

# **University of Alabama School of Medicine Goals and Objectives for the Educational Program Leading to the MD Degree**

## **Vision**

The University of Alabama School of Medicine aspires to achieve national recognition in medical student education comparable to that received for its research and patient care for its ability to produce physicians with the essential knowledge, skills, and professionalism to successfully continue their professional education and pursue a variety of careers to better serve Alabama and the nation through health promotion, medical research, and disease prevention and treatment.

## **Mission**

The mission of the University of Alabama School of Medicine is to produce quality physicians who (1) possess all essential knowledge, skills, and professionalism and who possess skills and the habit of life-long learning, (2) possess the ability to work in and lead future health care systems, (3) will help meet the health care and research needs of Alabama and the nation, and (4) reflect the population and composition of Alabama.

## **UNDERGRADUATE MEDICAL EDUCATION GOALS AND OBJECTIVES**

### **Professionalism and Communication**

- 1. Each student will develop and cultivate personal and professional qualities of ethics, commitment to patient well being, commitment derived from the role accorded physicians in society, and an understanding of their own personal strengths, weaknesses, obligations, and limitations.**

#### **a. Ethics:**

##### ***Each student will...***

- Understand, value, and practice basic ethical concepts, moral reasoning, and patient, societal, and professional responsibility in the educational and health care context.
- Exhibit personal qualities of honesty, integrity, reliability, altruism, dependability, open-mindedness, and intellectual curiosity.

#### **b. Commitment to patient well being:**

##### ***Each student will...***

- Understand, value, and practice compassionate treatment of patients, including a respect for their privacy and dignity, a commitment to advocate the interests of his/her patients over his/her own selfish interests, a commitment to provide care irrespective of their ability to pay, advocacy for the needs of individual patients and of patient groups, an understanding of the roles of other health care professionals, and a commitment to collaboration with other health care professionals as needed to achieve the best interests of the patient.

**c. Obligations derived from role of physicians in society:**

***Each student will...***

- Understand and value the role given to physicians in society and thereby practice personal lifelong learning as a means of achieving personal and professional excellence in clinical care.
- Understand the need to place societal needs ahead of those of any physician colleague whose performance is substandard and/or unethical.
- Recognize and value collaboration among health care disciplines, between the physician and patient and his/her family, and among community and governmental organizations, and industry for achievement of optimal care for patients.

**d. Understanding of self:**

***Each student will...***

- Understand the importance of self-awareness as a means of recognizing his/her own limitations in knowledge and clinical skills.
- Value and develop, through self-reflection, critical self-appraisal, and openness to feedback, skills for continuous improvement as a provider of health care.

**2. Each student will understand and value the importance of honest and effective communication with patients and their families, other health professionals, and society.**

**a. Patients and their families:**

***Each student will...***

- Understand, appreciate, and possess skill in educating and counseling patients as a means of involving them meaningfully in decision-making and thereby enabling and encouraging them to understand the importance of their personal responsibility in their own health.
- Develop and practice interpersonal skills that facilitate development of effective and empathetic relationships with patients and their families and effective collaborations with other health care professionals.
- Develop and practice skills in producing and handling in a confidential and appropriate manner oral and written communication with patients and colleagues.

**b. Other health professionals:**

***Each student will...***

- Value the importance of and practice accurate, professional, and productive communication with colleagues at all levels and in all locations concerning each patient.
- Develop skills for using information technology to manage information, access online medical information, and communicate with team members in the interests of patients.

**c. Society:**

***Each student will...***

- Value the importance of physicians addressing health care needs and problems at the societal level and, when possible, taking a leadership role in the societal response to issues/problems that arise.

**Biomedical Knowledge and Clinical Skills**

- 1. Each student will acquire a fund of biomedical, psychological, and social knowledge, develop the skill of obtaining information from the patient, and assess the collected information in the light of the latest, critically evaluated medical literature.**

**a. Foundation of knowledge:**

***Each student will...***

- Understand the normal human structure and function of the body and its major organ systems and the molecular, biochemical, and cellular mechanisms that are important in maintaining the body's homeostasis.
- Understanding various causes (genetic, developmental, metabolic, toxic, microbiologic, autoimmune, neoplastic, degenerative, traumatic, and behavioral) of maladies and the ways in which they operate on the body.
- Know the rationale and application of the therapeutic options relevant to the various mechanisms of disease.
- Understand and be able to apply the social and behavioral sciences, epidemiology, and humanities to important non-biologic and cultural factors that contribute to health or disease.

**b. Information from patient:**

***Each student will...***

- Develop an ability and skill for eliciting through an accurate and comprehensive medical history and physical exam all information that is relevant.
- Develop an ability to organize the information from all sources, including epidemiology.
- Understand appropriate tests and procedures to be ordered on the basis of findings from the medical history and physical exam in the light of epidemiological knowledge.

**c. Comparison with literature:**

***Each student will...***

- Develop an ability to access medical literature, critically analyze this literature, understand how medical knowledge is generated, and assess the literature's relevance to the clinical case under consideration.

- 2. Each student will demonstrate the ability to apply information compiled from all sources into a coherent prioritized differential diagnosis and make appropriate clinical decisions.**

***Each student will...***

- Demonstrate an ability to recognize a situation requiring rapid intervention, take steps to implement appropriate emergency care, know the pathophysiological rationale for particular management approaches, and explain methods of monitoring effectiveness of therapy and avoidance of complications.
- Demonstrate the ability to synthesize and integrate the pertinent facts from the history, physical, and laboratory data, formulate a hypothesis, and, if appropriate, order additional tests and procedures for confirmation, relying on knowledge of the most frequent clinical, laboratory, radiologic, and pathologic manifestations of common maladies..
- Understand the contribution to patient care provided by other health professionals and when to obtain their consultation.
- Demonstrate the ability to integrate psychological and social issues and apply them to clinical situations.
- Develop a diagnosis, establish causation, and formulate management strategies.

- 3. Each student will demonstrate sound clinical judgment, solid technical and procedural skills, and compassionate interpersonal skills.**

***Each student will...***

- Understand the clinical problems (and their treatments) unique to the various patient categories, including age, gender, and culture.
- Demonstrate skill in the evaluation of patients at various levels of medical care, including inpatient, ambulatory, home care, etc. and the subsequent management appropriate for each level of care.
- Understand when to use medical and invasive procedures.
- Demonstrate skills in performing appropriate basic medical and invasive procedures considered essential for entering any area of graduate medical education.
- Understand the basic issues relating to the care of critically ill patients.
- Understand the principles and application of fluid management, pharmacologic management, and nutritional management.
- Understand common acute and chronic illnesses and their effect on the patient, family, and society.
- Understand and value the importance of working collaboratively with health care professionals, including those from other disciplines, to provide patient focused care.
- Know the role of prevention in health care and demonstrate skills in providing health care services and health care information aimed at maintaining health through recognition and reduction of risk factors that contribute to major causes of morbidity and mortality for individual patients and large populations across the life span.
- Know the role of patient education as a means of involving patients actively in their health care and demonstrate skill in patient counseling/educating that makes the patient a part of the decision making process.

## **Social and Community Contexts of Health Care**

**The student will develop an understanding of the social, cultural, and community factors that contribute to and affect patients' health status and influence the health care system and patients' access to care.**

### ***The student will...***

- Understand the epidemiological factors that place the individual patient, as well as patient populations in general, at risk for disease or injury.
- Understand and value gender, ethnic, and cultural issues at work in the physician-patient encounter and in the patient's response to disease, treatment, and wellness.
- Understand the effects of chronic disease, trauma, violence, alcohol and drug abuse, and tobacco use on the patient, family, society, and community.
- Understand the importance of and develop skills in addressing psychosocial, economic behavioral, and community factors when negotiating with patients on health-related lifestyle modification.
- Understand basic principles of health care economics.
- Understand the importance of advocating for quality in patient care.