



# Professional Etiquette

Webinar for Shadowing/Mentoring Programs both Virtually and In Person

# Before Making Contact



- Clean out the message box on your phone.
- Make sure your phone message is professional.
- Have your resume reviewed at University Career Services.
- Read up on the physician who will be your mentor, and his field of expertise.
- Make a list of questions for the doctor so that you show interest (see the last slide for ideas).
- If you will be on Zoom, make sure that you test the equipment, that your background is not cluttered, and that you are professionally attired.



# Making Contact

- ▶ Call or be available to receive the call at the designated time. Do not be late.
- ▶ Maintain a professional and courteous demeanor at all times.
- ▶ Should you email, make sure you pay attention to grammar, tone and discretion.
- ▶ Email messages should be professional and concise.

# What Should I Wear?

- Unless the physician with whom you are shadowing instructs you otherwise, the appropriate attire for a medical office setting is business attire.
- Shadowing etiquette dictates males should wear a shirt and tie, pants and dress shoes. Females should wear a conservative skirt/pants and blouse, dress, or suit. Remember, part of having a physician mentor you in a healthcare setting means looking the part. Also, if the doctor plans to write you a letter of recommendation, you can assure that you would like every impression to be positive.





# What Should I Bring?

- ▶ Only bring items that are expected of a student
- ▶ Bring a legal pad or composition book and some pens
- ▶ DO NOT BRING A CAMERA!! HIPAA is of great concern to physicians when it comes to shadowing opportunities. Taking photographs in a healthcare setting where there is a first-hand patient contact is not advisable nor is it generally legal
- ▶ Likewise do not use patient names when discussing shadowing experiences with family or friends.
- ▶ Cell phones are not only distracting, but they also give an impression that something else in your life is of a higher priority. In addition to being unprofessional, it may be illegal for you to use your phone in a patient setting.



# What Should I Do? Part 1

- ▶ First of all, be sure to be respectful.
- ▶ Be punctual every day.
- ▶ Take your directions directly from your sponsoring doctor.
- ▶ Do not be afraid to take notes, however, be sure that you refrain from documenting any patient related data.
- ▶ If a patient addresses you, be sure to identify yourself as a pre-medical student and kindly answer their questions.
- ▶ While taking notes, reflect on how the experiences you have endured will help you to succeed in medical school and eventually, as a health care professional.
- ▶ You are there to watch, pay attention, and experience the nature of a practicing physician's profession.



# What Should I Do? Part 2


- ▶ Expect that many patients might be wary of your presence in concern for their privacy. Keeping this in mind, make an attempt to be somewhat invisible. If you have questions while patients are around, take note of them and ask them later when you have more one-on-one contact with the doctor.
- ▶ Every day you shadow a doctor, jot down a summary of your experiences for the day. Keep note of the date, number of hours, the facility or environment, and the name of the doctor you observed.
- ▶ Write about what you saw and how it made you feel. Try to focus on the physician-patient interaction, and consider how you would feel and act in the position of the doctor.
- ▶ The summary will serve as a useful tool later on when you are completing your application, writing your personal statement, and during preparation for your interviews.

# Sample Questions to Ask While Shadowing



Students should be prepared to ask questions when shadowing a physician. You should definitely have questions prepared to ask if it is requested that you interview for the shadowing position. Be sure to engage the physician that you have chosen to shadow and learn as much as you can during the opportunity. Really try to gain insight into the life of a physician and determine if a career as a physician really suits you. Be sure to take notes. Note-taking will really benefit you in the application process when you draft your personal statement.





All things considered, do not interrupt or be a distraction to the physician while he/she is caring for patients. Try to leave questions for time when there may not be much happening in the office or between patients. This is especially important if you are offered an opportunity to observe a physician in surgery or in an operating room. The following are sample questions you may wish to ask during your physician shadowing experiences.

➤ **Life and Time of a Physician**

- On a typical day in this as a physician, what do you do? How many patients do you see each day?
- How many hours do you work in a typical day/week?
- How much time do you have for philanthropy?
- What kinds of problems do you deal with?
- What percentage of your time is spent doing what?
- How does the time use vary? Are there busy and slow times or is the work activity fairly constant?
- How much of your time do you spending doing paperwork?
- How do you balance work and family responsibilities?
- **How long have you been a physician?**
- **How does the demanding nature of a physician's daily job function compare to that of other medical professions?**



## ➤ **Choice to become a Physician**

- What personal attributes or characteristics are important to being successful as a physician?
- What part of being a physician do you find most satisfying?
- What about being a physician do you find most challenging?
- How did you decide to pursue this field?
- Is there anything you dislike about your job? If so, what?
- What jobs should I pursue as an undergraduate to learn as much as possible?
- If you could do things all over again, would you be a physician? Why? What would you change?
- What is the greatest event you have experienced as a physician?
- **Would you go to medical school if you were to start over?**



## **Future of Medicine**

- How do you see medicine changing in the future?
- How do you think current legislation will affect your practice?
- What advances do you think will be made in this field and how will that impact your career or the way that you do your job?
- Do you think technology has made a large impact on your practice?  
How?
- How has your career been affected by the new economies of medicine?
- What is your opinion about the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act?



## **Specialty**

- Is there a demand for physicians in this specialty?  
Why or why not?
- Will the demand for physicians in this specialty change? Why or why not?
- Are there other specialties you considered pursuing?
- What special advice would you give a person entering this specialty?
- How does technology play a role in this field or in your job?
- What types of medical conditions do you deal with most often in your specialty?
- How did you pick your specialty? And when did you decide? Before med school? During rotations, etc.,?

# After Your Shadowing Experience

- Send the doctor and anyone else who has provided you with help a simple thank you note.
- Be sure to request a letter of recommendation from the physician you have shadowed. Many schools prefer or even require a letter from a physician.
- Add the shadowing experience to your resume
- Keep them updated on your application process, especially once you are accepted into medical school
- While completing your medical school application, be sure to include your shadowing experiences.
- Remember to look back on the journal and notes you kept when writing your personal statement.
- Also be prepared to answer questions regarding your shadowing experiences in your interview and secondary application

Much of the material for these slides were taken from the following websites:

<http://www.doctorshadow.com/about-shadowing-a-physician/shadowing-etiquette/>

<http://smallbusiness.chron.com/business-etiquette-online-58760.html>

<http://www.dotorshadow.com/about-shadowing-a-physician/sample-questions-to-ask/#.WYlayXlk270>