

July 15, 2019

Dear students,

I am excited that you will be joining the Pritzker family in August and would like to extend a warm personal welcome to all of you! In the weeks leading up to medical school, there will undoubtedly be times when you will be nervous regarding the notion that you will become a physician in a few short years.

The foundation of knowledge and skills you will gain during your time at Pritzker will serve you well as you care for patients throughout your careers. You will ultimately become the type of physician you wrote about in your applications to medical school – someone who is compassionate, competent and professional.

The last word (professional) can be a difficult one to define. Several years ago, a group of students, faculty, staff and deans set out to express what professionalism means to Pritzker. The group created a document outlining the guiding principles of professionalism that will serve as a “touchstone” during medical school. Please find attached a copy of this document for your review. I look forward to the opportunity to talk with you about these principles and your personal aspirations throughout your time at Pritzker!

With warm regards,



James Woodruff, MD
Dean of Students
Pritzker School of Medicine
Professor of Medicine
The University of Chicago

Enclosed: Guiding Principles of Professionalism

Guiding Principles of Professionalism

Background of Guiding Principles of Professionalism

In 2009, members of the University of Chicago Physician and Medical Student Professionalism Committee and clerkship directors decided to outline the ideals and behaviors that students should embody during their medical school training. A task force on Medical Student Professionalism consisting of course directors, clerkship directors, student representatives, faculty members and faculty deans met for eight months to develop the following policies and procedures which were approved by the Education Executive Committee in April 2010.

A mark of a great medical school is the ability to create an environment which nurtures future physicians who possess knowledge of the most advanced scientific fundamentals and who demonstrate clinical competencies while behaving in ways that honor the profession of medicine. Helping students to achieve this level of professionalism is as important to a medical school as is its success in educating students in the biological and clinical sciences.

Below are the fundamental attributes to which we ascribe as members of the Pritzker School of Medicine community in our professional responsibilities, relationships and ethic.

Professional Responsibilities

As a medical student and future physician, I have chosen to pursue a profession which requires personal integrity, compassion, and a constant awareness of the commitment I have made to myself, to my patients, and to the other members of the teams with whom I work. Exhibiting personal behaviors consistent with a respect for my chosen profession and having pride in my work are central tenets of professionalism which I will strive to incorporate into my daily life. To demonstrate my commitment to these responsibilities while enrolled at the Pritzker School of Medicine, I will:

- Seek and accept feedback and constructive instruction from teachers, peers, residents and faculty in order to continually improve my educational experience, knowledge, and clinical skills.
- Commit to the highest standards of competence both for myself and for those with whom I work.
- Recognize the importance of life-long learning and commit to maintaining competence throughout my medical career.
- Be mindful of my demeanor, language, and appearance in the classroom, in the presence of patients, and in all health care settings.
- Be accountable to all members of the Pritzker community, including students, residents, faculty, and support staff.
- Admit to and assume responsibility for mistakes in a mature and honest manner and develop productive strategies for correcting them.
- Refrain from using illicit substances. Refrain from using alcohol, non-prescription or prescription drugs in a manner that may compromise my judgment or my ability to contribute to safe and effective patient care.

- Be considerate and respectful of others' (teachers, peers, residents and faculty) time, rights, values, religious, ethnic and socioeconomic backgrounds, lifestyles, opinions, and choices, even when they differ from my own.
- Meet the expectations for participation and timeliness that are communicated to me by those who teach me.
- Take an active role in caring for the diverse patient population served by the University of Chicago Medical Center.
- Recognize my limitations and seek help when my expertise, knowledge, or level of experience is inadequate to handle a situation in the classroom, hospital, or research setting.

Professional Relationships

Establishing productive and respectful relationships with patients, faculty, residents, staff, and colleagues is an essential component of providing the best possible health care. To strive for professionalism and kindness in all of my daily encounters, I will:

- Maintain appropriate relationships with patients, teachers, peers, residents and faculty.
- Treat all members of the UCMC and Pritzker community, patients, and their families with respect, compassion, and dignity.
- Be mindful to avoid intentionally embarrassing or deriding others.
- Provide feedback to others (both colleagues and superiors) in a constructive manner, with the goal of helping them to improve.
- Treat those who participate in my education (e.g. standardized patients) with dignity and respect.
- Actively work to create an atmosphere in classrooms, clinical settings and in laboratories that is conducive to optimal, interactive learning.
- Help and support my peers during difficult times in their academic, professional, and personal lives.
- Attend to my own physical and emotional well-being.

Professional Ethic

Certain personal values and behaviors will be expected of me as a care-giver and as an ambassador of the Pritzker School of Medicine. Through my behaviors, I will demonstrate a commitment to honoring and upholding the expectations of the medical profession, and, in so doing, I will contribute to maintaining society's trust in it. In particular, I will:

- Maintain the highest standards of academic and scholarly honesty throughout my medical education, by behaving in a trustworthy manner.
- Recognize and function in a manner consistent with my role as a student on a team.
- Maintain a commitment to patient confidentiality, recognizing that patients will trust me with sensitive information.
- Place my patients' interests and well-being at the center of my educational and professional behavior and goals.

- Treat cadaveric and other scientific specimens with respect.
- Adhere to the standards of the profession as put forth by the American Board of Internal Medicine Physician Charter (Appendix A) whose fundamental principles are social justice, patient autonomy, and the primacy of patient welfare.
- Learn about and avoid conflicts of interest as I carry out my responsibilities.
- Contribute to medical knowledge through active scholarship and discovery.

More Information Can Be Found:

<http://pritzker.uchicago.edu/page/student-professionalism>