

Sample Osteopathic Curriculum

The first two years of the osteopathic medical curriculum focus on basic sciences. The third and fourth years emphasize clinical work, with much of the teaching in community hospitals, major medical centers and doctors' offices.

During the clinical years, students study general medicine and are involved in research. They rotate through urban, suburban and rural settings, gaining exposure to all areas of medicine.

Osteopathic principles and practices, which emphasize the relationship between body systems, are integrated into the four-year curriculum. Students learn osteopathic manipulative treatment for prevention, diagnosis and treatment of disease.

The curriculum is structured around nine competencies in order to maximize the student's opportunity to train for a career in Osteopathic Primary Care.

Osteopathic Advocate

The PCSOM graduate is knowledgeable about, and an advocate for, the unique nature of the osteopathic medical profession. This includes, but is not limited to, integrating the four key principles of osteopathic philosophy into clinical practice. Those principles are: (A) the person is a unit of body, mind and spirit; (B) the body is capable of self-regulation, self-healing, and health maintenance; (C) structure and function are reciprocally interrelated; and (D) rational treatment is based upon an understanding of the basic principles of body unit, self-regulation, and the interrelationship of structure and function.

Effective Communication

The PCSOM graduate will listen attentively and communicate clearly with patients, families, and other health care team members. The graduate will establish the necessary rapport to form and sustain an effective therapeutic relationship.

Basic Clinical Skills

The PCSOM graduate will obtain an appropriate history and perform skillful, comprehensive examinations in a variety of patient care encounters. The graduate will correctly select, proficiently perform, and accurately interpret clinical procedures and laboratory findings.

Uses Basic Science to Guide Therapy

The PCSOM graduate will recognize and explain health problems based upon current scientific knowledge or understanding. The graduate will develop a plan for intervention that uses scientific understanding for optimum results, including a full understanding of the implications and application of osteopathic principles and practices.

Diagnosis, Management and Prevention

The PCSOM graduate will diagnose and manage patients, and will educate them regarding prevention of common health problems of individuals, families, and communities. The graduate will develop a problem list, differential diagnosis, carry out additional investigations, and choose and implement interventions with consultation and referral as needed. They shall determine outcome goals, share information and educate, and adjust therapy and diagnosis according to results.

Lifelong Learning

The PCSOM graduate will be aware of the limits of his/her personal knowledge and experience and have an intellectual interest in general education and medical science. The graduate will actively set clear learning goals, pursue them, and apply the knowledge gained to his/her practice of osteopathic medicine.

Self-Awareness and Self-Care

The PCSOM graduate will approach the practice of osteopathic medicine with awareness of his/her limits, strengths, weaknesses, and personal vulnerabilities. The graduate will assess personal values and priorities in order to balance personal and professional commitments. The graduate will seek help and advice when needed for his/her own difficulties and develop personally appropriate coping strategies. The graduate will accurately hear and respond to constructive criticism.

Social and Community Contexts of Care

The PCSOM graduate will respond to the broader context of medical practice and provide guidance to patients by responding to the many non-biological factors that influence health, disease and disability. Those factors include cultural, familial, psychological, economic, environmental, legal, political, and spiritual aspects of individuals in their communities.

Moral Reasoning and Ethical Judgment

The PCSOM graduate will recognize the ethical dimensions of medical practice and health policies and will identify alternatives and difficult ethical choices; will analyze systematically the conflicting considerations supporting different alternatives; and will formulate, defend, and effectively carry out a course of action that takes into account of this ethical complexity. The graduate will combine a willingness to recognize the nature of the value systems of patients and others with a commitment to his/her own value system.