

A Helpful Guide for Loved Ones

of students considering medical school



Providing Support

You can be supportive by encouraging your student to build healthy ways to manage stress. Promote hobbies or joining student groups not related to medicine like hiking, knitting, or yoga.

If you get a panicked phone call about a bad test grade be the calming voice of reason. It will all be OK!

I am so proud of all you accomplished this semester!

I know how hard you studied and I can tell how disappointed you are.

Have you talked this over with your prehealth advisor?

Lesser Known Truths

1. A gap or growth year between graduation and the start of medical school is typical
 - About 70% of WashU undergrad students took at least 1 gap year prior to matriculating to medical school
2. Experience is essential
 - A strong GPA and MCAT are not enough. Your child will need experience working directly with patients. As a starting point, suggest they reach out to your family doctor or volunteer at a local hospital
3. The medical school application process is long
 - Applications are submitted in June
 - Interview invites occur in the fall and can be as late as February or March. Encourage and model patience!
4. Medical school is expensive
 - Applications are too. Honest discussions about financing are important. Explore AAMC FIRST resources together.
5. Your student may not get into medical school the first time they apply and that is OK
 - There are options for reapplying. Encourage a discussion with their pre-health advisor about plan B, C, D, or Z



Academics

Major: Encourage your child to major in something they are interested in. Medical schools don't care what your major is as long as the pre-reqs are done.

GPA: While their grades are important, one C in a course will not stop your child from going to medical school. Calm their anxiety and encourage your student to develop good study skills and seek out available resources. There are a lot of resources at Wash U (the Learning Center, PLTL groups, tutors, etc.)

The MCAT

Encourage your child to use evidence-based study strategies promoted by Wash U's Learning Center.

Nonstop studying isn't effective and can compromise mental health.

Full length practice tests are essential!

THERE ARE MANY PATHS TO A CAREER IN HEALTHCARE.
FOR OUR STUDENTS IT IS NOT IF BUT WHEN.