

## **HOLISTIC APPROACH**

Rochester is home of the "Biopsychosocial Model" of medical practice, a tradition started in the 1950's by Dr. George Engel that continues to guide and inform our educational mission and approach to clinical practice in the 21st Century. Our supportive, nurturing, and collegial learning environment prepares Rochester graduates for a holistic view of medicine, clinical practice, and a balanced and fulfilling life.

## **INNOVATIVE AND PROGRESSIVE CURRICULUM**

Rochester is a nationally recognized leader in medical education, noted for its integrative, progressive and successful curricular initiatives. Our Double Helix Curriculum, now in its 25th year, encompasses very early clinical clerkships, integrated basic and clinical science across all four years of the curriculum, and a hybrid Problem-Based Learning approach that focuses on the idea combination of lectures and small-group learning. Active, life-long learning and a focus on the acquisition and application of knowledge to clinical problems highlight our academic focus. Moreover, Rochester emphasizes personal and professional growth that leads to a balanced approach to life and a career in medicine.

## **BALANCED APPROACH TO EDUCATION AND CAREERS**

We do not track out students into academic, specialty, or primary care careers. Rather, Rochester offers a balanced curriculum that encourages our students to select the area and pathway of medicine best suited to their individual strengths and interests.

## **COMMITMENT TO LOCAL AND GLOBAL COMMUNITIES**

Rochester has been recognized by the Association of American Medical Colleges for its outstanding community outreach programs, including over 50 different agencies and three city-center UR-Well Clinics that provide volunteer medical services to our city's most vulnerable residents. Additionally, a significant number of Rochester graduates participate in our International Medicine Program, considered one of the better global health programs in the nation!

## **RESEARCH OPPORTUNITIES**

As a research-intensive medical school, Rochester offers ample opportunities for our students to explore laboratory or clinical research (in our year-out Academic Research Track or MSTP-MD/PhD programs), research in Population Science (MPH/MD and MS/MD degrees), training in our health-care management program (MD/MBA), or "Graduation with Distinction" in a variety of different educational and research pathways.

# THE BIOPSYCHOSOCIAL APPROACH

The biopsychosocial approach was developed at Rochester decades ago by Drs. George Engel and John Romano. While traditional biomedical models of clinical medicine focus on pathophysiology and other biological approaches to disease, the biopsychosocial approach in our training programs emphasize the importance of understanding human health and illness in their fullest contexts.

The biopsychosocial approach systematically considers biological, psychological, and social factors and their complex interactions in understanding health, illness, and health care delivery.

Biological, psychological, and social factors exist along a continuum of natural systems, as depicted in the diagram above.

Systematic consideration of psychological and social factors requires application of relevant social sciences, just as consideration of biological factors requires application of relevant natural sciences. Therefore, both the natural and social sciences are 'basic' to medical practice. In other words, psychological and social factors are not merely epiphenomena: they can be understood in scientific ways at their own levels as well as in regard to their biological correlates.

Humanistic qualities are highly valued complements to the biopsychosocial approach, which involves the application of the scientific method to diverse biological, psychological, and social phenomena as related to human health.

While the biomedical approach takes the reductionistic view that all phenomena are best understood at the lowest level of natural systems (e.g., cellular or molecular), the biopsychosocial approach recognizes that different clinical scenarios may be most usefully understood scientifically at several levels of the natural systems continuum.

To apply the biopsychosocial approach to clinical practice, the clinician should:

Recognize that relationships are central to providing health care

Use self awareness as a diagnostic and therapeutic tool

Elicit the patient's history in the context of life circumstances

Decide which aspects of biological, psychological, and social domains are most important to understanding and promoting the patient's health

Provide multidimensional treatment

