Going Back to Medical School:
Making an informed decision

If you’re reading this, you are probably considering returning to school for a degree in one of the health professions. This isn’t a decision to be taken lightly – you most likely have obligations now that you didn’t when you were in school (family, job, etc.) – the application process to medical or dental school is an approximately 14 month process from application to matriculation, and this doesn’t include preparing for the entrance exam (MCAT or DAT). Your schooling will be 4 years, and your residency will be 3 years at a minimum.

Things to consider:

- **Do I have the required coursework?** You will need to have taken:
  
  - 2 semesters of Organic Chemistry with lab
  - 2 semesters of Inorganic (or General) Chemistry with lab
  - 2 semesters of Physics with lab
  - 2 semesters of Biology with lab
  - 2 semesters of Biology with lab (calculus and statistics is common)
  - 2 semesters of “writing intensive” coursework or English courses
  - Any classes that the schools that you are interested in may also require. Some require Biochemistry, a Behavioral Science (Psychology or Sociology) or additional Biology courses.
  - Most dental schools require Biochemistry.

- In addition, if you will be taking the MCAT in 2015 or later, the Biochemistry and Behavioral Sciences will be on that exam.
- Ideally, all science courses would be completed before sitting for the MCAT. The DAT does not cover Physics, but it is required at many of the dental schools.

- **How am I going to prepare for my entrance exam?**
  
  - There are both independent and in-class study options available from a number of companies.
  - Longer preparation time and numerous practice exams tends to produce better results than “cramming” your preparation into a shorter time.
• **Can I afford this?**
  
o  Can you continue working while completing courses (if you need to finish additional course work)?
o  Will you be able to balance your work/family obligations with the amount of time it will take to adequately prepare for the entrance exam?
o  There is a Financial Assistance Program available for the costs of application – it doesn’t cover the cost of exam preparation or of travel to interviews.

• **Have you experienced the profession you are considering first-hand?**  
  (Watching every episode of Grey’s Anatomy doesn’t count!)
  
o  You will need some clinical experiences – both to know what you are getting into, and also for the schools you apply to. The schools want to see that you have seen medicine/dentistry from a provider perspective and not just as a patient. These experiences can be paid or unpaid.

If, after reading this, you feel like you are ready or at least like you are pretty sure that you want to pursue this path, your next step is to contact me.

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We can talk through where you’re at and what you need to do to get to where you want to be.