

# Medical students shouldn't overlook these essential study guides

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If you're preparing for the United States Medical Licensing Examination (USMLE) Step 1 exam, or the COMLEX, the AMA offers great study tips as well as a series from Kaplan Medical that outlines the questions (and answers) that prep test-takers miss the most often.

There's another exam you might want to prepare for. The AMA, in collaboration with the National Board of Medical Examiners (NBME), has launched the Health Systems Science Examination. The standardized assessment was developed as a tool to support the implementation of health systems science (HSS) curricula and educational initiatives, and similar material is increasingly represented on the USMLE Step exams.

HSS—the study of how medical care is delivered, how professionals work together, and how the health system can improve patient care—is the third pillar of medical education. HSS topics have been at the center of the work conducted by the AMA Accelerating Change in Medical Education Consortium and are the basis for the Association's expansion into residency training through the AMA Reimagining Residency initiative.

More information about the new HSS Examination, including availability, content, purpose, length, cost, score reporting and research components, is available in these "HSS At-A-Glance" and FAQ documents. Also check out the InsideTheBoards' Health Systems Science podcast series, created with support from the AMA and Elsevier.

The AMA Health Systems Science Learning Series prepares medical students—and residents and physicians who may not have received such training—to successfully navigate complex health systems, enhance patient care, improve outcomes, and work toward better patient experience, better population health, lower overall costs, and improved professional satisfaction.

Here are some of the key lessons you will learn by taking the courses in this series.

### **How to unleash population health's power**

Traditionally, physicians have focused on one-on-one care, solely addressing the individual patient in the exam room. But thanks to technology and health care delivery system changes, that focus is shifting to population health—a method that aims to improve the medical outcomes of groups of individuals in a certain population.

### **What you should understand about quality improvement**

As a medical student stepping into the clinical setting with fresh eyes that veteran physicians entrenched in the day-to-day delivery of care no longer have, you may be able to spot changes that can be made to improve the quality of care patients receive and find ways to make the system more efficient for everyone.

### **How to find your place in fast-moving health systems**

The health care system is changing fast, and future physicians need to understand their role and ethical obligations in helping ensure patients' health and well-being is maximized, while the costs are minimized, in an environment that provides a patient-centered experience.

### **How to respond when patient harm occurs**

With medical errors caused more often by systems failures rather than individual lapses, it's up to everyone in the system—medical students included—to identify problems, say something and work toward reducing the risk of patient harm.

### **Why you need to be a systems thinker in health care**

Physicians must understand all parts of the health care system—from the emergency department to the primary care clinic, from the patient's family to community organizations—and critically think about how all these moving parts can work together to improve patients' health, meet their health care needs and anticipate and mitigate safety

threats or other problems.

## **The key elements of value-based care?**

High-value care is about much more than containing costs. It's also a recipe for improving patient outcomes, safety and satisfaction. But what exactly is it and how is it measured?

## **Why team-based care is so critical**

Health care organizations can dramatically cut the number of deaths from medical error each year by taking lessons from high-reliability organizations—like those in aviation and the military—that have succeeded in preventing failures despite working in risky and complex environments.

## **What you need to know about social determinants of health**

Where your patients were born as well as where they work, play and grow older all have a big impact on what their health outcomes will be, with research showing that a person's overall health is mostly driven by social, economic and environmental factors.

## **How to become a leader in medicine**

As health care systems strive to become high-reliability organizations, they need strong leaders at all levels to deal with the challenges that continually emerge as a result of growing populations, new standards of care, changing government regulations and shifts in access to care. Students should appreciate that they too can be leaders by embracing change to promote shared goals.

Four additional courses in the series have been added. They are:

- | "What Is Health Systems Science?"
- | "How Clinical Informatics Impacts Health Care Delivery."
- | "Introducing Health Care Policy and Economics."
- | "Identifying the Fundamentals of Medical Ethics."

The courses are available on the AMA Ed Hub™, an online platform with high-quality CME and education that supports the professional development needs of physicians and other health

professionals. With topics relevant to you, it also offers an easy, streamlined way to find, take, track and report educational activities.

Learn more about AMA CME accreditation.

## Other resources from the AMA

The AMA has developed numerous resources, including the AMA's *Health Systems Science* textbook , to help ensure physicians-in-training enter practice with a better understanding of how health care is delivered, how health care professionals work together to deliver care, and how they can improve patient care and health care.

The AMA also has published the *Health Systems Science Review* book—the first study tool of its kind—to help physicians-in-training and other health professionals, as well as their instructors, evaluate competencies in health systems science and learners' readiness for navigating modern health systems. This includes competencies in the value of health care, medical economics and health care policy. The textbook is available for purchase from the AMA Bookstore. The Health Systems Science Review book is available directly from Elsevier.