Ways to Stay Engaged During COVID

We know that for many of you, the way you planned to spend the past summer as well as this upcoming academic year has been drastically altered by the COVID-19 pandemic. Some of you may be able to engage in your planned work/internship on a remote basis. If so, that is wonderful! For others that may not be possible. With this document, we hope to provide some ideas to structure an engaging and productive year in order to keep building on your current skills and preparing for your future career pathway.

Continue to Serve Others
Wanting to be of service to others is a cornerstone for your interest in the health professions. While it may not be possible to volunteer in the traditional ways (hospitals, nursing homes, hospice care, etc) we would encourage you to investigate the following options:

- Be an active, helpful member of your home community. Volunteer to cover childcare needs for neighbors or to check in (by phone/from a distance) on the elderly. If you’re part of a religious community, see if there are ways that you can provide support through them. Check with organizations where you have volunteered in the past to see if you can step back into previous roles.
- Use idealist.org, volunteermatch.org, or omprakash.org to seek other local options, but be ready for slow responses.
- Look into the volunteer National Medical Reserves Corps branch near you.
- Donate blood and volunteer to help the Red Cross address blood delivery and donation support needs in your community. (Remote volunteering options exist for those at high risk.)
- Check to see if Meals on Wheels needs more volunteers in your community. Inquire whether other local organizations focused on supporting the elderly need volunteers.
- Food pantries, soup kitchens, and homeless shelters in most areas are continuing to look for volunteers and have been trying to maintain social distance for their volunteers and those they serve. Feeding America can help students to find their local food pantry.
- Many chapters of the United Way have updated their volunteer opportunities to show all the local non-profits seeking help.
- Check with University of Chicago’s Community Service Center for possible opportunities.
- Operation Warm has a list of 25 ways to volunteer virtually.
- Paper-airplanes.org invites volunteers to provide online tutoring to “bridge gaps in language, higher education, and professional skills training for conflict-affected individuals”.
- Dosomething.org’s nine places to volunteer online and make a real impact.
- If you’ve received crisis hotline training, check to see if your community’s crisis hotline could use additional phone or chat volunteers. Many crisis hotlines are overloaded right now.
  - Suicide Prevention Lifeline
  - Crisis Text Line (requires 30 hours of training)
  - The TREVOR Project - supports LGBTQ youth
- Work with underserved and under-resourced youth
  - Upchieve: Online tutoring for disadvantaged youth
- Assist in digitizing, transcribing and otherwise contributing to nonprofit organizations
  - Amnesty Decoders
- Digital Smithsonian Museum
- Project Gutenberg free ebooks service
- Zooniverse crowd-sourced research

- Assist with the upcoming election
  - Participate in voter registration efforts: www.rockthevote.org/get-involved/
  - 100 Ways to Get Involved: www.lwv.org/blog/100-days-and-100-ways-get-ready-election-day
  - Sign up to be a poll worker: https://www.workelections.com/

- Physiocamp seeks volunteers to provide online health/science education through “Telecamps”

Paid Opportunities

- Become a contact tracer
- Become a medical scribe

Develop Your Knowledge About Medicine
Professional schools always value applicants who have taken the time to really learn about their chosen career field, and to think critically about their fit for the profession.
- Once the current situation has stabilized, contact alum physicians utilizing Wisr, UChicago’s alumni directory, or LinkedIn. It will be interesting to talk with them about their experiences as physicians, especially during this time. Of course, they may be far too busy to connect with you for quite a while. Consider seeking out retired physicians who are watching this unfold, or medical students who are currently not allowed on the wards.
- Read books that provide insight about being a doctor, applying to medical school, or learning about other health careers.
  - Book lists:
  - Book recommendations from advisors:
    - The Spirit Catches You and You Fall Down
    - The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks
    - Being Mortal
    - When Breath Becomes Air
    - The Emperor of All Maladies
    - My Own Country
    - Teeth: Beauty, Inequality, and the Struggle for Oral Health in America
    - Fresh Fruit, Broken Bodies: Migrant Farmworkers in the United States (Seth Holmes, MD/PhD)
    - Mountains Beyond Mountains
  - Read Blog posts from current medical students
    - AACOM’s Choose DO Blog
    - AAMC Aspiring Docs Diaries
  - Podcasts are a great way to learn and engage.
    - Top 10 podcasts for pre-meds from Diverse Medicine
    - Premed Mondays with Dr. Dale: https://www.stitcher.com/podcast/anchor-podcasts/premed-mondays-2
    - The Short Coat Podcast: http://theshortcoat.com/tag/dave-etler/
• All Access Medical School Admissions podcast with Christian Essman, director of admissions at Case Western Reserve University School of Medicine

**Watch documentaries**
- [Making Rounds](https://www.dailymotion.com/video/x3ojj9b_features-cardiologists-at-mt-sinai) features cardiologists at Mt. Sinai
- [Vaccines: Calling the Shots](https://www.dailymotion.com/video/x3ojj9b_features-cardiologists-at-mt-sinai)

**Virtual Shadowing**
While in-person shadowing has been largely cancelled across the country, there are a few virtual shadowing opportunities that you may wish to explore:
- [Virtual Shadowing.Com](https://www.virtualshadowing.com)
- [WebShadowers, LLC](https://www.weshadowers.com)
- University of Colorado School of Medicine Virtual Shadowing

The Virtual Shadowing course is a series of 5 classes in which students will watch over the shoulder of one of our physicians, nurse practitioners, or PAs as s/he goes bedside in the ED to assess and diagnose a simulated patient. The video is followed-up by a series of questions posed to the student and then a summary by the physician. A short quiz on the topic addressed finalizes each class. The first of the "e-shadowing" sessions are up and ready for student learning. The virtual shadowing videos are free and if so desired, after successfully completing all five, students can apply for a Certificate of Completion from the University of Colorado School of Medicine for a $50 fee (covering our costs of producing the videos). Those interested in viewing the first video series please email Bre McKercher at breanna.McKercher@cuanschutz.edu for a link.

**Research Professional Schools**
When you are ready to apply to professional school, you will give yourself the best odds for acceptance by applying to a carefully cultivated range of schools for which you demonstrate a good "fit." The more you know about a school, beyond their average GPA and MCAT, the better you will be able to create such a list.
- Surf through websites for schools to learn more about the curriculum and experiences in which you can expect to engage once you reach professional school
  - [AAMC Allopathic (MD) Medical Schools](https://www.aamc.org/directory/membership/search?sort=distance&fields=distance)
  - [AACOM Osteopathic (DO) Medical Schools](https://www.aacom.org/membership/search)
- The [website of the National Association of Advisors for the Health Professions](https://www.naahp.org) maintains a comprehensive list of pre-health events around the country, including many virtual events. The site also has a plethora of information on the various health professions under the “Student Resources” tab.

**Hone Your Skills and Knowledge of the Healthcare System**
Healthcare is a massive industry, encompassing nearly 1/5th of the gross national product in the United States. How much do you know about its origins? Why do we do things the way we do? How are healthcare policies developed? What leads to the health disparities that exist? How will you seek to make an impact through your own career? A multitude of online courses exist that can help you in gaining the answers to these questions!
- [Class about pandemics from Harvard](https://www.coursera.org/specializations/pandemic-epidemiology)
- [Class about community change in public health from Johns Hopkins](https://www.coursera.org/specializations/community-change-public-health)
- [Essentials of global health from Yale](https://www.coursera.org/specializations/global-health)
• Ivy League free courses list via freecodecamp.org
• Class “An Examination of coronavirus-COVID-19” from St George’s University
• Medical School Headquarters YouTube: premed.tv
• Georgetown offers free MOOCs including Bioethics, Biomedical Big Data, Globalization, or Genomic Medicine.
• Linkedin Learning, Coursera

Learn more about racism and structural inequality in health care
• Prioritizing Equity video series from the American Medical Association
• Epidemics and the African American Community video series from the Hutchins Center Project on Race and Gender in Science and Medicine
• What the Racial Data Show: The pandemic seems to be hitting people of color the hardest. The Atlantic, April 2020
• Duke University School of Medicine Antiracism Resources
• Harvard University Countway Library Antiracism and Health Reading List
• Peggy McIntosh TEDTalk: How to recognize your white privilege — and use it to fight inequality
• Justice in June: a starting place for individuals trying to become better allies
• Vox’s video “The US Medical System Is Still Haunted by Slavery”

Work on Life/“Adulting” Skills
Once you reach professional school, you will be consumed by your studies and future career development. The “everyday” essentials of independent life should not be an additional stressor. Take the time now to develop important life skills and a self-care routine!
• Do you know how to cook? Offer to cook and deliver a meal to neighbors trying to manage childcare and work obligations at home.
• Develop an at-home exercise routine (this is also good self-care!)
• Take up or revisit a craft or hobby -- origami, bike repair, gardening, the instrument or art supplies you put down at the end of high school
• If you’ve never tracked your budget and expenses before, analyze your spending from the last year and develop a budget moving forward (see Nerdwallet tips)

Many suggestions in this resource are the result of a collaborative effort among the pre-health advisor members of the National Association of Advisors for the Health Professions. We know this is a challenging time for our pre-health students, and seek to consistently share opportunities we learn of for the good of all.