



One Specialty.

A WORLD OF OPPORTUNITY.

Is Family Medicine Right for You?

“Family medicine is the specialty where you’re most able to take your expertise and do what you will with it. Everything is in your domain and within your scope of practice. Family medicine was definitely the right path for me because I’m interested in so many different things.”

— BRIGHT ZHOU (FOURTH YEAR STUDENT)

When it's time to decide which specialty you'll practice, *Choose More.*

As a future physician, you're bound to make a difference, but that doesn't mean you have to be bound to treating only certain types of patients or organ systems, or limit your impact on your community to what happens in your clinic.

Family medicine is medicine's unbound specialty. Its doctors are primary care specialists, trained to care for all patients, regardless of factors like age, gender, or health concern. The full-scope training family physicians experience allows them to do more for their patients and families by being their first contact, and their continual partner in health throughout generations.

A family physician's favorite part of the day could be seeing one 100-year-old patient followed by a visit with a newborn. It could be lobbying a state lawmaker for stronger public health measures. It could be seeing their relationship with a patient finally help bring about a needed lifestyle change or being the one to solve the puzzle for an undifferentiated patient by finding a new diagnosis. It could be all these things and more, because family medicine is the specialty that lets physicians do it all.

“**Optimal health comes not only from medicine; it comes from one's environment and relationships. More than any other specialty, family medicine recognizes this.**”

— ALLYSSA ABEL, M.D.

“**As family medicine is the only discipline that allows me to serve both mothers and children, for me, it was family medicine or it was nothing at all.**”

— PRISCILLA AUGUSTE, M.D.

When you choose family medicine, you choose more than medicine.

You Choose

Purpose

Family physicians are rooted in the communities they care for, and have vast opportunities to make a difference every day seeing a range of patients, regardless of their age or health condition. They heal through building trusting relationships over time, and through avenues outside of traditional care settings, like advocacy and public health. They find purpose by:

- Treating vulnerable populations, including patients who are refugees, LGBTQ, or experiencing homelessness
- Adapting to meet changing health care needs
- Helping patients prevent, understand, and manage illness
- Applying knowledge of the social determinants of health to improve patients' well-being
- Advocating for a health care system that promotes access, preventive care, and value for patients

Variety

Family physicians offer diverse services. Imagining what they'll be doing in their career 30 or 40 years down the road draws many students to the field. In family medicine, each day offers something different, which is a major advantage for those seeking flexibility and the opportunity for lifelong learning. In family medicine, you can:

- Routinely perform procedures
- Care for infants and children
- Treat patients in a hospital setting
- Provide maternity and obstetrical care
- Deliver emergency care
- Pursue focused training and fellowships

Skill

Family physicians perform many types of procedures, making the specialty unique in how it combines hands-on interventions and relationship-based care to meet nearly all of a patient's health care needs. In residency training, family physicians learn a broad number of clinical procedures, often tailored to the future physicians' desired practice setting and surrounding community need. Family physicians can also build on their residency training to add procedures to their repertoire throughout their career. Some procedures and interventions family physicians might use in practice are:

- Colposcopy/LEEP
- Skin procedures
- IUD insertion
- Colonoscopy
- Suturing lacerations
- Osteopathic manipulative treatment
- Endoscopy
- Ultrasound imaging
- Cosmetic procedures
- Musculoskeletal injections
- Vasectomy
- Radiography
- Spirometry

Versatility

Family physicians have many practice options, and are in demand everywhere they go—including globally. Family medicine makes it possible to have a fulfilling career while maintaining a healthy work/life balance that allows time to raise a family, travel, and pursue hobbies. Some popular settings to choose from in family medicine are:

- Solo or group practices
- Telehealth-based practices
- Direct primary care offices
- Multispecialty group practices
- Research or academic health centers
- Hospitals
- Rural, urban, and suburban practices
- Emergency departments and urgent care centers
- Community health centers
- Administrative roles and government

Expertise

Family physicians are trained to offer the best possible patient care. They train to meet the needs of their future community by becoming experts in broad-scope care who can flex and adapt to any setting. Family medicine residencies are located everywhere, from big cities to rural areas, in traditional academic settings, communities, and the military. Most are three-year programs, with a few options for four-year programs. There are also several combined-specialty options in family medicine, where residents train in family medicine and an additional specialty, like psychiatry or preventive medicine.

As residents, all family physicians are trained in:

- Hospital medicine, including intensive care, inpatient, and outpatient medicine
- Prenatal care, labor, and delivery
- Emergency medicine
- Surgery and procedures
- Pediatrics
- Geriatrics

Family medicine also has many fellowship and certification options, including in:

- Adolescent medicine
- Emergency medicine
- Faculty development
- Geriatric medicine
- Hospice and palliative medicine
- Hospital medicine
- Integrative medicine
- Global health
- Obstetrics
- Sleep medicine
- Sports medicine

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