

Hello, this is Judith Woolfson, Manager of the PreHealth Advising Program at Northeastern. I would like to welcome you to the PreHealth Program on behalf of myself, the Program Director, Dr. Gail S. Begley, and members of the Northeastern University PreHealth Program Advisory Committee.

Listening to this podcast and obtaining a MedAppTrak account are your first steps at NU on the road to a fulfilling career in medicine, dentistry, optometry, podiatry, or veterinary medicine.

Your second step is to continue this journey by examining your motivations. Why do you want to do this? Do you really know what is involved in both the training and the daily practice of the field of medicine to which you aspire?

We ask you, even if you are many years away from applying, to sit down and write a personal statement for yourself in which you articulate why you want to practice medicine. Many of you will not be able to say more than "I want to help people." But ask yourself – "Is that enough?".

Go to the Preparing Tab at the PreHealth website. Research the profession of your choice as well as other medical and nonmedical career paths. Click on the link to [explorehealthcareers.org](http://explorehealthcareers.org). It is a great place to gather information about other health careers and to look for

internships and scholarship opportunities. Then, get out into the world. Experience the realities of your chosen profession. The best way to do this is by shadowing a professional, volunteering in a hospital, a medical practice, and/or a clinic. If you participate in Coop, think about research experiences, whether the focus is clinical or laboratory. Competitive applicants will have some knowledge about how research is done, how treatments, drugs, and therapies move along the road from the discovery and development to the patient, as well as how to read scientific journals critically.

In addition to gaining relevant experiences, you need to build a strong academic record in a rigorous program of study that includes all of the necessary prerequisite courses for your profession and chosen schools. At the end of your first semester at NU, log into MyNEU and run a premed degree audit under Explore Options. When you do this, you will see the *basic minimum course requirements* for health professional schools and the results of the audit will separate out your science GPA from your non-science GPA. Your science GPA is commonly referred to as the BCMP GPA because it includes biology, chemistry, math, and physics courses only. Not only should you select a rigorous course of study, you need to maintain a strong overall GPA and a strong BCMP GPA through your undergraduate career at NU

if you are to be a competitive applicant in the year in which you do apply.

Minimum course requirements are also listed at the PreHealth web site under the Preparing Tab. Many programs now require or recommend Biochemistry. Some fields, such as dentistry, optometry, and veterinary medicine, have special requirements and individual schools also vary. Furthermore, Advanced Placement credit may not satisfy medical school requirements. Therefore it is your responsibility to research ALL course requirements for your intended program and target schools.

If you are planning to apply to schools of allopathic medicine – that is pursuing an MD degree - over the next five years or so, these schools will be moving away from a list of prescribed course requirements to a set of defined competencies that may be fulfilled by a combination of coursework and experiential learning. For more detailed information, please visit the Preparing Tab at the PreHealth website.

So, what can you do besides exploring medicine, enrolling in required courses, studying hard, and maintaining a strong GPA? You should establish relationships with academic and co-op faculty, supervisors at work (whether coop or any

other employment), and supervisors from volunteer activities.

You may also choose to join student organizations related to your major and to health careers. NU has a branch of the American Medical Student Association on campus (NUAMSA), which is our general premed club. Pre-Soma is the NU student organization affiliated with the Student Osteopathic Medicine Association. MAPS, the Minority Association of PreHealth Students is affiliated with the National Medical Student Association. NU also has a Pre-Dental Association and a Pre-Vet Club as well as other health-related interest organizations. Click on the Resources tab at the Prehealth website to make one of these connections.

Keep in mind that healthcare professionals must be ethical, demonstrate integrity, and make sound judgments and decisions. In order to achieve your goal to become a healthcare professional, it is important to demonstrate those personal qualities. Do not jeopardize your potential for a medical career through either student misconduct or unlawful actions. Finally, be fiscally responsible – by the time you are ready to begin your post-NU graduate career, you will be considered an adult and you will want to be credit-worthy. Your total debt will not necessarily be the

issue but you will want to demonstrate that you do pay your bills on time.

Now, I would like to say a few words about the admissions exam for which you will have to sit and achieve success before the application step (in two or three years, for most of you). Why bring this up now?, you may ask. Healthcare professionals must demonstrate a passion for life-long learning. Start now with the goal of learning your course material well for long-term retention – not just for the test or for the final grade you earn. We recommend that you keep your class notes and textbooks for key courses. Organize study groups. And remember that co-op is a great time to focus on admissions exam prep because you are not studying for anything else at that time. Study patterns vary greatly from individual to individual, but six months of serious preparation is typical. Commercial test prep courses are not sufficient for this purpose. This topic is discussed in greater length in another podcast that will be more relevant to you when you get much closer to applying.

There are two important meetings for which you should be aware. The first is a special orientation in early December for Tufts Early Assurance applicants. This program allows second semester sophomores or middlers who have completed only one coop to apply for acceptance to Tufts

University School of Medicine. Students must have minimum overall and science GPAs of at least 3.5 and must have complete specific premedical course requirements to be eligible. For more information, please click on the link to the Tufts EA Program web page from the home page of your MedAppTrak account.

The second meeting to be looking for is the special information session for candidates seeking regular admission. This meeting will be held in the late fall of the calendar year just preceding your application year. When you are about a year away from your application year (2 years away from your matriculation year), go to the home page of your MedAppTrak Account and click on the link "timeline to the application" and listen to a podcast that will help you to determine in what year you may be the most competitive applicant you can be.

Now that you have listened to this podcast, you are almost ready to register – that is – to identify yourself as "premed" and obtain a MedAppTrak account. The next step is to download the PreHealth Agreement. Please review it carefully. Make sure that you understand your responsibilities, our expectations and the requirements of the NU PreHealth Program. When you click on "Complete My Registration" at the bottom of the webpage, you will be

prompted to acknowledge the statements in the PreHealth Program Agreement before you add your digital signature and continue to the next registration step.

A little bit about your MedAppTrak account – It is designed for you to organize and review application essentials as you progress through your academic program. After your account has been created, log in immediately and provide all of the requested information in the “Personal” section.

Browse through the remaining sections to understand what will make you a competitive applicant and to update each section with as much information as you can. Why is this important?

Because MedAppTrak helps us to advise you effectively and to communicate appropriately with different groups of students (e.g., pre dental students or this year’s applicants only). We cannot advise you effectively if we know nothing about you or your experiences.

Be sure to review the information at the MedAppTrak home page, especially the link that is labeled “When and How to Start Preparing for a Career in Medicine”.

As you continue down the road to applying to health professional schools, the remaining links will be more relevant: How and When to Ask for Letters of Evaluation,

Preparing for the Admissions Exam, and Timeline to the Application.

Just so you know, MedAppTrak is a Northeastern-developed website. The information entered into your MedAppTrak account will be seen only by Northeastern PreHealth Advisors and you. It is NOT your application for medical school. You may modify/edit/delete information at any time.

In closing, remember to bookmark the PreHealth website in your browser and visit it often to review information about preparing for your future career and to check for announcements and calendar postings.

Click on the Contact Us Tab to find pertinent information about the PreHealth Advisory Team and be sure to follow all of the instructions at this page before requesting an appointment. Click on the Resources Tab to contact NU student organizations.

Finally, download the script of this podcast in pdf format and refer to it periodically so that you stay on track.

Once again, welcome to the PreHealth Program community. We look forward to working with you.