

# GOALS AND OBJECTIVES OF MEDICAL EDUCATION\*

Leading to the Medical Degree

University of Massachusetts Medical School

Prepared by the Educational Policy Committee  
University of Massachusetts Medical School

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\*pending approval by the Board of Trustees

The University of Massachusetts Medical School is committed to training physicians in the full range of medical disciplines and with emphasis on practice in the primary care specialties, in the public sector, and in underserved areas of Massachusetts.

We, the faculty and students at the University of Massachusetts Medical School, strive to achieve these goals by defining the objectives of medical education in the areas of knowledge, skills and competencies, and values/personal attributes as described below. These objectives are not necessarily of equal weight and are not listed in order of priority. The **highlighted** subjects represent the traditional concepts of medical training. The additional objectives (not highlighted) expand on these traditional concepts to meet contemporary educational needs.

## **KNOWLEDGE**

### **1. THE SCIENCE OF HEALTH AND DISEASE**

An understanding of the scientific basis of health and disease is vital to the development of a physician. Such knowledge will enable students to practice effective clinical medicine, to understand scientific advances in health care, and to participate in medical research.

### **2. CLINICAL MEDICINE**

A solid grounding in clinical medicine is the foundation of medical practice. Students will learn disease and syndrome recognition, pathogenesis, clinical problem-solving and management, epidemiology and preventive medicine as the central basis of medical practice. Included within pathogenesis are the effects of occupational, environmental, behavioral, and lifestyle factors.

### **3. THE DOCTOR-PATIENT RELATIONSHIP**

An effective patient-physician alliance is essential to successful medical practice. Students will understand the unique nature of the doctor-patient relationship. They will understand the psychological needs of patients, as expressed in the medical interview, and will develop an awareness of how these needs influence patients' experience of illness. In addition, students will learn the important role of physician as teacher of patients and families.

4. **THE IMPACT OF HUMAN DIVERSITY**

Students will understand the relationship of age, gender, race, ethnicity, culture, socioeconomic status, and sexual preference to the patient's experience of illness, the relationship with the physician, and encounters with the health care system.

5. **LEGAL AND ETHICAL DIMENSIONS OF MEDICAL PRACTICE**

Students will understand the major legal mechanisms for oversight and regulation of medical practice, including those related to licensure and discipline, malpractice, doctor-patient relations, confidentiality, and patients' rights. Students will understand current ethical standards and the fundamental ethical questions and conflicts common to medical practice.

6. **ECONOMICS OF HEALTH CARE**

Students will learn to practice in a cost-effective manner. In addition, students will understand how the organization of health care systems in the United States and other advanced industrial nations impacts on access, cost, and quality. This understanding will enable students to participate in the national debate about the future delivery of health care.

7. **EMOTIONAL WELL-BEING OF HEALTH PROFESSIONALS**

Students will understand the causes, prevention, and treatment of stress and emotional disorder among health professionals. This knowledge will not only prepare them to recognize dysfunction among colleagues but will also help them to develop personal strengths for fulfilling their professional lives.

# **SKILLS AND COMPETENCIES**

## **1. HISTORY AND PHYSICAL EXAMINATION**

Students will learn to take a complete and reliable history and perform a comprehensive physical examination in order to assess the patient's physical and psychological state.

## **2. PROBLEM-SOLVING**

Students will develop proficiency at problem-solving using both deductive and inferential reasoning as well as pattern or syndrome-recognition.

## **3. APPRAISAL AND MANAGEMENT INFORMATION**

Students will learn to critically appraise scientific literature. Students will effectively utilize data and knowledge from diverse sources by employing advanced methods of information management. Students will become familiar with the evolving computerized environment of modern health care, to access scientific literature.

## **4. COMMUNICATION SKILLS**

Students will learn to converse effectively with patients (particularly in the medical interview), colleagues and other health professionals, and the lay public using both technical nomenclature and standard English. Development of both written and oral communication skills will enable them as future physicians to act as advocate and educator for both patients and the profession.

## **5. ESTABLISHING COLLEGIAL RELATIONSHIPS AND WORKING IN ORGANIZATIONS**

Students will learn to work cordially, cooperatively, and effectively with colleagues in other health professions and in various organizational settings.

# **VALUES AND PERSONAL ATTRIBUTES**

## **1. THE MEANING OF A MEDICAL CAREER**

Students should embrace medicine as a calling, a dedication, and a privilege rather than merely a job.

## **2. ETHICAL STANDARDS**

Students should practice medicine, relate to colleagues, and conduct research according to the highest standards of ethics.

## **3. INTELLECTUAL DEVELOPMENT AND EDUCATION**

Students should sustain intellectual curiosity and a commitment to a lifetime of continuous education.

## **4. PLEASURE IN THE PRACTICE OF MEDICINE**

Students should experience satisfaction, pleasure, and pride in learning and in the practice of medicine.

## **5. RESPECT FOR DIVERSITY**

Students should understand and respect cultural, racial, and ethnic diversity, and eschew bias regarding sexual orientation, race, gender, and socioeconomic class.

## **6. SERVING THE UNDERSERVED**

Students should expend part of their professional efforts both during training and in practice serving the underserved, including those with stigmatizing medical conditions.

## **7. ADVANCEMENT OF MEDICAL EDUCATION**

Students should seek to improve the quality of medical education at the University of Massachusetts by participating in the academic life of the Medical School now and as future alumni.

## **8. PERSONAL STRENGTHS**

Students should develop sufficient personal strengths in order to meet the physical and psychological demands of careers in medicine.