Physicians serve a broad range of medical functions. They diagnose disease, prescribe treatment, supervise patient care and participate in the improved delivery of health services. Many physicians branch off into basic and applied medical research, teaching or administration.

Professional medical education consists of four years of graduate-level study. Typically, the first two years of medical school are composed of classroom instruction and laboratory work, and the second two years consist of clinical rotations. Medical school graduates may elect to continue their training in a one-year internship and/or a one- to three-year residency. The residency option is required in order to specialize in medicine.

Medical schools evaluate each applicant's overall academic achievement together with results of the Medical College Admission Test (MCAT). While medical schools do not require a specific undergraduate major, they generally expect applicants to have a foundation in biology, chemistry and physics. UAF courses that satisfy this are biology (Biol 105X and 106X), chemistry (Chem 103X and 104X, or 105X and 106X), organic chemistry with lab (Chem 321, 322, and 324), and physics (Phys 103X and 104X). Other science course work such as anatomy and physiology (Biol 111X and 112X), as well as a background in the social sciences and humanities, is not usually required for admission but can strengthen a pre-med curriculum. Medical schools will consider applicants for admission after their third year of undergraduate work, but most entering medical students have completed a bachelor's degree.

Students who are considering medicine as a career choice should contact the dean of the College of Natural Science and Mathematics or the Academic Advising Center. An academic advisor will help the student with pre-med program advisement, exploration of professional schools and licensing requirements, and financial planning. See www.uaf.edu/advising/degree/preprof/medicine.html for more information.