July 2017

Dear Students,

Welcome to Yale School of Medicine! You have already taken your first steps towards becoming a doctor with your prerequisite science coursework. You will learn much more science in the years to come. However, early in your studies at Yale, you will also start to learn the “art of medicine.” Along with a dedicated group of clinical faculty, I will work with you to develop fundamental bedside skills in the **Clinical Skills Course**. In this course, you will learn to: communicate with patients, families, and other members of the care team; examine patients; develop clinical reasoning skills; and understand the important role of a student-doctor in a patient’s care. The sessions in this course will prepare you for your clinical clerkships, which occur after your first 18 months of school. Many of the sessions in the Clinical Skills Course are designed to be hands-on, offering you the opportunity to develop your clinical skills with direct faculty observation and feedback.

In order to start you on your path toward the acquisition of these skills, you will be asked to do three things during the summer or the first few weeks of medical school:

1. **Medical instruments** – Each incoming student receives a stethoscope during the White Coat Ceremony on 8/10/17. Additionally, you will need other instruments in order to maximize opportunities to practice the physical exam. I will send you a list of recommended instruments after you begin school. The highest priced item is typically an ophthalmo-otoscope, and the total cost for purchasing all instruments can be as high as $800. While the school does not require that you purchase instruments, high quality instruments should be looked at as an investment that will serve you and your patients for a lifetime. Since there are many options and combinations available, you will receive guidance from students and faculty during a dedicated class session in the fall semester. Money has been allocated in your scholarship and loan accounts for the purchase of these instruments.

2. **Required textbooks** – There are two required textbooks for the Clinical Skills Course:
   Both of these books are available in paper and online formats. While you may obtain them before arrival at school, Smith’s is available for free through the Yale medical library, and I often receive discount codes in the fall for Bates’ textbook purchases.

3. **Psychosocial impact on the experience of illness** – Over the summer, before arriving to school, you will interview a family member or close friend who has experienced an illness and write a 2-page report on how psychosocial factors impacted his or her perception of illness. **Your write-up of this interview will be shared and discussed with a small group of classmates and faculty in our first Clinical Skills Course session on 8/31/17.** Through this exercise, you will gain an understanding of the impact of psychosocial factors on the experience of illness. Find more details about this session in the letter from Dr. Paul Kirwin.

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**Yale School of Medicine**

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**Office of Education**
Edward S. Harkness Hall D (C511)
Room 305
367 Cedar Street
New Haven CT 06510-3222
T 203 737-4100
f 203 737-4139
medicine.yale.edu/education
This is an exciting time for you. While I hope you are feeling joy and enthusiasm to embark on the next stage of your training, some anxiety and trepidation for what lies ahead is quite normal. Your hard work and talents have gotten you to this point and will continue to serve you well during your time with us. Through the Clinical Skills Course, I hope to share with you my passion for medicine and patient care, which makes the hard work and dedication meaningful on a daily basis. I look forward to start working with you as you learn the clinical skills needed to become the doctor you want to be.

Sincerely,

[Signature]

Jaideep S. Talwalkar, M.D.
Associate Professor of Internal Medicine & Pediatrics
Director of Clinical Skills Program
Yale School of Medicine