



 hsafp.org

IVY LEAGUE & BS/MD ADMISSIONS PLAYBOOK

An Essential Guide for Parents of
Aspiring Medical Students



Written by our partners at MedSchoolCoach for the High School Alliance of Future Physicians:

Kachui Lee, MD

Director, Direct Med (BS/MD) Advising

Laura Baldasare

College Advisor

INTRODUCTION

Start Here: Your Roadmap to Ivy League & BS/MD Success

Welcome to the Ivy League & BS/MD Admissions Playbook — your family's trusted resource for understanding and navigating the most competitive college and direct medical programs in the country.

Inside, you'll find up-to-date trends, clear expert strategies, and at-a-glance profiles for every Ivy League university and major BS/MD program nationwide. We explain shifting test policies, the impact of affirmative action changes, how to build a compelling personal brand, and exactly what the most selective programs expect from high school applicants.

Whether your student is exploring a traditional pre-med college path or aiming for a guaranteed BS/MD seat, this book shows you how to plan ahead and stand out. With advice from MedSchoolCoach experienced College and Physician Advisors, your family can approach the process with confidence and set your student up for success in high school, college, and beyond.

Use this guide to make smart decisions, map out next steps, and give your child the best chance to thrive — then reach out to MedSchoolCoach for personalized support every step of the way.

Good luck!



WHAT'S INSIDE

PAGE 04	Traditional Pre-Med vs. Combined Medical Programs
PAGE 06	2025 Admissions Trends Report
PAGE 12	Why BS/MD? The Case for Direct Medical Programs
PAGE 14	Strategies for Ivy League & BS/MD Admissions
PAGE 17	Ivy League School Profiles
PAGE 18	• Brown University
PAGE 19	• Columbia University
PAGE 20	• Cornell University
PAGE 21	• Dartmouth College
PAGE 22	• Harvard University
PAGE 23	• University of Pennsylvania
PAGE 24	• Princeton University
PAGE 25	• Yale University
PAGE 26	BS/MD Program Profiles
PAGE 30	Key Takeaways & Application Timeline
PAGE 31	Is a BS/MD Program Right for You? Key Questions to Consider
PAGE 32	How MedSchoolCoach Can Help

UNDERSTANDING YOUR OPTIONS: TRADITIONAL PRE-MED VS. COMBINED MEDICAL PROGRAMS

Choosing how to pursue a career in medicine is one of the biggest decisions a student will make in high school. There are two main pathways to becoming a doctor in the United States:

The Traditional Pre-Med Pathway

What it is:

Students attend a four-year undergraduate college of their choice (Ivy League, liberal arts college, or any accredited university). They complete required pre-med courses, build up experiences like research, clinical volunteering, and leadership, and then apply to medical school during junior or senior year (or after a gap year). Admission to med school is a separate, highly competitive process.

Pros:

- **Maximum flexibility** – Freedom to choose any college, change majors, or pivot if career goals change.
- **More time to grow** – Students can explore interests, study abroad, and mature before committing fully to medicine.
- **Broader application options** – Students can apply to a wide range of medical schools, including top-ranked institutions nationwide.

Cons:

- **Stressful application process** – High stakes exams (MCAT), essays, interviews, and stiff competition.
- **No guaranteed spot** – Even top students can be rejected, requiring backup plans.
- **Extra cost and time** – Gap years or post-bacc programs can add expenses and delay your timeline.

Best for:

Students who want flexibility, are still exploring academic passions, or prefer to strengthen their application in college.



Combined Medical Programs (BS/MD, BA/MD, BS/DO)

What they are:

These are special programs that combine undergraduate and medical school admissions into a single application process during high school. Students are guaranteed (or conditionally guaranteed) a seat in a partnering medical school if they meet all requirements.

Common types:

- **BS/MD** – Bachelor of Science + Doctor of Medicine
- **BA/MD** – Bachelor of Arts + Doctor of Medicine (similar with broader liberal arts focus)
- **BS/DO** – Bachelor of Science + Doctor of Osteopathic Medicine (path to becoming a DO physician)

Pros:

- **Secure pathway** – Removes the stress of reapplying for med school later.
- **Possible time savings** – Some programs are accelerated (6–7 years instead of the usual 8+).
- **Early mentorship** – Students get advising and exposure to med school expectations from day one.

Cons:

- **Highly competitive** – Fewer than 5% of applicants are admitted.
- **Intense workload** – Especially in accelerated programs; less room to change majors or explore unrelated fields.
- **Limited choice** – Students commit early to a specific medical school and usually cannot switch later.

Best for:

Students who are 100% certain about becoming a physician, already have strong academic records and healthcare experiences, and are ready to commit to a structured plan early.

Which Path is Right for You?

There is no single “best” option — only the one that best matches your personality, goals, and readiness. If your student loves structure, thrives under clear expectations, and is absolutely sure about medicine, a BS/MD or BA/MD may be a great fit. If your student wants to explore majors, study abroad, or consider other careers, the traditional pre-med track provides more freedom.

This guidebook provides the latest trends, key stats, and insider advice to help you choose and prepare for whichever path you decide

2025 ADMISSIONS TRENDS REPORT

College admissions have changed dramatically following the end of affirmative action, shifting testing requirements, and record competition for spots at Ivy League schools and BS/MD programs.

This section highlights the key trends parents and students need to understand — from how diversity is being maintained to how testing, interviews, and campus culture are evolving. Use these insights to help your student stand out in an increasingly complex and competitive landscape.

Post-Affirmative-Action Changes in Admissions

In 2023, the U.S. Supreme Court's decision to prohibit race-conscious college admissions reshaped the landscape for Ivy League and other elite institutions. The first full admissions cycle without affirmative action saw a slight decline in student diversity. A CBS News analysis found that underrepresented minority enrollment fell by about 2 percentage points in fall 2024 compared to the prior year.

At the most selective colleges (with acceptance rates below 10%), the drop was sharper — roughly a 5-point decrease in the share of Black, Hispanic, Indigenous, and Pacific Islander freshmen. Notable declines were reported at schools like Dartmouth, Princeton, Cornell, and Brown. While one year of data is not conclusive, it signals a potential long-term risk that campuses could become significantly less diverse if the trend continues.

In response, colleges are exploring race-neutral ways to maintain diversity, such as placing greater emphasis on socioeconomic factors, first-generation status, and adversity-themed essays. Many Ivy League admissions offices have retrained their holistic review processes to consider obstacles overcome and unique personal backgrounds in the absence of race as an explicit factor.

Additionally, some universities have reevaluated legacy and donor preferences under public pressure to demonstrate fairness in admissions. A few elite colleges have moved to eliminate legacy advantages since the affirmative action ban.

The full impact of these changes is still unfolding, but families should be aware that 2025 admissions decisions will place even more weight on personal character and achievement beyond demographics. Strong storytelling in essays and recommendation letters that highlight resilience, service, and unique perspectives can help applicants stand out in this new context.



Evolving Standardized Testing Policies

After several years of test-optional admissions due to the pandemic, testing policies in 2025 are at a turning point. Many Ivy League universities are reinstating SAT/ACT requirements for upcoming application cycles. For example, Harvard has announced it will again require standardized test scores for future classes after a temporary test-optional period.

Dartmouth, Brown, and Cornell have similarly reinstated mandatory SAT/ACT submissions, moving away from pandemic-era flexibility. Yale has introduced a “test-flexible” policy — applicants must submit some form of standardized result, which can include AP or IB exam scores as alternatives to the SAT/ACT. Only a few Ivies remain test-optional for the 2025–2026 cycle: Princeton and the University of Pennsylvania, with Columbia declaring a permanent test-optional stance.

Current Ivy League Testing Snapshot:

- **Required:** Harvard, Dartmouth, Brown, Cornell
- **Test-Flexible:** Yale (SAT/ACT, AP, or IB scores)
- **Test-Optional:** Princeton, University of Pennsylvania, Columbia (permanent)

This shift means that strong test scores are once again crucial for most Ivy aspirants. Even at test-optional schools, competitive applicants typically submit high scores (e.g., 1500+ SAT or 34+ ACT) to strengthen their profile.

For BS/MD programs, testing policies also matter. Many still require SAT/ACT scores for high school applicants or expect high scores if submitted, given the programs’ extreme selectivity. However, a few programs and undergraduate partners have remained test-optional. Families should always verify each program’s current policy.

In general, we strongly advise students to take standardized tests seriously and aim for top-percentile scores to maximize their options. The return of testing requirements at most Ivies confirms that test scores, while not the only factor, continue to play a significant role in admissions decisions.



Competitiveness & Acceptance Rates

Admissions competitiveness is at an all-time high and shows no sign of easing in 2025. The Ivy League and direct-medical (BS/MD) programs have some of the lowest acceptance rates in higher education, often in the low single digits.

Recent test-optional policies led to surging applicant pools, pushing acceptance rates to record lows. For example, Harvard College's admit rate for the Class of 2027 hovered near 3–4%, while Columbia, Yale, and Brown were each in the 4–5% range. BS/MD programs can be just as selective — or even tougher. Many receive thousands of applications for a handful of spots, with acceptance rates often below 5% and sometimes under 3%.

Quick Acceptance Rate Snapshot

- **Harvard:** ~3–4%
- **Columbia, Yale, Brown:** ~4–5%
- **Top BS/MD programs:** 1–5% (Brown PLME ~3%)

Families should recognize that even exceptional students face steep odds. Admitted applicants usually have near-perfect grades, top test scores (if required), and standout extracurriculars. In this hyper-competitive environment, small differences — like an extra research experience, a unique essay angle, or proven leadership — can tip the balance.

It's more important than ever for students to craft a distinctive personal story and robust résumé. Families should prepare for the reality that rejection is not a reflection of a student's worth; given the math, many highly qualified candidates won't make the cut. Knowing this, families should set realistic expectations and always have solid backup plans, including strong traditional pre-med pathways.



Holistic Review Developments

Both Ivy League colleges and BS/MD programs continue to use holistic admissions review, meaning they evaluate the whole applicant — not just test scores and GPAs. However, how they apply holistic review is evolving in 2025. With the end of affirmative action, admissions officers are looking more closely at personal essays and recommendation letters for evidence of character, impact, and unique background.

Students are now encouraged to share meaningful parts of their identity, personal challenges they've overcome, and what motivates them to pursue medicine or their chosen field. These stories have become critical for providing context that race-based data can no longer supply. Many top colleges have also increased emphasis on socioeconomic status and first-generation college status to help maintain diversity. Overcoming hardship or making a significant contribution to one's community can boost an applicant under holistic review.

Character and values are bigger selection factors than ever. Committees look for traits like empathy, integrity, leadership, and resilience — qualities essential for future physicians and leaders. This means that substantive extracurriculars and service work carry even more weight. A student who started a nonprofit, cared for family, or succeeded despite financial hardship might stand out more than one with perfect grades alone.

Academic excellence is still required, but it's not enough on its own. Top programs often reject candidates with flawless grades and test scores if other parts of their profile are weak. In 2025, holistic review is about building a well-rounded, mission-driven class: BS/MD programs want students with a clear passion for healthcare and service, while Ivy League schools look for future innovators and changemakers.

As you'll see in the school profiles, some programs even state the qualities they value — for example, Wayne State's BS/MD prefers applicants dedicated to addressing health disparities. Understanding what each school prioritizes can help families tailor applications to stand out for the right reasons.



Interview Process Expectations

Admissions interviews have become more important in both Ivy League and BS/MD admissions, but they serve different purposes. Most Ivy League colleges offer optional alumni interviews for undergraduate applicants. These are primarily designed to keep alumni connected and to let students learn more about the school, rather than to make or break an application.

Ivy alumni interviews are usually informal and carry modest weight in admissions decisions. Still, students should take them seriously: showing curiosity, clear communication, and a genuine fit with the school's culture can reinforce the overall application. Many Ivies continue to offer these interviews virtually, making participation more accessible. We recommend that students review their main application points and practice basic questions, but treat alumni interviews as friendly conversations.

For BS/MD programs, interviews are typically mandatory and play a critical role in selection. Applicants often complete two rounds — one with the undergraduate college and another with the partnered medical school. These interviews are far more rigorous than typical undergrad alumni chats.

Key Interview Differences:

- **Ivy League Interviews:**
 - Optional alumni conversations
 - Informal and conversational
 - Modest impact; more about engagement and fit
- **BS/MD Interviews:**
 - Required and highly evaluative
 - Typically involve two rounds: one for the college, one for the medical school
 - May use a **panel or one-on-one format** – Traditional Q&A with faculty
 - May use a **Multiple Mini-Interview (MMI)** format – Rotating stations to test ethics, empathy, and reasoning

BS/MD interviews probe deeply into a student's motivation for medicine, understanding of the field, commitment to a demanding combined program, and relevant experiences like research or volunteering. Students should be ready to discuss healthcare exposure and current topics in medicine.

Unlike undergraduate interviews, BS/MD interviews can be make-or-break. Strong communication, professionalism, and authentic enthusiasm are essential. Many programs now start interviews via video conference, then invite finalists for on-campus sessions. Families should encourage practice — mock interviews are highly recommended — and help students get comfortable with both virtual and in-person formats.



Political & Campus Climate Shifts

College campuses in 2025 reflect the broader societal climate — politically active, sometimes polarized, and wrestling with questions of inclusion and free expression. Parents should know that the campus environment can shape a student's experience, especially for pre-med students who often engage in health-related service and culturally sensitive topics. Following recent national events — from social justice movements to global conflicts — students at many universities have become more vocal.

Ivy League campuses traditionally lean progressive, and recent debates over public health policies or international issues have sparked protests and conversations at schools like Harvard and Columbia. While this atmosphere encourages robust discussion and civic engagement, it can feel challenging if a student's viewpoints differ from the majority. Colleges continue working to balance free speech with efforts to support diversity and inclusion — a balance that is still evolving.

In the post-affirmative-action era, many schools have launched new initiatives to maintain a welcoming climate for underrepresented students. Ivy League institutions have expanded mentorship programs and cultural centers to help all students feel a sense of belonging, even as the demographics of incoming classes shift. In some states, political decisions have also shaped campus policies — for example, some public universities have seen new legislation affecting diversity training or faculty tenure.

While Ivy League schools, as private institutions, are generally shielded from most state-level politics, combined programs at public universities may reflect local political climates. For example, programs in more conservative states might differ in campus culture or approach to topics like reproductive health, which can influence medical training. It's wise for parents of BS/MD students to keep this in mind.

For pre-med students, the campus climate also includes the academic culture — is it collaborative or cutthroat? Many Ivies, despite rigorous coursework, encourage collaboration. For instance, Yale's science programs promote study groups, and Brown's open curriculum reduces competition. These supportive environments can make a big difference in student well-being.

While the political and campus climate shouldn't be the sole factor in choosing a school, families should consider how comfortable and supported a student will feel. Campus visits, virtual tours, and student Q&A panels are great ways to get a sense of daily life and whether a school's culture aligns with your student's values.



WHY BS/MD? THE CASE FOR DIRECT MEDICAL PROGRAMS

For high school students who are certain about a career in medicine, a BS/MD program — also called a direct medical program — can be a powerful option. These programs let students secure admission to both an undergraduate college and its partnering medical school at the same time. With this pathway, a medical school seat is guaranteed as long as undergrad requirements are met.

Key Advantages of BS/MD Programs

Reduced Admissions Stress – The biggest benefit: avoiding the traditional medical school application process. Once in a BS/MD, students skip the competition for med school spots that peers face in college. Instead of juggling MCAT prep and interviews, they can focus on learning, activities, and personal growth.

Time Savings (Accelerated Programs) – Many programs shorten the journey. Some, like Howard University's or UMKC's, can be completed in just 6 years — compared to the standard 8 years of college plus 4 years of medical school. Finishing sooner means starting a career earlier and saving on tuition.

Enriched Undergraduate Experience – Without med school admissions pressure, students have more freedom to take challenging or diverse courses. For example, Brown's PLME allows any major and even study abroad. This flexibility can shape well-rounded doctors who understand more than just science.

Strong Advising and Mentorship – BS/MD students often receive dedicated advising from freshman year onward. Faculty mentors help them meet GPA benchmarks, select courses wisely, and prepare for any required MCAT. Many programs also connect students with physician mentors and early clinical exposure.

Competitive Edge (if Plans Change) – While most students stay the course, being a BS/MD admit is an impressive credential if applying elsewhere. The rigorous high school selection means these students are among the top applicants nationwide — giving them an edge should they apply out for residency or another med school.

Networking and Peer Community – Cohorts are small and highly motivated. Students build tight-knit friendships and professional connections that often last through residency. Being linked to both an undergrad campus and medical school means more research, shadowing, and networking opportunities from day one.



Is BS/MD Right for You?

These programs aren't for everyone. The commitment to medicine must be firm — switching paths later may require leaving the program and the college. Accelerated programs can be academically demanding. Some students may feel they miss out on choosing among multiple med schools later on.

Socially, BS/MD students sometimes balance two worlds: the traditional undergrad experience and early exposure to med school life. Families should weigh these factors carefully.

For students who know they want to be a doctor — and have the grades, scores, maturity, and passion to prove it — a BS/MD program is an efficient, secure route to an MD. It's a unique opportunity and, for many, the peace of mind and clear direction are invaluable.



HOW TO GET IN: STRATEGIES FOR IVY LEAGUE & BS/MD ADMISSIONS

Gaining admission to an Ivy League university or a BS/MD program is highly competitive, but a thoughtful plan can boost your student's chances. Use these proven strategies to build a standout profile and craft persuasive applications.

Build a Personal Brand & Clear Narrative

In a sea of top students, a clear “personal brand” makes an applicant memorable. Help your student identify a core passion or theme that ties their activities together. For example, an aspiring physician focused on public health could volunteer at clinics, lead a health awareness club, and research community health trends — creating a cohesive story of a future doctor-advocate.

Encourage your child to reflect on why they want an Ivy or medical career and let that “why” shine through essays, activities, and recommendation letters. Authenticity matters more than padding a résumé. It's better to be “well-angled” with depth in a few meaningful areas than superficially involved in many.

Gain Research, Clinical, & Service Experience

Top programs expect applicants to actively explore their interest in science and medicine. Guide your student to commit deeply to a few standout experiences:

- **Research** – Work in a lab, complete a science fair project, or assist a professor. Programs like RSI or NIH internships are competitive but local college labs count too.
- **Clinical Exposure** – Volunteer at hospitals, nursing homes, or clinics. Even a few hours a week adds up. Shadowing doctors or training as an EMT also stands out.
- **Community Service** – Medicine is about service. Leading local initiatives, tutoring, or organizing drives shows compassion and leadership.
- **Selectivity over Prestige** – Admissions teams prefer genuine, sustained experiences over short “pay-to-play” programs abroad.

Depth beats quantity. A student who commits years to a single clinic or lab and writes about it insightfully will impress more than one who lists a dozen brief stints.



Demonstrate Leadership & Impact

Elite schools want future leaders. Encourage your student to take on leadership roles by junior or senior year — as a club president, team captain, or project founder. The title is less important than measurable impact:

- Did they grow a club's membership?
- Launch a new community service project?
- Win awards or gain recognition?

Use the “spike with service” approach: apply their passion to help others. For example, a coder can create free tech workshops for underserved youth. Quantify results in applications: “Led 30 volunteers to tutor 100 students, improving test scores by 20%.”

Excel Academically: GPA, Course Rigor & Tests

Academics are the foundation. Aim for an unweighted GPA close to 4.0 and rank in the top 5–10% of the class. Take the most challenging courses available — AP Biology, Chemistry, Calculus — and excel in them.

Competitive test scores:

- **Ivy League:** SAT ~1500–1550+, ACT ~34+.
- **BS/MD:** Often 1500+ SAT or 33+ ACT minimum; many have strict cutoffs.
- **APs:** Strong scores (4s and 5s) reinforce academic readiness.

Many BS/MDs require maintaining a high college GPA and sometimes an MCAT score to stay in the program. Building strong study habits early is key.



Write Compelling Essays

Essays bring the application to life. Guide your student to:

- **Be authentic** – Share personal stories that only they could write.
- **Show, don't tell** – Use vivid anecdotes to illustrate growth and passion.
- **Tailor each piece** – “Why this college?” or “Why this program?” answers must be specific.
- **Address “Why Medicine?” thoroughly** – Combine personal stories, meaningful experiences, and thoughtful reflection to show genuine interest and understanding.
- **Revise** – Strong essays go through many drafts. Proofread and keep the student's voice front and center.

Put It All Together

Every piece — academics, activities, essays, and recommendations — should reinforce the same big picture: a bright, curious, and caring student ready to thrive at an Ivy or in a direct-medical program.

Start early, stay authentic, and don't be afraid to ask for expert help. With clear focus and sincere effort, your student can stand out in even the most competitive applicant pools.



IVY LEAGUE SCHOOL PROFILES (PREMED FOCUS)

Each Ivy League university profile on the following pages provide an overview from a pre-medical student's perspective, highlighting academic environment, advising resources, acceptance trends to medical school, and unique opportunities or challenges for pre-med students on campus.)



Brown University

Brown is renowned for its flexible Open Curriculum and a famously collaborative, stress-reducing campus culture — a standout choice for premeds who want freedom to explore alongside strong health career advising.



Location: Providence, Rhode Island

Undergrad Enrollment: ~7,000

Advising & Support:

Brown's Health Careers Advising office offers tailored guidance, planning help, and a trusted committee letter system. Advisors encourage students to pursue their interests broadly while ensuring med school requirements are met.

Curriculum & Grades:

No mandatory core courses — students craft their own academic path, avoiding unnecessary classes that could hurt GPA. Grading is relatively gentle: no plus/minus grades, widespread A's, and flexible pass/fail options (though premeds usually take requirements for a grade).

Premed Culture:

Friendly, non-competitive, and cooperative. The Program in Liberal Medical Education (PLME), Brown's unique 8-year BS/MD program, contributes to a med-focused student community. Students freely form study groups and share notes.

Med School Outcomes:

Strong results: ~85–90% of applicants with committee letters are accepted to medical school, many to top-tier programs. PLME students go straight to Brown's Warren Alpert Medical School if they meet standards.

Unique Opportunities:

- Research or volunteer at Brown's partner hospitals, like Rhode Island Hospital.
- Join Brown EMS for real EMT experience.
- Study abroad more easily than at many peer schools.
- Small premed clubs and PLME connections open doors to mentoring by med school faculty.

Admissions Snapshot:

- Brown undergrad acceptance: ~5%
- PLME acceptance: ~3% (very limited seats)
- Brown favors students who show curiosity, creativity, and community-mindedness.

Bottom Line:

A top pick for self-starters who want a customizable curriculum, strong advising, and a genuinely supportive atmosphere — plus a rare direct route to an MD for PLME admits.



Columbia University

Columbia offers unmatched access to top hospitals and labs in the heart of Manhattan — ideal for driven premeds ready to thrive in an intense, resource-rich urban setting.



Location: New York, NY

Undergrad Enrollment: ~8,500

Advising & Support:

The Pre-Professional Advising Office guides students through every stage, from planning the required Core Curriculum plus premed courses, to crafting strong applications. One-on-one advising and workshops help students navigate NYC's wealth of opportunities.

Curriculum & Grades:

All students complete Columbia's Core Curriculum — classics, philosophy, art, and music — alongside science requirements. The Core enriches but demands careful planning. Grading is rigorous, especially in intro sciences with strong curves.

Premed Culture:

High-achieving, fast-paced, sometimes competitive — but collaborative students form study groups and find community in premed clubs like AMSA and the Charles Drew Society. Many secure research or internships at nearby institutions like NYU or Rockefeller.

Med School Outcomes:

~80% of committee-approved applicants get into med school. Columbia grads are highly regarded and often stay at Columbia P&S or land spots at top schools like Harvard, Yale, and NYU.

Unique Opportunities:

- Proximity to Columbia University Irving Medical Center, NewYork-Presbyterian Hospital, and dozens of research labs.
- Volunteer or shadow right across campus.
- Exclusive programs like the Columbia-Bassett Program emphasize rural/urban medicine.

Admissions Snapshot:

- Acceptance rate: ~4%
- Applicants should highlight resilience, curiosity, and readiness for a rigorous Core and bustling NYC life.

Bottom Line:

Columbia is a powerhouse for premeds craving top-tier research, big city energy, and the prestige of one of the country's most iconic Ivies.

Cornell University

Cornell pairs a large, diverse student body and rigorous science training with a laid-back college-town vibe in Ithaca — perfect for premeds wanting a blend of challenge and community.



Location: Ithaca, NY

Undergrad Enrollment: ~15,000

Advising & Support:

University Pre-Health Advising and college-based advisors help students plan early and access the Health Careers Committee Letter system. Workshops and panels prepare students for the application cycle.

Curriculum & Grades:

Cornell is known for tough science courses and fair, but sometimes deflated, grades in STEM. Students must balance college distribution requirements with premed courses. Academic support is robust: tutoring, office hours, and study sessions are the norm.

Premed Culture:

Intense but collaborative. Big intro classes mean students must advocate for themselves. Study groups and tight friendships help students weather snowy semesters and heavy workloads. Active premed clubs and professional fraternities foster connections.

Med School Outcomes:

~70–80% acceptance for committee-endorsed applicants. Cornell grads are respected for handling a tough curriculum and often match into top med schools nationwide.

Unique Opportunities:

- Research with faculty at world-class labs; some link to Weill Cornell Medicine in NYC.
- Volunteer at Cayuga Medical Center or spend a semester in NYC with the Urban Semester program.
- Engage in global health or public health internships, often funded.

Admissions Snapshot:

- Acceptance rate: ~9%
- Students must show they can handle rigorous STEM courses and an active campus life.

Bottom Line:

Cornell trains resilient, well-rounded future doctors who thrive under challenging academics — and enjoy campus camaraderie in one of the prettiest college towns in the Northeast.



Dartmouth College

Dartmouth's tight-knit, undergraduate-focused community in a rural setting nurtures close faculty ties and collaboration — a dream for premeds who value personal attention and flexibility.



Location: Hanover, NH

Undergrad Enrollment: ~4,400

Advising & Support:

The Health Professions Program provides one-on-one advising and a trusted committee letter. The D-Plan (quarter system) gives students the freedom to schedule research terms, clinical volunteering, or MCAT prep off-campus.

Curriculum & Grades:

Three courses per 10-week term means fast-paced learning with deeper focus. Courses are rigorous but teaching is top-notch, and grading is generally fair. Small class sizes promote interaction.

Premed Culture:

Highly collaborative. Strong sense of community in and out of class. Peer mentoring is common. Students form bonds through Dartmouth EMS, premed societies, and outdoor adventures.

Med School Outcomes:

~85–90% acceptance for committee applicants — excellent for a small college. Students benefit from detailed letters and strong faculty support.

Unique Opportunities:

- Easy access to shadowing and research at Geisel School of Medicine and Dartmouth-Hitchcock Medical Center.
- Flexible scheduling to spend terms abroad or doing global health fieldwork.
- Many join Dartmouth's campus EMS or even the ski patrol.

Admissions Snapshot:

- Acceptance rate: ~6%
- Dartmouth seeks curious, community-minded students ready to thrive in a close-knit, remote setting.

Bottom Line:

For students wanting top academics, personal mentoring, and a family-like vibe in beautiful New Hampshire, Dartmouth is an outstanding launchpad for med school.

Harvard University

Harvard's unmatched prestige, abundant resources, and Boston location place premeds at the center of the biomedical world — a top choice for ambitious students ready to craft their own path.



Location: Cambridge/Boston, MA

Undergrad Enrollment: ~7,200

Advising & Support:

Each House (residential college) has dedicated premed tutors, plus the Office of Career Services. Medical Applicant Boards ensure top-notch committee letters and strategic planning.

Curriculum & Grades:

Flexible general education system plus various course sequences for different preparation levels. Significant grade inflation means high GPAs are common, though the peer group is extremely competitive.

Premed Culture:

Large, diverse, achievement-oriented. Students leverage the Harvard name to secure top research and internships. The House system builds tight micro-communities, balancing the drive with social support.

Med School Outcomes:

~90%+ acceptance for well-prepared applicants. Many go on to Harvard Med, other Ivy med schools, or top-tier programs nationwide.

Unique Opportunities:

- Research at Harvard labs, Harvard Med, MIT, Broad Institute.
- Volunteer or intern at Mass General, Brigham, or Boston Children's.
- Funding for global health and public service.
- World-class networking with alumni and faculty.

Admissions Snapshot:

- Acceptance rate: ~4%
- Seeks outstanding academic talent plus evidence of impact, leadership, and curiosity.

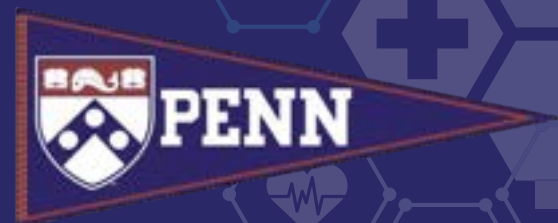
Bottom Line:

Harvard offers incredible opportunities for driven premeds ready to stand out among the world's brightest peers and build a resume that opens any door in medicine.



University of Pennsylvania

Penn's deeply integrated campus in West Philly gives premeds easy access to a top-tier medical school, bustling hospitals, and a community-focused environment rich with service opportunities.



Location: Philadelphia, PA

Undergrad Enrollment: ~10,000

Advising & Support:

Pre-health advising through Career Services plus dedicated advisors in the College. The Pre-Health Board and committee letter process guide students step by step, supported by connections to Penn Med faculty.

Curriculum & Grades:

Standard science prerequisites plus flexible options for electives. Interdisciplinary minors like Health Care Management are popular. Grading in sciences is rigorous but fair; proactive students excel.

Premed Culture:

Career-minded but friendly. Study groups, shared notes, and community volunteering strengthen bonds. Many premeds combine research with service through local clinics or Netter Center initiatives.

Med School Outcomes:

~80–85% med school acceptance for committee applicants. Penn undergrads often match at Perelman (Penn Med) or other elite programs.

Unique Opportunities:

- Volunteer or research at HUP, CHOP, or Presbyterian Medical Center — all near campus.
- Cross-register for Wharton courses or do a dual-degree (LSM, VIPER) blending science with business or policy.
- Global health projects and local public health service.

Admissions Snapshot:

- Acceptance rate: ~6–7%
- Look for students who can bridge disciplines, handle a busy campus, and engage with Philly's community.

Bottom Line:

Penn is a dream for students who want real-world medical exposure, research, and service opportunities woven into everyday life on a vibrant city campus.

Princeton University

Princeton's small size, intense academics, and deep commitment to undergrad research make it a nurturing yet rigorous place to build a rock-solid foundation for medical school.



Location: Princeton, NJ

Undergrad Enrollment: ~5,300

Advising & Support:

The Office of Health Professions Advising offers personal guidance and a robust committee letter system. Faculty and residential college staff take a personal interest in students' success.

Curriculum & Grades:

All students complete distribution requirements plus a senior thesis — a hallmark of Princeton's emphasis on original research. Grading is known to be tough, but context is well communicated to med schools.

Premed Culture:

Collaborative, tight-knit, and honor code-driven. Students bond through shared labs, study groups, and mentoring. Many premeds blend science with humanities or policy coursework.

Med School Outcomes:

~85%+ acceptance for first-time applicants, rising over 90% with re-applicants. Strong committee letters and the thesis boost med school apps.

Unique Opportunities:

- Thesis research often leads to publication or conference presentations.
- Certificates in Global Health or Neuroscience add depth.
- Funded summer internships and global health experiences.
- Alumni network actively supports shadowing and mentoring.

Admissions Snapshot:

- Acceptance rate: ~4%
- Looks for top scholars who value research, service, and the close-knit liberal arts vibe.

Bottom Line:

A great fit for students who love deep research, personalized faculty relationships, and the challenge of standing out at one of the country's most academically demanding colleges.



Yale University

Yale combines top-tier science training with a creative, service-oriented culture and easy access to its med school and hospital — a perfect match for compassionate, well-rounded premeds.



Location: New Haven, CT

Undergrad Enrollment: ~6,500

Advising & Support:

The Office of Career Strategy and health professions advisors work closely with students, aided by supportive residential colleges and peer mentoring. Committee letters and mock interviews set students up for success.

Curriculum & Grades:

Flexible liberal arts curriculum with distribution requirements. Students often double major or choose unique tracks like History of Science and Medicine. Grade averages are high but effort is still key, especially in sciences.

Premed Culture:

Collaborative and balanced. Students mix serious academics with arts, community service, and campus life. Pre-meds volunteer at the HAVEN Free Clinic and local hospitals, supported by groups like MAPS.

Med School Outcomes:

~85–90% acceptance for well-prepared applicants. Many Yale grads match at top schools, including Yale Med itself.

Unique Opportunities:

- Research at Yale School of Medicine or Yale-New Haven Hospital.
- Funded summer fellowships for global health work.
- Interdisciplinary majors and the Global Health Studies program.
- Strong integration with the local community via Dwight Hall public service programs.

Admissions Snapshot:

- Acceptance rate: ~5%
- Looks for brilliant students with a blend of academic rigor, service, and diverse interests.

Bottom Line:

Yale produces compassionate, curious, and multi-talented future physicians, combining serious academics with a humanistic approach to premed life.



BS/MD PROGRAM PROFILES

Direct medical programs — often called BS/MD or BA/MD — combine undergraduate study with a conditional or guaranteed seat in medical school. These programs are among the most competitive college pathways in the United States, with many accepting fewer than 5% of applicants each year.

This section profiles each BS/MD program nationwide, highlighting essentials like program length, available seats, academic expectations, residency preferences, unique features, and interview formats. Use these profiles to compare options and pinpoint programs that match your student's goals.

What to Know About BS/MD Programs

Students accepted to these programs typically have top grades and test scores, substantial exposure to healthcare (volunteering, shadowing, research), and a clear, mature commitment to medicine. Once admitted, students must maintain excellent academic performance in college — usually a GPA of 3.5 or higher — to keep their guaranteed med school spot. Some programs waive the MCAT entirely, while others require a minimum score.

Key Factors to Compare

- **Program Length** – Most programs last 8 years (4 undergrad + 4 med school), but some are accelerated (6–7 years), which shortens time but increases intensity.
- **Curriculum** – Some schools run a separate cohort with special seminars and advising; others fully integrate BS/MD students with the general college population.
- **Affiliated Medical School** – Consider the med school's ranking and reputation if your student is targeting specific specialties or research.
- **Location & Residency** – Many state schools give preference to in-state students or require state residency. Private universities tend to be open to national applicants.
- **Seats** – Cohorts are usually small — often just 6–20 students — which allows for close faculty attention and a tight peer group.
- **Academic Requirements** – A high college GPA is mandatory. MCAT policies vary: some programs waive it entirely; others require a minimum score for progression.
- **Unique Focus** – Some programs emphasize research, global health, rural medicine, or community service. Look for these nuances to find the right fit.
- **Interview Process** – Applicants usually face two interviews — one by the undergrad admissions team and another by the med school. Formats vary from traditional panels to Multiple Mini Interviews (MMIs) designed to test communication and ethical reasoning.



2025 ADMISSIONS SNAPSHOT

With more colleges going test-optional, some BS/MD programs have also dropped or made flexible SAT/ACT requirements — but a strong score remains helpful. After the Supreme Court ruling on affirmative action, many public universities now focus more on socio-economic and experiential diversity instead of race alone. Meanwhile, record numbers of applications continue to make BS/MD admissions extremely selective. Applying to a range of programs — and having strong traditional premed options — is essential.

The summary table on the next page gives you a quick comparison of seats, duration, MCAT requirements, and residency preferences. Detailed profiles for each program follow, organized alphabetically by state.



Summary Table of BS/MD Programs (2024-2025 Cycle)

Premed University	Duration	Seats	MCAT Requirement
Augusta University	7–8 years	25	Yes (MCAT required)
Ball State University	8 years	Not listed (Indiana only)	Yes (MCAT required)
Baylor University	8 years	6	Yes (MCAT $\approx$ 501 +)
Brown University	8 years	~70	No MCAT; no GPA cut
Caldwell University	7 years	Not listed	No minimum MCAT (none required)
Case Western Reserve University	8 years	6	Yes (MCAT $\geq$ 511)
CUNY Brooklyn College	8 years	15	Yes (MCAT required)
CUNY City College	7 years	75–85 (50 matriculate)	No MCAT
DePaul University	8 years	TBA (new program)	MCAT highly recommended
Drexel University	8 years	58	Yes (MCAT 511–513)
Florida Atlantic University	7–8 years	12	Yes (MCAT $\geq$ 510)
Florida International University	7 years	5	Yes (MCAT $\geq$ 510)
George Washington University	7 years	10–15	No MCAT (not taken)
Grambling State University	8 years	Not specified	Yes (MCAT required)
Hofstra University	8 years	10–15	Yes (MCAT $\approx$ 80th %ile)
Howard University	6 years	12	Yes (MCAT $\geq$ 504)
Indiana University	7–8 years	20	Yes (MCAT $\geq$ 512)
Mercer University	8 years	30	Yes (MCAT $\approx$ 55th %ile)
Middle Tennessee State University	7 years	6	Yes (MCAT $\geq$ 501)
Montclair State University	8 years	Not listed	Yes (MCAT required)
New Jersey Institute of Technology (NJIT)	7 years	28	No minimum MCAT
Nova Southeastern University	6–8 years	5	Yes (MCAT $\geq$ 510)
Penn State University	7 years	25–30	Yes (MCAT $\geq$ 508)
Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute (RPI)	7 years	15	No MCAT
Rowan University	8 years	< 10	Yes (MCAT $\approx$ 80th %ile)
Rutgers University–Newark	7 years	Not listed	Yes (MCAT required)
St. Louis University (SLU)	8 years	~105–120	Yes (MCAT $\geq$ 508)
Saint Peter's University	7 years	Not listed	No minimum MCAT
Seton Hall University	8 years	No set cap (40 med seats reserved)	Yes (MCAT $\approx$ 80th %ile)
Siena College	8 years	15	No MCAT
Stevens Institute of Technology	7 years	Not listed	Yes (MCAT required)

Premed University	Duration	Seats	MCAT Requirement
Stony Brook University	8 years	8	Yes (MCAT required)
SUNY Upstate Medical University	7–8 years	20–40	No MCAT (40 hr service required)
Texas A&M University	8 years	15	Yes (MCAT ≈ 80th %ile)
Texas Tech University	8 years	Not listed	No MCAT
The College of New Jersey (TCNJ)	7 years	20	No minimum MCAT
Tulane University	8 years	< 10	Yes (MCAT required)
UC Merced	8 years	12	No MCAT
Union College	8 years	15	No MCAT
University of Alabama at Birmingham	8 years	17 (10 in-state, 7 out-of-state)	Yes (MCAT ≥ 506)
University of Arizona, Tucson	7 years	5	No MCAT required
University of Cincinnati	8 years	15–20	Yes (MCAT required)
University of Colorado Denver	8 years	10	Yes (MCAT required)
University of Connecticut	8 years	Not specified	Yes (MCAT ≈ 80th %ile)
University of Evansville	8 years	8	Yes (MCAT required)
University of Houston	8 years	6	Yes (MCAT ≥ 500)
University of Illinois at Chicago	8 years	43–55	Yes (MCAT ≥ 513)
University of Louisville	8 years	Not specified	Yes (MCAT ≥ national mean)
University of Minnesota	7 years	10	Yes (MCAT ≥ 500)
University of Missouri–Kansas City	6 years	105–110	No MCAT
University of New Mexico	8 years	28	Yes (MCAT ≥ 494)
University of Oklahoma	8 years	5–8	Yes (MCAT ≥ 509)
University of Pittsburgh	8 years	10–15	Yes (MCAT only if undergraduate was test-optional)
University of Rochester	8 years	10	No MCAT
University of South Alabama	8 years	17	Yes (MCAT ≥ 504)
University of South Carolina	7 years	10	No MCAT
University of South Florida	7 years	~15 matriculate (no cap)	Yes (MCAT ≥ 516)
University of Southern Indiana	8 years	6	Yes (MCAT required)
University of Texas Rio Grande Valley	8 years	Not listed	Yes (MCAT ≈ 60th %ile)
University of Toledo	8 years	No cap	Yes (MCAT ≈ 65th %ile)
University of Tulsa	8 years	5	Yes (MCAT ≥ 510)
Virginia Commonwealth University (VCU)	8 years	~32	Yes (MCAT ≥ 508)
Washington & Jefferson College	8 years	5	Yes (MCAT ≥ 509)
Wayne State University	8 years	10	Yes (MCAT ≈ 70th %ile)
Wilkes University	8 years	Not listed	MCAT unknown (required)
Yeshiva University	8 years	Unknown	Yes (MCAT ≥ 501)

KEY TAKEAWAYS & APPLICATION TIMELINE

Use the simple timeline below to plan a focused, successful path to an Ivy League or BS/MD acceptance.

Start Early — Build a Strong Foundation

The path to an Ivy League acceptance or a spot in a BS/MD program begins long before senior year. Top students plan ahead, maintain excellent grades, and seek out meaningful, long-term experiences that demonstrate commitment to medicine and service.

Apply Broadly — Keep Options Open

Even the strongest candidates should apply to a mix of direct medical programs and traditional pre-med colleges. Combined programs are highly competitive, so a balanced list maximizes your chances of success.

Stand Out — Focus on What Matters Most

High grades and test scores remain essential, but they aren't enough alone. Admissions teams look for real-world experiences, leadership, clear motivation for a career in medicine, and compelling personal essays that showcase maturity and purpose.

Sample High-Level Timeline:

9th–10th Grade – Prioritize academic excellence in core subjects. Begin community service or volunteer work, ideally in a healthcare or service-focused setting. Join clubs and take on small leadership roles.

11th Grade – Take the SAT/ACT and aim for top-percentile scores. Deepen commitment to research, shadowing, or clinical experiences. Identify and research colleges and BS/MD programs; attend information sessions and start drafting your school list.

12th Grade – Finalize your college and BS/MD application list. Write and refine personal statements and supplemental essays. Complete applications early and prepare thoroughly for interviews. Stay focused on grades and extracurriculars through graduation. Planning ahead and balancing both direct medical and traditional pre-med pathways gives your student the best possible foundation for a career in medicine.



IS A BS/MD PROGRAM RIGHT FOR YOU? KEY QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

Even the strongest students should pause to reflect on what life in a BS/MD program really means. Use these self-checks and practical tips to decide if this path is right for your family.

Self-Check: Are You Truly Ready for a BS/MD?

Ask your student:

- Are you 100% sure you want to become a physician?
- Can you see yourself staying at one school (and its medical partner) for up to 8 years?
- Do you thrive with structure and a demanding workload?
- Would you be okay with less flexibility to change majors or study abroad?
- How well do you handle long-term commitments and pressure?

Students who answer “yes” to most of these may thrive in a BS/MD program. If the answers are mixed, a traditional pre-med pathway may be the better match.

Other Factors to Compare

- **Flexibility** – Accelerated programs (6–7 years) often leave little room for electives or minors. Eight-year tracks usually allow more freedom to explore.
- **Apply-Out Policies** – Some BS/MD programs allow students to apply to other med schools later; others expect a firm commitment. Clarify this up front.
- **Combined Degrees** – If your student might want an extra master’s, MBA, or PhD before med school, know that many BS/MDs do not allow this detour.
- **Financial Aid** – Check how undergrad scholarships or grants apply to the med school portion. Some aid may not carry over.
- **Family Logistics** – Plan for travel to required interviews or progression meetings. Understand housing costs if the medical school is on a different campus.

One Last Tip

A BS/MD is an excellent path for students ready to commit early and stay focused. Talk openly about goals and fit — and remember that great doctors come from many routes. A well-chosen plan is better than a forced shortcut.

HOW MEDSCHOOLCOACH CAN HELP

Trusted Guidance from the Experts in Medical School Admissions

At the High School Alliance of Future Physicians (HSAFP), we are proud to connect our students and families with MedSchoolCoach — the leading expert in helping high school students navigate the path to a career in medicine. Whether you're aiming for an Ivy League undergraduate experience, a competitive BS/MD program, or a strong traditional pre-med track, MedSchoolCoach offers unmatched support and insight at every step.

Personalized Admissions Strategy:

MedSchoolCoach builds customized plans based on each student's academic goals, interests, and timeline, ensuring every element of the application reflects a cohesive and compelling narrative.

Research, Clinical, and Extracurricular Planning:

Their advisors help students identify high-impact activities, gain hands-on exposure to healthcare, and create meaningful projects that demonstrate leadership and passion for medicine.

Essay Coaching and Interview Preparation:

With a team that includes former admissions committee members and BS/MD graduates, MedSchoolCoach guides students through writing powerful, authentic essays and preparing for interviews — including rigorous formats like Multiple Mini Interviews (MMIs).

Comprehensive, Ongoing Support:

From building a school list and editing applications to conducting mock interviews and making post-acceptance decisions, MedSchoolCoach is a valuable partner throughout the entire admissions journey.

Explore Their Services:

To learn more about how MedSchoolCoach can support your journey:

- For traditional pre-med advising: medschoolcoach.com/pre-med-coach-hs
- For BS/MD program advising: medschoolcoach.com/bs-md-college-applications







Join us in empowering high school students who dream of becoming doctors.



CONTACT US



hsafp.org

