A Reading List for Students and Others Interested in Health Care

A great way to prepare for any career is by reading everything you can about it. To help you get started, ExploreHealthCareers.org has compiled a reading list. Don’t miss our On Screen page for more in-depth information on health care. It lists documentaries that take you into the health care world.

You can browse books by category or scroll the whole list.

About Medicine

Being Mortal by Atul Gawande
In his new book, published in October 2014, Atul Gawande examines how our over-medicalized culture affects those who are near death and their families. A review in The Chicago Tribune notes that Gawande “invites readers to join him as he considers the modern experience of mortality,” setting the stage with a brief explanation of aging and a quick history of how earlier generations died—usually abruptly and at home. From there, he heads into nursing homes and explores the paradox of assisted living. How do you balance the often competing priorities of autonomy and safety for those who are too frail to live alone?

Better: A Surgeon’s Notes on Performance by Atul Gawande
Best-selling writer Atul Gawande examines, in riveting accounts of medical failure and triumph, how success is achieved in this complex and risk-filled profession. At once unflinching and compassionate, Better is an exhilarating journey, narrated by “arguably the best nonfiction doctor-writer around” ( Salon.com).

The Big Fat Surprise: Why Butters, Meat and Cheese Belong in a Healthy Diet by Nina Teicholz
In The Big Fat Surprise, journalist Nina Teicholz shows how the misinformation about saturated fats took hold in the scientific community and the public imagination, and how recent findings have overturned these beliefs. This startling history demonstrates how nutrition science has gotten it wrong: how overzealous researchers, through a combination of ego, bias and premature institutional consensus, have allowed dangerous misrepresentations to become dietary dogma. With eye-opening scientific rigor, The Big Fat Surprise upends the conventional wisdom about all fats with the groundbreaking claim that more, not less, dietary fat—including saturated fat—is what leads to better health and wellness. (Amazon.com)

Body of Work: Meditations on Mortality from the Human Anatomy Lab by Christine Montross
Though it never goes for the gross-out effect, this memoir is not for the squeamish. While her recollections encompass all of her medical training, Montross uses her semester-long dissection of a cadaver as the narrative backbone of the story. Performing her own dissection leads Montross to explore the history of studying anatomy through corpses. Her thoughtful meditations on balancing clinical detachment and emotional engagement will easily find a spot on the shortlist of great med school literature. (Publisher’s Weekly)

The Checklist Manifesto by Atul Gawande
In this bestseller, physician Atul Gawande shows what the simple idea of the checklist reveals about the complexity of our lives and how we can deal with it. In riveting stories, he reveals what checklists can do, what they can’t, and how they could bring about striking improvements in a variety of fields, from medicine and disaster recovery to professions and businesses of all kinds. And the insights are making a difference. Already, a simple surgical checklist from the World Health Organization designed by following the ideas described here has been adopted in more than twenty countries as a standard for care. (Amazon.com)

The Cost of Getting: A Surgeon Reveals the Truth Behind a Multibillion-Dollar Industry by Paul A. Ruggieri
Surgeon Paul A. Ruggieri reveals little-known truths about his profession—and the hidden flaws of our health care system—in this compelling and troubling account of real patients, real doctors and how money influences medical decisions behind the scenes. Even many well-informed patients have no idea what may be contributing to the cost of their surgery. With up-to-date research and stories from his practice, Ruggieri shows how business arrangements among hospitals, insurance companies and surgeons affect who gets treatment—and whether they get the right treatment. Pulling back the curtain from the hospital bed, he explains how to safeguard one’s own health (and finances), and how America can make surgery more affordable for all without sacrificing quality care. (Amazon.com)

County: Life, Death and Politics at Chicago’s Public Hospital by David Ansell

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The Family That Couldn't Sleep by D. T. Max

Prions are ordinary proteins that sometimes go wrong, resulting in neurological illnesses that are always fatal. Even more mysterious and frightening, prions are almost impossible to destroy because they are not alive and have no DNA. In The Family That Couldn't Sleep, essayist and journalist D. T. Max tells the spellbinding story of the prion's hidden past and deadly future. Through exclusive interviews and original archival research, Max explains this story's connection to human greed and ambition—from the Prussian chemist Justus von Liebig, who made cattle castrate by feeding them the flesh of other cows, to New Guinea natives whose custom of eating the brains of the dead nearly wiped them out. (Amazon.com)

Final Exit: A Surgeon's Reflections on Euthanasia by Pauline Chen

When Pauline Chen began medical school, she dreamed of saving lives. What she could not predict was how much death would be a part of her work. Almost immediately, she found herself dealing with medical's darkest secret—that a profession prides itself on caring for the ill also systematically depersonalizes dying. Final Exit follows Chen over the course of her education and practice as she struggles to reconcile the lessons of her training with her innate sense of empathy and humanity. (Amazon.com)

Five Days at Memorial: Life and Death in a Storm-Ravaged Hospital by Sheri Fink

In the tradition of the best investigative journalism, physician and reporter Sheri Fink reconstructs five days at Memorial Medical Center, a New Orleans hospital, during and after Hurricane Katrina and draws the reader into the lives of those who struggled mightily to survive and to maintain life amid chaos. (Amazon.com)

Knocking on Heaven's Door by Kitty Butler

"Once upon a time we knew how to die. We knew how to sit at a deathbed." In this sad yet valiant and exacting memoir, Butler, an award-winning science writer, recounts the plight of her elderly father and the toll his many afflictions exacts on her and her mother. He suffers a stroke followed by progressive dementia, speech difficulty, visual loss, and incontinence. An injury during WWII already cost him an arm. Before undergoing hemis surgery, a permanent cardiac pacemaker is implanted. As his mind and body further deteriorate, Butler and her mother plead with doctors to let the disease run its course. When the doctors decline, Butler looks inside the dead man's chest, a chilling reminder of "our culture'siedostrous, one-sided worship of maximum longevity." About a year later, her physically and emotionally exhausted wife expires. Butler looks at the strain on caregivers, feelings of guilt and grief, the untapped utilization of palliative care, and the hesitance between "saving a life and prolonging a dying." (Tony Michaels, Booklist)

Living and Dying in Brick City: Stories from the Front Lines of Inner-City E.R by Sampson Davis and Lisa Frazier Page

Sampson Davis is best known as one of three friends from inner-city Newark who made a pact in high school to become doctors. Their book The Pact and their work through the Three Doctors Foundation have inspired thousands of young men and women to strive for goals they otherwise would not have dreamed they could attain. In this book, Dr. Davis looks at the healthcare crisis in the inner city from a rare perspective: as a doctor who works on the front line of emergency medical care in the community where he grew up, and as a member of that community who has faced the same challenges as the people he treats every day. He also offers invaluable practical advice for those living in such communities, where conditions like asthma, heart disease, stroke, obesity, and AIDS are disproportionately endemic.

The Man Who Missed His Wife for a Hat by Oliver Sacks

This book by well-known author and neurologist Oliver Sacks tells the stories of individuals afflicted with fantastic perceptual and intellectual aberrations: patients who have lost their memories and with them the greater part of their pasts; who are no longer able to recognize people and common objects; who are stricken with violent tics or grimaces or who shout involuntary obscenities; whose limbs have become alien; who have been dismissed as retarded yet are gifted with uncanny artistic or mathematical talents. (Amazon.com)

The Man Who Touched His Own Heart by Bob Dunn

The Man Who Touched His Own Heart tells the raspy, gruff, mesmerizing story of the heart, from the first "explorers" who dug up cadavers and plucked their hearts' chambers, through the first heart surgeries which had to be completed in three minutes before death arrived to heart transplants and the last medical efforts to prolong our hearts' lives, almost defying nature in the process. (Amazon.com)

The Optimism Bias by Tal Shavit

Psychologists have long been aware that most people maintain an irrationally positive outlook on life. Tall Shavit—one of the most innovative neuroscientists at work today—takes this a step further, Optimism, he shows, may in fact be crucial to our existence. With its cutting-edge science, this is as eye-opening to readers with an interest in the workings of the brain as the major role that optimism plays in determining how we live our lives. (Amazon.com)

The Pain Chronicles: Cures, Myths, Mysteries, Prayers, Diaries, Brain Science, Healing, and the Science of Suffering by Melanie Thompson

In The Pain Chronicles, Melanie Thompson traces conceptions of pain throughout the ages—from ancient Babylonian pain-banishing spells to modern brain imaging—to reveal the elusive, mysterious nature of pain itself. Interspersing first-person reflections on her own battle with chronic pain, incisive reportage from leading pain clinics and medical research, and insights from a wide range of disciplines, Thompson shows that when dealing with pain, we are either as advanced as we imagine or as helpless as we may fear. (Amazon.com)

Reinventing American Health Care: How the Affordable Care Act Will Improve Our Terrifyingly Complex, Blandy Unusual, Outrageously Expensive, Grossly Ineficient, Error Prone System by Ezekiel Emanuel

Ezekiel J. Emanuel, a professor of medical ethics and health policy at the University of Pennsylvania who also served as a special adviser to the White House on health care reform, has written a brilliant diagnostic explanation of why health care in America has become such a divisive social issue, how money and medicine have their own—quite distinct—American story, and why health care has been the one area where presidents of the left and right have so far been able to agree. Emanuel also explains exactly how the ACA reforms are reshaping the health care system now. (Amazon.com)

Still Alice by Lisa Genova

In Lisa Genova's bestselling novel, an accomplished professor diagnosed with Alzheimer's disease learns that her worth is comprised of more than her ability to remember. It was recently made into a movie starring Julianne Moore, Alec Baldwin, Kate Bosworth and Kristen Stewart. (Amazon.com)

The Tale of the Dying Neurosurgeon by Sam Kean

In The Tale of the Dying Neurosurgeon, Sam Kean travels through time with stories of neurological curiosities: phantom limbs, Siamese twin brains, viruses that eat patients' memories, blind people who see through their tongues. He weaves these narratives together with prose that makes the pages fly by, to create a story of discovery that reaches back to the 1500s and the high-profile jumping accident that inspired this book's title. With the lucid, masterful explanations and razor-sharp wit his fans have come to expect, Kean explores the brain's secret passageways and recounts the forgotten tales of the ordinary people whose struggles, resilience, and deep humanity made neuroscience possible. (Amazon.com)

Talking with Doctors by David Newman

Diagnosed with a life-threatening brain tumor, David Newman made his way through a dense thicket of medical consultations in search of a physician and a treatment that offered the possibility of survival. In Talking with Doctors, he writes about the harrowing process of assessing conflicting "expert" opinions and, in so doing, making sense of the priorities, personalities and vulnerabilities of different doctors. Picking the nature of medical authority and the grounds of a trusting doctor-patient relationship, Newman illuminates with grace and power what it
now means for a patient to participate in life-and-death medical decisions. (Amazon.com)

Tasty: The Art and Science of What We Eat by John McQuaid
In Tasty: The Art and Science of What We Eat, author John McQuaid argues that flavor is "the most important ingredient at the core of what we eat" and that smell is "the biochemical currency of feeling and action." Using information from neuroscience, psychology, chemistry and biology, McQuaid takes his subject in unexpectedly wide-ranging directions, from the race to cultivate the hottest chili to the quest to replicate an ancient Chinese beer. Along the way, you learn that dolphins and whales cannot taste anything but salt, and "chill pepper" is a misnomer coined by Christopher Columbus, after the unrelated black pepper. Tasty is packed with such fascinating tidbits—a pleasing sampling menu of a book. (Scientific American)

In this provocative book, Jonathan Bush, co-founder and CEO of athenahealth, calls for a revolution in health care to give customers more choices, freedom, power, and information, and at far lower prices. With humor and a tell-it-like-it-is style, he picks up insights and ideas from his days as an ambulance driver in New Orleans, an army medic, and an entrepreneur launching a birthing start-up in San Diego. Bush calls for disruption of the status quo through new business models, new payment models, and new technologies that give patients more control of their care and enhance the physician-patient experience. (Amazon.com)

Zoobiquity: The Astonishing Connection Between Human and Animal Health by Barbara Natterson-Horowitz and Kathryn Bowers
Inspired by an eye-opening consultation at the Los Angeles Zoo, which revealed that a monkey experienced the same symptoms of heart failure as her human patients, cardiologist Barbara Natterson-Horowitz embarked upon a project that would reshape how she practiced medicine. She began informally researching every affliction that she encountered in humans to learn whether it happened with animals, too. Natterson-Horowitz and her co-author, science writer Kathryn Bowers, have dubbed this pan-species approach to medicine zoobiquity, which they describe in fascinating detail in their book. What can animals teach us about the human body and mind? How can our commonalities be used to diagnose, treat and heal patients of all species? (Barons and Noble)

Arts and Medicine
The Doctor Stories by William Carlos Williams
American poet William Carlos Williams was also a doctor. This book contains Williams' 13 "doctor stories" and several of his most famous poems on medical matters along with an essay "My Father, the Doctor" by his son, Dr. William Eric Williams.

The House of God by Samuel Shem
Amazon.com describes this classic novel as "heartbreaking, hilarious, and utterly human." So it then goes on to say that it is "a mesmerizing and provocative journey that takes us into the lives of Roy Basch and five of his fellow interns at the most renowned teaching hospital in the country. Young Dr. Basch and his irreverent confidant, known only as the Fat Man, will learn not only how to be fine doctors but, eventually, good human beings.

Career Education and Preparation
The Medical School Interview: From Preparation to Thank You Notes: Empowering Advice to Help You Succeed by Jessica Freedman
Based on her experience as an admissions officer and as a private advisor with www.MedEdits.com, physician Jessica Freedman provides guidance on what to expect on interview day, how to influence what is discussed during your interview and what you can do to ensure a stellar interview performance. She also writes about what goes on "behind the scenes" after your interview and provides a transcript for a sample interview. (Amazon.com)

Mindset by Carol Dweck
Carol Dweck proposes that everyone has either a fixed mindset or a growth mindset. A fixed mindset is one in which you view your talents and abilities as... well, fixed. In other words, you are who you are, your intelligence and talents are fixed, and your fate is to go through life avoiding challenges and failure. A growth mindset, on the other hand, is one in which you see yourself as fluid, a work in progress. Your fate is one of growth and opportunity. Which mindset do you possess? Dweck provides a checklist to assess yourself and shows how a particular mindset can affect all areas of your life, from business to sports and love. The good news, says Dweck, is that mindsets are not set at any time, you can learn to use a growth mindset to achieve success and happiness. This is a serious, practical book. (Publisher's Weekly)

The Port by Samantha Davis, George Jenkins, Rameck Hunt and Lori Frazer Page
As teenagers from a rough part of Newark, New Jersey, Samantha Davis, Rameck Hunt, and George Jenkins had nothing special going for them except loving mothers (consistency). Their first stroke of luck was being accepted into University High, one of Newark's three magnet high schools, and their second was finding each other. When a recruitment presentation at Seton Hall University reignited George's childhood dream of becoming a dentist, George convinced his two friends to go to college with him. They would help each other through. None of them would be allowed to drop out and be reabsorbed by the Newark streets. (Amazon.com)

Diversity
Coping for Patients from Different Cultures: Case Studies from American Hospitals by Gari-Ann Galanti
What happens when a Cherokee patient summons a medicine man in the hospital, or when an Anglo nurse refuses to take orders from a Japanese doctor? Why do Asian patients rarely ask for pain medication, while Mediterranean patients seem to seek relief for even the slightest discomfort? Coping for Patients from Different Cultures contains more than 200 case studies illustrating cross-cultural misunderstanding and culturally competent health care. The chapters cover a wide range of topics, including birth, end of life, traditional medicine, mental health, pain, religion, and multicultural staff issues. (Amazon.com)

Heardstrong: 52 Women Who Changed Science and the World by Rachael Swaby
Covering Nobel Prize winners and major innovators, as well as lesser-known but hugely significant scientists who influence our everyday lives, Rachael Swaby's vibrant profiles span centuries of courageous thinkers and illustrate how each one's ideas developed, from their first moment of scientific engagement through the research and discovery for which they're best known. This fascinating tour reveals these 52 women at their best—while encouraging and inspiring a new generation of girls to put on their lab coats. (Amazon.com)

The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks by Rebecca Skloot
Her name was Henrietta Lacks, but scientists know her as HeLa. She was a poor black tobacco farmer whose cells—taken without her knowledge in 1951—became one of the most important tools in medicine, vital for developing the polio vaccine, cloning, gene mapping, and more. Henrietta's cells have been bought and sold by the billions, yet she remains virtually unknown, and her family can't afford health insurance. This New York Times bestseller tells a riveting story of the collision between ethics, race, and medicine; of scientific discovery and faith healing; and of a daughter consumed with questions about the mother she never knew. (Amazon.com)

Medical Apartheid by Harriet Washington
Medical Apartheid is the first and only comprehensive history of medical experimentation on African Americans. The product of years of prodigious research into medical journals and experimental reports long underbelly of scientific research and makes possible, for the first time, an understanding of the roots of the African American health deficit. (Amazon.com)

The Sceptor and the Silver Bear by Lori Alvord and Elizabeth Cohen Van Pelt
A spellbinding journey between two worlds, this remarkable book describes surgeon Alward's struggles to bring modern medicine to the Navajo reservation in Gallup, New Mexico—and to bring the values of her people to a medical care system in danger of losing its heart. (Amazon.com)

The Spirit Catches You And You Fall Down by Anne Fadiman
In this award-winning book, Fadiman explores the clash between a small county hospital in California and a refugee family from Laos over the care of Liis Lee, a young child diagnosed with severe epilepsy. Liis's parents and her doctor both wanted what was best for Liis, but they had opposing medical beliefs. (Amazon.com)

Woman in Medicine: Getting In, Growing, and Advancing by Janet Bickel
Drawing on all the best available literature and the experience of thousands of women doctors, the book covers getting into medical school, overcoming gender stereotypes, finding a mentor, combining parenting with a career and maximizing career development. The author also offers tips on building key professional skills and a self-diagnostic section for readers who are preparing to begin a medical career. (Amazon.com)

Humanism

Becoming Dr. Q by Alfredo Quinones-Hinojosa
This gripping memoir, Alfredo Quinones-Hinojosa tells his amazing life story—from his impoverished childhood in the tiny village of Palencia, Mexico, to his harrowing border crossing and his transformation from illegal immigrant to American citizen and gifted student at the University of California at Berkeley and at Harvard Medical School. (Amazon.com)

The Calm of Stories: Teaching and Moral Imagination by Robert Coles
Coles presents conversations with college, law, and medical school students that focus on the moral impact of their reading. For Coles, the study of literature is not a purely intellectual exercise but an encounter with examples that bear on everyday moral dilemmas. (Library Journal)

Cutting for Stone by Abraham Verghese
Physician Abraham Verghese mines his own life and experiences in a fast-selling sweeping novel that moves from India to Ethiopia to an inner-city hospital in New York City over decades and generations. (Publishers Weekly)

Death of the Good Doctor by Kate Scannell
This account details Scannell's tenure as clinical director of a county hospital's AIDS ward at the height of the AIDS epidemic (1985 to 1990), recording her journey from the aggressive, invasive, never-say-die medicine that she had been trained to perform to a more compassionate, realistic practice in which she might be just as likely to prescribe fresh pastries or an outing as she would antibiotics or extensive laboratory tests. (Amazon.com)

Empathy and the Practice of Medicine: Beyond the Pill and Scalpel by Howard Brody, Endo Petchel, Mary G. McCrea Curnen and Deborah St James, Eds.
This book seeks to restore empathy to medical practice. A collection of essays by physicians, philosophers, and a nurse, the book is divided into three parts: one deals with how empathy is weakened or lost during the course of medical education and suggests how to remedy this; another describes the historical and philosophical origins of empathy and provides arguments for and against it; and the final section offers compelling accounts of how physicians' empathy for their patients has affected their own lives and the lives of those in their care. (Amazon.com)

How We Die by Sherwin B. Nuland
A National Book Award winner, How We Die has become the definitive text on perhaps the single most universal human concern: death. Drawing on his own broad experience and the characteristics of the six most common death-causing diseases, Nuland examines what death means to the doctor, patient, nurse, administrator and family. (Amazon.com)

The Human Side of Medicine: Learning What It's Like to Be a Patient and What It's Like to Be a Physician by Laurence Savett
With more than 30 years of medical practice, teaching, advising, and mentoring medical students and undergraduates, Savett champions two premises: first, that the importance of physicians mastering the human side of medicine is as critical as learning its biology and technology; and second, that this can be taught. Physicians who have always put their patients' interests first and never compromised their professional values have preserved their identity, vitality, and enthusiasm as caring doctors. (Amazon.com)

Kitchen Table Wisdom by Rachel Naomi Remen
Remen has a unique perspective on healing rooted in her background as a physician, a professor of medicine, and a long-term survivor of chronic illness. In this down-to-earth collection of true stories, this physician shows us how to live in all its terror and mystery and reminds us that the things we cannot measure may be the things that ultimately sustain and enrich our lives. (Amazon.com)

The Last Lecture by Randy Pausch
A lot of professors give talks titled "The Last Lecture," asked to consider their demise and to raminate on what matters most to them. When Randy Pausch, a computer science professor at Carnegie Mellon, was asked to give such a lecture, he didn't have to imagine it as his last, since he had recently been diagnosed with terminal cancer. But the lecture he gave--"Really Achieving Your Childhood Dreams"--wasn't about dying. It was about the importance of overcoming obstacles, of enabling the dreams of others, of seizing every moment (because "time is all we have...and you may find one day that you have less than you think"). (Amazon.com)

Let Me Listen to Your Heart: Writings by Medical Students by David Scharf and Alan Kozak, Eds.
Medical students wrote these 42 reflections based on their experiences with patients during their training.

Letters to a Young Doctor by Richard Selzer
In this collection of "letters" and stories, surgeon Selzer describes a life in medicine and the surgical profession. Called "candid, insightful and unexpectedly funny," the book will inspire those considering a career in health care.

The Measure of Our Days: A Spiritual Exploration of Illness by Jerome Groopman
In eight moving portraits, Groopman offers a compelling look at what it is to be learned when life itself can no longer be taken for granted. The stories are diverse—from Kirk, an aggressive venture capitalist determined to play the odds with experimental chemotherapy treatments, to Elizabeth, an imperious doyenne humbled by a rare blood disease, to Elliott, who triumphs over leukemia and creates for himself a definition of success—but each, in the words of Maggie Scarl, "transforms the misery of terrible suffering into a marvelous celebration of the sweetness of human life." (Amazon.com)

Mountains Beyond Mountains: The Quest of Dr. Paul Farmer by Tracy Kidder
Paul Farmer is a doctor, Harvard professor, renowned infectious-disease specialist, anthropologist, and recipient of a MacArthur "genius" grant who found his life's calling on his first visit to the slums of Haiti. (Amazon.com)

My Own Country by Abraham Verghese
In 1985, physician Abraham Verghese—who was born in Ethiopia of Indian parents—returned with his wife and newborn son to Johnson City, Tennessee, where he had done his internship and residency. As he watched AIDS infect the small town, he and the community learned many things from one another, including the power of compassion. (Library Journal)

On the Move by Oliver Sacks

http://explorehealthcareers.org/en/issues/reading_list
Oliver Sacks, a well-known neurologist and writer, looks back on his life and career in his new autobiography, *On the Move*. Reflecting on his past, he details his love of writing and discovery, and how they have influenced his personal and professional life. Sacks has written an "unconventionally moving autobiography. Sacks' unflinching is that of a life defined by a compassionate curiosity — about the human mind, about the human spirit, about the invisibility of our inner lives." (Brain Pickings)

The Other Side by Kate Granger

Kate Granger, a British physician working in Yorkshire, was diagnosed with cancer in 2011 at the age of 29. On the advice of one of her bosses, she began writing about her experiences as therapy. From those diary entries, she wrote *The Other Side*. Published in 2012, the book is an honest and often harrowing tale of accepting a devastating prognosis, the treatment of what she knew to be an incurable disease and her decision to cease treatment to enjoy the rest of her life. Her goal in writing the book, she said at an interview, was for health care professionals to read it so that they would have "a better understanding and empathy for their patients, and from the reviews I have been receiving I think I may have achieved this.

Second Opinions: Stories of Intuition and Choice in the Changing World of Medicine by Jorama Groopman

In this book, Groopman focuses on the ways intuition informs his medical decisions and enhances the quality of his patient relationships. In eight chapters that vividly recount cases whose outcomes hinge as much on the doctor's gut feeling and empathy as on his expertise, Groopman eschews the impersonal and know-it-all role of the doctor, describing instead the cases in which careful consideration of both the emotional and medical issues positively impacted his approach to treatment. (Amazon.com)

The Soul of Medicine by Sharon Nuland

Like all physicians, Sharon Nuland collects stories, and over 30 years in the practice of surgery, he has collected a consider number of both his own stories as well as the stories of surgeons he has worked with and admires. The remarkable stories told in this book are filled with the lessons of humanity. They describe the important connections between these stories we call the doctor-patient relationship and that other relationships between the mentor and student, so important to the perpetuation of medical knowledge judgment, wisdom and character. (Amazon.com)

Treat ment Kind and Fair: Letters to a Young Doctor by Perri Klass

Klass offers a fascinating glimpse inside the doctor's office for aspiring physicians and medical buffs. She addresses the primary issues in the life of any doctor and, by extension, the lives of those for whom they care. She explores the moral judgment of doctors, questions of death and physician-assisted suicide, and the impact of a doctor, doctors as patients, and more. (Amazon.com)

Tuesdays with Morrie by Mitch Albom

Mitch Albom "rediscovered" Morrie Schwartz, a college professor from whom he at age 20 before he wrote the book. Knowing he was dying, Albom visited with Mitch in his studio every Tuesday, just as they used to be in college. Their rekindled relationship turned into one final "class"—lessons in how to live: Tuesdays with Morrie is a magical chronicling of their time together, which Mitch shares Morrie's list of the world. (Amazon.com)

What Doctors Feel: How Emotions Affect the Practice of Medicine by Danielle Ofri

How do the stresses of medical life—from paperwork to grueling hours to lawsuits to facing death—affect the medical care that physicians can offer their patients? Digging deep into the lives of physicians, physician Danielle Ofri examines the daunting range of emotions—shame, anger, empathy, frustration, hope, pride, occasionally despair, and sometimes even love—that permeate the contemporary physician-patient relationship and drawing on scientific studies, including some surprising research, Ofri offers up an unflinching look at the impact of emotions on health care. (Amazon.com)

Practicing Medicine

Between Expectations: Lessons from a Pediatric Residency by Meghan MacLean Weir

This personal chronicle of a pediatrician's residency at Children's Hospital Boston and Boston Medical Center offers an inside's account of what it is like to work with sick children, and to see the stresses of depression, stress and heartbreak to joy, hope and happy endings. (Amazon.com)

Black Man in a White Coat by Damon Tweardy

This memoir examines the complex ways in which both doctors and patients must navigate the difficult and often contradictory terrain of race and medicine. As a witness, Damon Tweardy transforms from student to practicing physician, he discovers how often race influences his encounters with patients. Through their stories, he illustrates the complex social, cultural, and economic factors at the root of most health problems in the black community. These issues take on greater meaning when Tweedy is himself diagnosed with a chronic disease for more common among black people. In this powerful, moving, and deeply empathetic book, Tweedy explores the challenges confronting black doctors, and the disproportionate health burdens faced by black patients, ultimately seeking a way forward to better treatment and more compassionate care. (Amazon.com)

Bringing It Home: A Nurse Discovers Healthcare Beyond the Hospital by Tilda Shalof

ICU nurse Tilda Shalof leaves the hospital behind to accompany the nurses who work in homes, from sions to the streets to the across the country. Working with the Victorian Order of Nurses, a Canadian not-for-profit organization that provides home and community care, Shalof meets a wide variety of nursing professionals who offer untraditional care, sometimes in unlikely settings. As she casts light on new health care issues, she also explores the nurses' role in the community, the role of nurses in PTSD, and the role of nurses in the care of people with physical disabilities, sex trade workers, and complex pediatrics. Shalof tells her story with her usual engaging, conversational style, and with this book, she continues to entertain, surprise, and entertain readers. (Amazon.com)

Complications: A Surgeon's Notes on an Imperfect Science by Atul Gawande

In gripping accounts of true cases, surgeon Atul Gawande explores the power and the limits of medicine, offering an unflinching view from the scalpel's edge. Complications lays bare a science not in its idealized form but as it actually is—uncertain, perplexing and profoundly human. The book was a 2002 National Book Award Finalist for Nonfiction. (Amazon.com)

Do No Harm: Stories of Life, Death and Brain Surgery by Henry Marsh

What is it like to be a brain surgeon? How does it feel to hold someone's life in your hands, to cut into the stuff that creates thought, feeling and reason? How do you live with the consequences of performing a potentially life-saving operation when it all goes wrong? With astonishing compassion and candor, one of Britain's leading neurosurgeons, Henry Marsh, reveals his answers to these questions and more, offering insights into the countless human dramas that take place in a busy modern hospital. (Amazon.com)

Doctors: The Biography of Medicine by Sherwin B. Nuland

Pretending compelling studies of great medical innovators and pioneers, Doctors gives us the extraordinary story of the development of modern medicine — told through the lives of the physician-scientists whose deeds and determination paved the way. Ranging from the legendary Father of Medicine, Hippocrates, to Andreas Vesalius, whose Renaissance masterpiece on anatomy offered invaluable new insight into the human body, to Heim Tausig, founder of pediatric cardiology and co-inventor of the original "blue baby" operation, this book is filled with the spirit of ideas and the thrill of discovery. (Amazon.com)

Every Patient Tells a Story by Lisa Sanders

Physician Lisa Sanders chronicles the real-life drama of physicians solving these difficult medical mysteries that not only illustrate the art and science of diagnosis, but also save the patient's lives. Through dramatic stories of patients with baffling symptoms, Sanders portrays the absolute necessity and surprising difficulties of getting the patient's story, the challenges of the physical exam, the pitfalls of physician-to-physician communication, the vagaries of tests and the near calamity of diagnostic errors. (Amazon.com)

First Do No Harm by Lisa Belkin

http://explorehalthcareers.org/en/issues/reading_list
A Reading List for Students and Others Interested in Health... [expl...}

Lisa Belkin takes a powerful and poignant look at the inner workings of Hermann Hospital in Houston, Texas, telling the remarkable, real-life stories of the doctors, patients, families, and hospital administrators who must ask—and ultimately answer—the most profound and heartbreaking questions about life and death. (Amazon.com)

Gifted Hands: The Ben Carson Story by Ben Carson
Carson, a celebrated neurosurgeon, tells of his inspiring odyssey from his childhood in inner-city Detroit to his position as director of pediatric neurosurgery at Johns Hopkins Hospital at age 33. A role model for anyone who attempts the seemingly impossible, he takes you into the operating room where he has saved countless lives. Filled with fascinating case histories, this is the dramatic and intimate story of Carson's struggle to beat the odds. (Amazon.com)

Gifts of the Heart by Hassan Tetteh
In this novel, the main character, Kareem Afarian, is a young military physician and heart surgeon in the desert of Afghanistan. The novel tells the story of the trials and challenges he faces to overcome the impossible and provide instructions for life—a blueprint for saving one's life to the fullest. Based on the real-life experiences of physician Hassan Tetteh, the story captures the transformation of a civilian transplant surgeon on the battlefield who quickly becomes a seasoned combat surgeon. (Amazon.com)

God's Hotel: A Doctor, a Hospital and a Pilgrimage to the Heart of Medicine by Victoria Sweet
Laguna Honda, a San Francisco hospital, provides medical care to those who have fallen onto hard times and needed extended care. Physician Victoria Sweet came for a two-month post and stayed for 20 years. It gave her the opportunity to practice a kind of intensive medicine that has almost vanished. Gradually, the place transformed the way she understood her work. (Amazon.com)

Healing the Wounds: A Physician Looks at His Work by David Hilfiker
Drawing on his years of rural and urban experience, David Hilfiker lets us all know what it really feels like to be a doctor. What do you do when you make a serious medical mistake? Is it enjoyable to play God? What do you say to a patient who wants reassurance when the essence of diagnosis is uncertainty? What about money? What happens when you patient is taking forever, your waiting room is full, and you want to get home? He practiced medicine as a family practitioner in a small town in rural Minnesota and in Washington, D.C., where he was medical director of Community of Hope Health Services and St. Joseph's House, a shelter for homeless men with AIDS. (Amazon.com)

Heirs of General Practice offers a glimpse into the practices of a dozen young family practice doctors. These young men and women are seen in their examining rooms in various rural communities in Maine, but Maine is only the example. Their medical objectives, their successes, their professional obstacles they do and do not overcome are representative of any place family practitioners are working. (Amazon.com)

The House of Hope and Fear by Audrey Young
Audrey Young writes from the point of view of an idealistic young physician entering her first post-graduate job at the local county hospital. The House of Hope and Fear explores not only Young's personal journey, but also examines the health care system as a whole. All of the hospital politics are detailed in a gripping account of the hospital's inner workings, and the human face is expertly given to the health care crisis in America. (Amazon.com)

How Doctors Think by Jerome Groopman
A window into the mind of the physician, this book is an insightful examination of the all-important relationship between doctors and their patients. Groopman explores the forces and thought processes behind the decisions doctors make, pinpointing why doctors succeed and why they fail. Most important, Groopman shows how and when doctors can -- with our help -- avoid snap judgements, embrace uncertainty, communicate effectively, and deploy other skills that can profitably impact patients health. (Amazon.com)

I Wasn't Strong Like This When I Started Out: True Stories of Becoming a Nurse by Lee Gutkind (Editor)
This collection of true narratives reflects the dynamism and diversity of nurses, who provide the first vital line of patient care. Here, nurses remember their first "sticks," first births, and first deaths, and reflect on what gets them through long, demanding shifts, and keeps them in the profession. The stories reveal many voices from nurses at different stages of their careers. (Amazon.com)

A Licencet to Heal: Random Memories of an ER Doctor by Steven Bentley
Steven Bentley is a board-certified ER physician with a career spanning more than 30 years in various North Carolina emergency departments. In A License to Heal, he describes the real world of emergency medicine from the viewpoint of a practicing emergency physician. In the dynamic world of emergency medicine, there is a great deal of pain, blood and tragedy, but there is also hope, compassion and excitement - for both the patients and the staff. (Amazon.com)

Life After Medical School: Thirty-Two Doctors Describe How They Shaped Their Medical Careers by Leonard Laster
Leonard Laster writes first-person narratives based on interviews with doctors about how they chose their specialties and their daily work. The physicians include women and African Americans and run the gamut from psychiatrists to surgeons and pediatricians. The Nerdy Nurse's Guide to Technology by Britteny Wilson
Britteny Wilson, BSN, RN, wrote this guide to give nurses the technology tools they need to improve their practices, further their careers and solidify themselves as easily digestible sources of information. This reference guide supplies nurses with the practical application tools they need to embrace technology and be successful. She also includes some "pretty cool tips and tricks for more advanced technology users," including how to:
- Use social media to advance your nursing career
- Check all your email accounts from your Gmail account
- Use a tablet to improve nursing care

The Nurses: A Year of Secrets, Drama, and Miracles with the Heroes of the Hospital
Nursing is more than a career; it is a calling, and one of the most important, fascinating, and professional professions in the world. As the frontliners treating trauma, illness, and aggression from surprising sources, nurses are remarkable. Yet contemporary literature largely neglects them. The New York Times bestselling author and award-winning journalist Alexandra Robbins peers behind the staff-only door to write a lively, fast-paced story and a riveting work of investigative journalism. Robbins followed real-life nurses in four hospitals and interviewed hundreds of others in a captivating book filled with joy and violence, miracles and heartbreak, dark humor and narrow victories, gripping drama and unsung heroism. (Amazon.com)

Out of My Life and Thought: An Autobiography by Albert Schweitzer
Out of My Life and Thought is the autobiography of Albert Schweitzer, the theologian, musician, scientist and medical missionary who won the Nobel Peace Prize in 1952 and donated his prize to build a leper colony. Schweitzer's autobiography is a masterful and moving blend of confession, narrative, adventure, and philosophy. (Amazon.com)

The Real Life of a Pediatrician by Perri Klass, Ed.
This anthology features first-person narratives from students and doctors who have chosen to specialize in pediatrics and offers a look at what practice is like.

Resident On Call: A Doctor's Reflections on His First Years at Mass General by Scott Rivkees
One of the nation's leading pediatric researchers recounts his first years as a newly minted, struggling, and insecure doctor at Massachusetts General Hospital in Boston. A graduate of a state university medical school, Scott Rivkees was competing with elite students from some of the most prestigious schools in the country. Neurotically unsure of the skills he worked long, lonely hours with patients ranging from indigent street people to celebrity guests drawn to the reputation and care offered by Mass General. Along the way he learned what medical school textbooks don't teach: how to deal with immense pressure, exhaustion, unruly patients, mysterious conditions, the joy of saving a life, and the wrenching...
Rule Number Two by Heidi Kraft

A clinical psychologist in the U.S. Navy who was deployed to Iraq, Heidi Kraft's job was to uncover the wounds of war that a surgeon would never see. One of the toughest lessons of her deployment was perfectly articulated by the TV show M*A*S*H: "There are two rules of war. Rule number one is that young men die. Rule number two is that doctors can't change rule number one." Some Marines, Kraft realized, and even some of their doctors, would be damaged by war in ways she could not repair. And sometimes, people were repaired in ways she never expected. Rule Number Two is a powerful firsthand account of providing comfort amidst the chaos of war, and of what it takes to endure. (Amazon.com)

What Patients Taught Me: A Medical Student's Journey, by Audrey Young

Do sleek high-tech hospitals teach more about medicine and less about humanity? Do doctors ever lose their tolerance for suffering? With sensitive observation and graceful prose, this book explores some of the difficult and deeply personal questions. 23-year-old physician Audrey Young confronts with her very first dying patient, and continues to struggle with as she strives to become a good physician. In her travels, she attends to terminal illness, AIDS, tuberculosis, and premature birth in small rural communities throughout the world. (Amazon.com)