Interview Questions: Future Careers in Medicine

The following are examples of questions that you should consider asking during your one-week preceptorship with a physician. These issues will be discussed in a small group on January 11, 2010.

• What is your daily schedule? Are these hours irregular or unpredictable? Is it typical for others in the same specialty? How about your daily week’s schedule? How close is it to your ideal? How much autonomy do you have in creating your daily, weekly, and/or annual schedule? Will different practice environments affect this schedule?

• What amount of your time is spent directly seeing patients in the hospital? In your office? Doing procedures? Do you feel that you have enough time to see patients particularly in the outpatient setting? What patient-care aspects of your practice are most and least appealing?

• What type of patients do you see in your practice? (Age, acuity of illness, insured, geriatric, etc.). Are there any particular illnesses or diseases that you do not want to treat?

• What percentage of your time is spent providing acute care? …Preventive medicine? …chronic care? Are you expected to work in a broader area so that you can practice your area of expertise (i.e., surgery/pediatric surgery; medicine/infectious diseases)?

• Do you practice your specialty independently or with a group? Do you rely on a large referral base? How much time do you spend interacting with colleagues in your same specialty and those in other specialties? How important is organized medicine in the practice of your specialty?

• How does one become board certified to practice your specialty? Is re-certification necessary? How often?

• How much pressure do you encounter or experience in your specialty? Is this aspect of your specialty changing?

• What is the future of your specialty? Any challenges that will threaten its current structure or your security? How important is understanding the “business of medicine” in your practice?

• What personal qualities are commonly encountered and valued in your specialty?

• How are you able to balance your personal life with the professional demands of your specialty?

• Do you feel that your specialty receives adequate recognition from other specialists?

• Are you remunerated adequately for your services? What kind of salaries can one expect in your specialty? Academic vs. community-based? Do you anticipate any changes in reimbursement patterns for your specialty?

• What kind of intellectual challenges are inherent in your field? How is technology changing the way you practice? Are there opportunities for research?

• Are you happy with your choice of specialty? Would you do things differently now?

• What is the most rewarding aspect of your professional life? Least rewarding?