

## Alternative Careers

A small but growing number of medical school graduates are choosing alternative careers. These paths less taken often make good use of a physician's medical, scientific, and clinical skills — although success often hinges on other skills and qualifications a candidate brings beyond the medical degree. Many of these alternative options value the medical degree, but clinical skills and knowledge often make physicians more beneficial in these industries, so completing a residency and becoming licensed may still be important for pursuing an alternative career.



Choosing a road less traveled does not in any way reflect your knowledge and skills, but rather, your interests and values.

## Public Health and Service



For physicians in public service, education and healthcare in the broadest sense are the focus. Physicians act as mediators serving the interests of both physicians and the public. Public health and service is a broad category that offers physicians opportunities in many different categories including international medicine, preventive medicine, non-profits and associations, and even unique opportunities in fields such as aerospace medicine.

## Public Policy and Government



Physicians in public service and government serve in a variety of roles in the federal, state and local government. They may work in politics or civic affairs and address broader health care issues within society. They may work on policies that deal with drug abuse laws, nutrition funding, humane fiscal policy, and health care financing.

Physicians can also involve themselves in governmental action by serving in an office of government relations for a health sciences center or university. This work involves lobbying and educating Congress or state legislators about important health related issues, reviewing and approving requests for funding, organizing health-related service programs, and consulting and advising university officials on a range of political and health-related topics.

## Communications and Journalism



Health communications is a growing field. While it is not an easy path to follow, there are a variety of opportunities for physicians who have the skills and desire to pursue them. Opportunities in medical communications trade on your knowledge as a physician and your ability to make that expertise understandable to the general population.

## Informatics



Medical information science or medical informatics is the research and application of information science and technology in the field of healthcare. More specifically, it's using technology to help organize, analyze, manage, and use information in healthcare.

## Pharmaceutical Research



One of the big "non-traditional" areas where physicians work is research and development. Of course, many physician scientists work in universities, where they also can engage in teaching and other academic activities. But a large number of physicians can be found in industry and government research positions.

## Consulting

Physicians consultants use their expertise to assist healthcare organizations become more efficient, increase profitability or solve a myriad of problems. There are growing opportunities for physicians to bring their management expertise to hospitals,



health systems, physician practices, health plans, managed care organizations, pharmaceutical companies, biotech companies, medical device manufacturers, state and federal government, and academic healthcare centers. They serve as experts on such topics as finance, organization design, management of people, leadership, conflict management, strategic planning, operational planning or quality improvement to name a few.

## Related articles

### Pursuing non-clinical careers

#### Careers in Medicine

© 1995-2015 Association of American Medical Colleges

About CiM

CiM Timeline

Contact us

CiM Terms and Conditions

Find your liaison

Clinical and research opportunities

Specialties

Residency Programs

#### Choices: The CiM Newsletter

##### Recent Issues

<input type="checkbox"/> Winter 2016	<input type="checkbox"/> Spring 2015
<input type="checkbox"/> Spring 2014	<input type="checkbox"/> Winter 2014

[Full archive](#)

#### Connect with CiM

Association of American Medical Colleges

Student Affairs and Programs

655 K St., NW, Suite 100

Washington, DC 20001-2399

(202) 862-6210

[careersinmedicine@aamc.org](mailto:careersinmedicine@aamc.org)

[Follow @AAMCMedStudent](#)

[Follow](#) 11K people are following AAMC Med Student. Sign Up are following.