

PHYSICIAN



Summary of profession

Medical doctors are qualified to examine, diagnose and treat patients. They may specialize in a number of medical areas, such as pediatrics, anesthesiology or cardiology, or they may work as general practice physicians.

Working hours, patterns and environment

Doctors may work long and unpredictable hours dictated by the needs of their patients. Additionally, doctors may need to travel amongst various locations, such as offices, hospitals and clinics, in order to provide patient care.

Education and Skills

Candidates must complete approximately eight years of education, including a four-year Doctor of Medicine (M.D.) program. Such programs are presented in two parts. The first portion is classroom instruction in the life sciences and the fundamentals of medical care. Coursework may include anatomy and physiology, medical ethics, pharmacology and immunology. The second portion includes practical rotations and a residency program. Before you can get into a M.D. program you need to earn a four-year bachelor's degree in biology or pre-medicine and an acceptable MCAT score.

Job and Growth Opportunities

Over the next 10 years Physicians and Surgeons will be one of the fastest growing occupations. While job prospects may be better for primary care physicians such as general and family practitioners and pediatricians, a substantial number of jobs for specialists will also be created because of the growing demand for specialty care.