Regarding summer plans, it is very important that you begin your planning earlier than later, since deadlines for positions can sneak up as early as January. In general, it is important to have begun investigating options during the fall semester, attending to the process over winter break, securing letters of recommendation and initiating applications.

There are many competing demands on students that influence how they spend their summers and, sometimes, personal circumstances that must be taken into account. Some of you will need to work full-time to support your education. Others need to enroll in full-time summer courses, taking on an accelerated course load that leaves little or no time for other pursuits. A summer science sequence can be particularly challenging.

For those of you who have the freedom to pursue research, internships, travel abroad or other full-time opportunities in health-related fields, take advantage of the opportunity! For some of you, particularly if you attend colleges with limited research opportunities, the summer is an ideal time to engage in meaningful research and to gain valuable research and problem-solving skills. An array of these options exists and there are some excellent websites (See Resources and Ideas below). Other of you have the opportunity to apply for summer programs specifically designed for premeds. These are often associated with teaching hospitals or community clinics. Having the chance to engage in a medical setting and learn from a team of health professionals is an invaluable experience. It is increasingly common for premeds to have the amazing opportunity to pursue summer experience abroad, whether through independent programs or formal study abroad programs. If this applies to you, check with your study abroad office to inquire about summer study abroad opportunities.

Special recognition should be given to summer opportunities intended to increase the number of highly qualified medical school applicants from minority groups that were underrepresented in medicine. The premier summer program is the Summer Medical and Dental Education Program (SMDEP), a six week summer academic enrichment program for college freshman and sophomores who are interested in a career in medicine or dentistry. There are program sites across 12 medical schools! A
A comprehensive guide to summer programs for minority students sponsored by the American Association of Medical Colleges (AAMC) is listed in the Resources and Ideas.

A discussion of summer for the premed must include mention of MCAT preparation. For many students, study for and taking the MCAT in the summer becomes a necessity and can have a big impact on competing priorities and what one can realistically expect to accomplish in the summer. Spanning MCAT study across the summer months leaves considerable time for work, internships, volunteering or other opportunities. Studying full-time for the MCAT is rarely necessary, particularly if studying is spread over a long period of time.

Do premeds have to pursue medically related experiences during the summer? Absolutely not. Is there one summer during the college experience that is more important than the others? Again, absolutely not. Each student has to assess her situation, consider opportunities afforded and competing priorities, and plan accordingly. The summers during college should be a time of activity, pursuit and responsibility. They should be viewed as flexible opportunities for personal and professional growth—though the value of a vacation cannot be understated! Be thoughtful and proactive in this quest. Seek out a job, internship or another pursuit. Regardless of whether what you do directly or indirectly enhances your preparation for medical school, plan for meaningful, fulfilling summers.

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~ Dr. Verrier, The New Physician, published by the American Medical Student Association.

Resources and ideas

General
AAMC Summer Undergraduate and Research Programs
www.aamc.org/members/great/61052/great_summerlinks.html
AAMC M.D.-Ph.D. Summer Undergraduate Research Programs
www.aamc.org/members/great/169782/mdphdsummerprograms.html

AAMC Summer Medical and Dental Education Program (SMDEP)
https://services.aamc.org/summerprograms/

Center for Disease Control Summer Employment Opportunities
www.cdc.gov/employment/menu_student.html

NIH Summer Internship Program in Biomedical Research
www.training.nih.gov/programs/sip

School specific
RIT Co-op/Internships and Summer Research Page
https://people.rit.edu/gtfsbi/Symp/premed.htm

Brown University Summer Internship Database
https://biology.brown.edu/bug/summer-internship-database

Swarthmore Summer Opportunities Database
www.swarthmore.edu/student-life/health-sciences-office/summer-opportunities.xml

Tufts University Experiential Preparation Page
https://uss.tufts.edu/hpa/ExperientialPrep/PreMedical.asp

Emory University Summer Research Programs and Internships
www.cse.emory.edu/sciencenet/undergrad/Summer_Research/Browse.cfm

Johns Hopkins Summer Opportunities Page
https://web.jhu.edu/prepro/health/summer_opportunities.html
Columbia University Summer Internships in Biology
www.columbia.edu/cu/biology/ug/intern.html