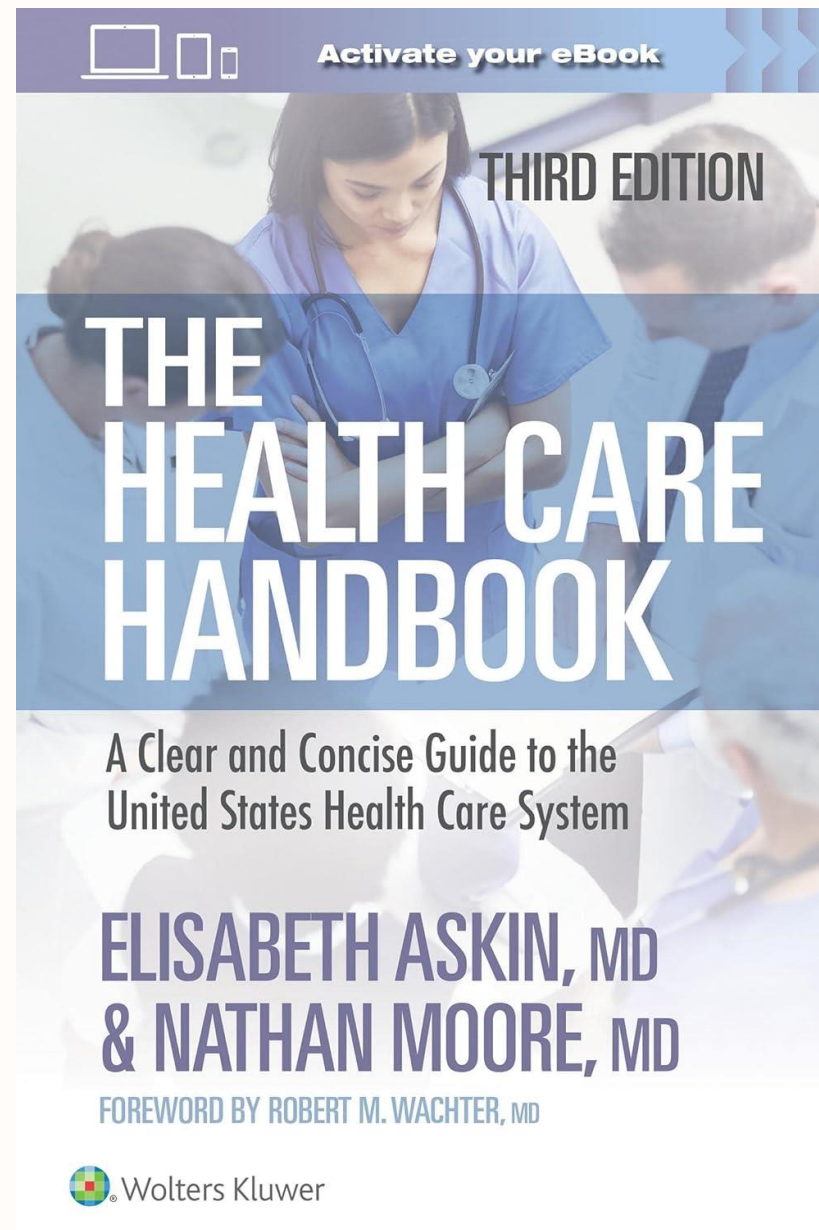
**Attend medical school webinars**

# Challenges & Advice



- **Time management is key**
- **Be realistic & set boundaries**
- **Make friends & find time for fun!**
- **Remember your WHY**
  
- **Pass/fail curriculum**
- **Internal rank system?**
- **When are exams? End of block or throughout?**

# Highly Recommended Resources





# FROM COLLEGE TO HEALTHCARE

PATHWAYS, REQUIREMENTS, AND STRATEGIES

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

- Career pathways in healthcare
- Educational pathways
- Application criteria and statistics
- Extracurriculars and resume building
- Timeline
- Beyond the statistics
- You're in! Now what?



# CAREERS IN MEDICINE

Physician (MD, DO) / Dentist (DDS)

Physician Assistants (PA)

Nurse (DNP, ARNP, RN, etc.)

Physical / Occupational Therapy

Support / Technical Staff

- Medical Assistant
- Xray/CT/MRI Technician
- Sonographer (Ultrasound Technician)

Emergency Medicine / First Responder

- Paramedic
- EMT/ER Technician



# EDUCATIONAL PATHWAYS

- MD/DO: College → Medical School → Residency → Job
- PA: College → PA School → (Residency) → Job
- Nursing: College → (Masters/PhD) → Job
- PT/OT: College → PT School → Job
- Support: Technical School → Job
- EMS: EMT/Paramedic School → Job



Just kidding of course 😊

# APPLICATION CRITERIA

- **Required**
  - Degree/Curriculum Requirements
  - Admissions Exam (MCAT/DAT/PA-CAT\*/GRE\*)
  - \*Supplemental Admissions Exams (CASPER)
  - Clinical Exposure
  - Letters of Recommendation
- 
- **Supplemental**
  - Research/Publications
  - Volunteering
  - Other Extracurriculars
  - \*\*\*The WOW Factor\*\*\*



# **WHAT ARE THE ACADEMIC REQUIREMENTS DURING COLLEGE FOR MEDICAL SCHOOL ADMISSION?**



# ACADEMICS IN COLLEGE

- Undergraduate Institution
  - Any accredited 4-year bachelor's program (BS/BA)
- Major
  - Any major\*
- Curriculum Requirements
  - Required (AAMC): Biology (1 yr), English (1 yr), Chemistry (2 yrs, inorganic and organic)
  - Common School Specific Requirements: Biology (+ 1 yr), Biochemistry (1 sem.), Physics, (1 yr), Math (1 yr, Statistics and Calculus)
  - Uncommon School Specific Requirements: Anatomy, Physiology
- Grade Point Average
  - No official cutoff
  - Avg GPA for MD matriculants: 3.74



## MCAT

- No official cutoff
- Matriculant Avg: 511.9  
(83<sup>rd</sup> Percentile)

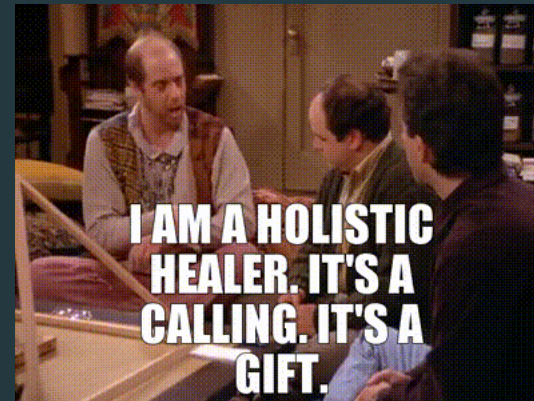
## DAT

- No official cutoff
- Matriculant Avg: 19-20  
(75<sup>th</sup> Percentile)

## ADMISSION EXAMS BENCHMARKS

# REMINDER: ADMISSIONS ARE HOLISTIC

- Academics and admissions exams are very important, but are not everything
- Below average grades and scores can be overcome
- Above average grades and scores are no guarantee



# CLINICAL EXPOSURE

- Sources:
  - Shadowing
    - HELP program with Dr. Sharma
  - Volunteering
  - Work
- Goals:
  - Understanding of what healthcare entails
  - Your “Why?”
    - For admissions, but more importantly for yourself



# LETTERS OF RECOMMENDATION



- Most schools require between 1-4 letters
- From whom?
  - Faculty (1-2 science, 1 non-science)
  - Supervisors/PI's
- Want good letters?
  - Seek out mentors
  - Build relationships

# EXTRACURRICULARS

- Admissions Committees want people, not statistics.
  - Demonstrate well rounded character, diversify activities
- Common Extracurriculars:
  - Research
  - Volunteering
  - Athletics
  - Student government
  - Clubs



# THE “WOW” FACTOR

- Getting into a Graduate/Professional program is difficult
  - Average MD program acceptance rate: 5.5%
  - Hundreds of applicants will share your GPA and test score
- When developing your resume:
  - Baseline: Demonstrate ability to perform and learn at required level
  - Goal: Give the reader a **reason to remember your name**
    - Unique project or accomplishment
    - Unique experience
    - Unique insight
    - **Unique connection**
    - Take chances, push your comfort zone

# TIMELINE FOR APPLYING

- Post-Undergraduate
- Average Matriculation Age:
  - MD/DO: 24
  - DDS: 25
  - PA: 26
- Gap years are normal
  - Most admitted students have multiple
- When should I apply?
  - Applications are long, stressful, and expensive. Apply when you are ready



# BEYOND THE STATISTICS: THE “WHY?”

- Working in and getting into healthcare is hard
  - Years of school
  - Debt + delayed financial compensation
  - Sacrifices in personal life
- Why do you want to be in medicine?
  - To help with others who are at their lowest?
  - Personal experiences with healthcare?
  - Status and financial security?
  - Desire to advance an active scientific field?
- This “Why” will carry you. Make sure it’s deep

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## THINGS TO REMEMBER

Your peers are  
your  
collaborators, not  
your competition

Your **effort**, above  
all else, will  
determine your  
outcome

Your “Why?” will  
carry you beyond  
each obstacle



# QUESTIONS?