

Physician Encyclopedia Article

Physician

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Physician

The term "physician" is often used as a more accurate version of "doctor," since the latter can mean anyone who has completed a doctorate in any discipline. A physician, or doctor of medicine (MD), is a person who has graduated from an accredited medical school and passed the state licensing examinations required to become a professional provider of medical care, including surgery.

There are different categories of physician. A *resident* physician has completed an internship (now called PG1, post-graduate 1) and obtained a license to practice medicine, but works full- or part-time at a hospital to learn more about his or her chosen specialty. A *family* or *primary care* physician is a specialized medical professional who provides ongoing care for all ages and both sexes, planning and carrying out a thorough health care program for all members of a family over time; this is the physician people see before going on to a specialist and who coordinates patients' care if multiple health care professionals are involved. An *attending* physician visits a certain hospital at specified times to supervise his or her patients' treatment and give further instructions to paramedics. An *emergency* physician is an expert in the particular procedures and methods used in the emergency room.