

Behavioral-Based Interview Questions for Physicians

Sample interview questions categorized by core physician attributes

Patient-centered, customer-focused care

- Who's been your favorite patient lately? Why?
- How would your patients describe you?
- How do you feel about using alternative methods (e.g., email, telemedicine) to increase access and meet patient needs?
- Tell me a story about the last time you had a major conflict with a patient. How did you resolve it?
- Tell me about the last time you went "over the top" for a patient.
- What type of complaints and compliments do you typically generate?
- What personal attributes play a key role in your patient relationship-building process?
- Building rapport is sometimes difficult. Give me an example of a time when you were able to build rapport with a patient of their family when their lack of cooperation or understanding presented barriers to ensuring quality care.
- What is your position on patient/patient family noncompliance?

Clinical quality

- What are your really strong clinical areas? Why do you say that?
- What areas of clinical practice are the most challenging to you?
- How would you feel about the results of your clinical quality data being available to your peers?
- How do you feel about sharing data and best practices?
- How do you feel about the emergence of publicly reported measures?
- In what areas was your training particularly strong? In what areas was it weak?
- Can you tell me a story about a recent clinical triumph?
- What was your latest clinical disaster?
- What are your favorite ways of keeping up your clinical skills?
- What things don't you like about your clinical specialty?
- Have you had experience using an electronic health record? Which one(s)?
- How familiar are you with clinical guidelines and protocols? How do you feel about their use? How do you perceive their role in practice?

Collaboration and communication

- What do you think your colleagues like best about you? What don't they like about you?
- Tell me about your strengths.
- Tell me about your weaknesses.
- What do nurses you work with say about you? How do you know?
- When was the last time you had a conflict with a nurse? How did you resolve it?
- What is the most recent difficult conversation or conflict you've had with a colleague?
- Can you tell me a story about a conflict you've had with your referring (or consulting) colleagues?
- What was your last performance review like?
- A group practice includes physicians with different styles. Describe your comfort level with patient referrals to your potential colleagues. How would you handle a difference of opinion with one of your colleagues?
- Tell me about a time when you placed another physician's needs over those of your own. How did you feel about that?
- Give me an example of a time when you encountered someone who was difficult to work with. Why was that person difficult? What did you do about it? What were the results?
- Tell me about a situation in which something was not done as well as you would have liked by someone else. How did you handle it, and what was the outcome?
- What do you feel the nurse practitioner role is in health care today?
- How would you define your communication style?
- What staffing models have you been associated with in terms of support staff, primary care, and specialty physicians? Which model(s) are you most comfortable with? Which are most effective?

Leadership

- Are you or have you been involved in any committees?
- What are the committee meetings like at your current place of practice?
- What leadership opportunities are you interested in participating in, if any?
- Tell me about the most important contributions you feel you've made to your current organization. What drove you to do those things?
- Tell me a bit about yourself as a leader.

Creating a positive work environment

- What is a pet peeve of yours in the workplace?
- What about your job excites you the most?
- Tell me how you handle stress. What are your stress relievers?
- In a hectic work environment, how do you prioritize? What do you like best about this type of atmosphere? Least?
- How would you go about establishing a relationship with your fellow physicians? With support staff? With the leadership team?

Flexibility

- It's 10 minutes to 5:00, and you get a call from a mother about her child's 103° fever. It will take her 20 minutes to get to the office, but the office is about to close. What do you do?
- How do you feel about change? Can you give me an example of a process or practice that you have recently changed?
- Tell me about a time when you found yourself in an unsettled or rapidly changing environment. How did you react?
- Some people prefer tasks that are well laid out. Others prefer tasks where the work changes frequently. Which is your preference?

Recognition and reward

- How have you recognized staff for a job well done in your clinic or work setting?
- Have you ever provided formal recognition, feedback, and/or praise to staff? To bosses/leaders and/or mentors? If so, how?
- How have you celebrated group accomplishments in your work environment?

Fiscally responsible

- How do you usually approach the workup of a new patient with _____ ?
(Include a diagnosis commonly treated by your physicians.)
- What do you think about the relationship between cost and quality?
- What is your philosophy about controlling health care costs?
- What is your current utilization profile like? Why?
- What's been your experience with clinical guidelines and pathways?
- Tell me a story about how you've helped reduce resource utilization while improving health outcomes for your patients.
- How do you decide whether or not to introduce a new diagnostic technique to your practice?
- What's a typical afternoon like in your clinic?
- How do you maximize your productivity??
- What kind of staff support is most helpful to your productivity? How do you work with them?
- What was your patient volume (billings/panel/RVUs) last year? What did you do to maximize it?

Other

- What do you want to be doing in 10 years?
- What's appealing about this practice opportunity?
- Tell me about the things you like to do when you're not practicing medicine.
- If you join our practice, are there areas of interest you want us to concentrate on during orientation?
- What interests you about this community? Why would you like to practice medicine in this community?
- What do you see as your ideal position?
- What would you need from this organization to be successful?
- What would you do in this situation: You have been called to the ER for a pediatric trauma case. A pediatric specialist is not immediately available, and you have to stabilize the patient. How would you feel in this situation? What would you do?
- What are your areas of growth and development (learning plans) over the next five years?



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