



**UNC School of Medicine  
Competency Objectives for Graduation  
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**Preface:** Graduates of the UNC School of Medicine practice with the highest professional standards. They apply up-to-date medical knowledge in the care of their patients while demonstrating care and compassion. They are life-long learners. They seek to maintain their personal health and well-being so they can better care for their patients. The UNC SOM faculty are committed to using effective educational technologies and strategies to produce competent generalist physicians, and to that end the curriculum is constantly evolving. All medical students at UNC SOM must demonstrate achievement of these competencies prior to graduation.

## **I. Medical Knowledge**

Students must demonstrate knowledge about established and evolving biomedical, clinical, and cognate (e.g., epidemiological and social-behavioral) sciences and the application of this knowledge in patient care, specifically:

1. Describe the normal structure and function of the human body and of each of its major organ systems, across the life span.
2. Explain various causes (genetic, developmental, metabolic, toxic, microbiologic, autoimmune, neoplastic, degenerative, behavioral, and traumatic) of major diseases and conditions and the ways in which they operate on the body (pathogenesis).
3. Describe how the altered structure and function (pathology and pathophysiology) of the body and its major organ systems are manifest through major diseases and conditions.
4. Describe the scientific principles underlying laboratory and radiologic diagnostic methodologies.
5. Identify the proximate and ultimate factors that contribute to the development of disease and illness, and, that contribute to health status within and across populations regionally, nationally, and globally.
6. Demonstrate knowledge of the basic principles of human behavior throughout the life cycle, including development during infancy, childhood, adolescence, adulthood and end of life.
7. Recognize the medical consequences of common societal problems.

## **II. Patient Care**

Students must be able to provide care that is compassionate, appropriate, and effective for treating health problems and promoting health, specifically:

8. Obtain an accurate, age-appropriate medical history.
9. Demonstrate proper technique in performing both a complete and a symptom-focused examination, addressing issues of patient modesty and comfort.
10. Perform routine technical procedures and tests under supervision and with minimal discomfort to the patient.
11. Justify each diagnostic test ordered and management strategy proposed with regard to cost, effectiveness, risks and complications, and the patient's overall goals and values.
12. Apply clinical reasoning and critical thinking skills in developing a differential diagnosis and management plan.
13. Apply the principles of pharmacology, therapeutics, and therapeutic decision-making to the care of an individual patient.
14. Identify and incorporate into the care of patients appropriate prevention strategies for common conditions.
15. Identify when patients have life-threatening conditions and institute appropriate initial therapy.
16. Sensitively address end-of-life issues with patients and their families, including do-not-resuscitate orders and pain management.
17. Provide culturally sensitive care to patients of diverse cultures and belief systems.

## **III. Interpersonal and Communication Skills**

Students must demonstrate interpersonal and communication skills that facilitate effective interactions with patients and their families and other health professionals, specifically:

18. Develop empathetic, caring relationships with patients.
19. Communicate effectively with patients, patients' families, colleagues, and other health care professionals.
20. Demonstrate collaborative teamwork skills and the ability to work effectively with other members of the health care team.

#### **IV. Professionalism**

Students must demonstrate a commitment to professional service, adherence to ethical principles, sensitivity to patients, and maintenance personal health and well-being, specifically:

21. Demonstrate honesty and integrity in all interactions with patients, their families, and colleagues.
22. Identify and apply theories and principles that govern ethical decision-making to the practice of medicine.
23. Recognize and discuss the implications of conflicts of interest inherent in various financial and organizational arrangements for the practice of medicine and in medical education and research.
24. Protect patient privacy and confidentiality.
25. Demonstrate personal accountability and admit professional mistakes openly and honestly with one's colleagues and instructors and critically evaluate these mistakes to promote professional development.
26. Recognize unprofessional behaviors in one's self as well as in peers and other health professionals with whom one interacts and address these in a constructive manner.
27. Maintain personal health and well-being and achieve a balance between priorities of patient care and personal and professional development.

#### **V. Practice-Based Learning and Improvement**

Students must be able to investigate and evaluate their patient care practices, appraise and assimilate scientific evidence, and improve their practice of medicine, specifically:

28. Identify gaps in medical knowledge, clinical skills (including communication skills), and professionalism, and develop a strategy for self-improvement.
29. Actively seek and respond to feedback about professional performance.
30. Demonstrate skills in retrieving, critically assessing, and integrating biomedical information into clinical decision-making.
31. Discuss the basic principles of basic, clinical and translational research and how this research is applied to patient care.
32. Apply principles of patient safety and quality improvement to enhance patient care.

## **VI. Systems-Based Practice**

Students must demonstrate an awareness of and responsiveness to the larger context and systems of health care and the ability to call on system resources to provide care that is of optimal value, specifically:

33. Use electronic and other information tools [e.g., including electronic health records and computer order entry] for systems-based patient care.
34. Identify necessary elements for coordinated care of patients with complex and chronic diseases.
35. Advocate for enhanced access to health care for members of underserved populations.
36. Describe the principles underlying the delivery of high quality patient care and effective patient care systems.
37. Outline the roles of the various members of the healthcare team and describe how these roles can be integrated for optimal patient care.

## **VII. Managing the Health of Populations**

Students must demonstrate an understanding of the management of populations, for both specific clinical populations and to diseases and conditions important to North Carolina and the US.

38. Describe and apply principles of population health improvement for specific populations with attention to access, cost and clinical outcomes including quality of care, morbidity and mortality, functional status and quality of life.
39. Identify factors that place populations at risk for disease or injury, and select appropriate strategies for risk reduction.
40. Describe various approaches to the organization, financing, and delivery of health care in North Carolina, the United States and other countries and the role of physicians in developing and implementing health policy.
41. Identify disparities across populations in North Carolina and nationally, and discuss physician roles in reducing these disparities.