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Protocol Title: Gratitude and the Good Physician: Qualitative Interviews

Appendix C: Outline of Interviews

Medical Life Story Interview – goal: 60 min interview

Introduction (5 min, including consent)

This is an interview about the *story of your growth as a physician and your experiences in medical school*. I will ask you to focus on a few key things in your medical school experience – a few key scenes, characters, and ideas—that have impacted you. I'll also ask you to imagine how your medical career will develop in the future. There are no right or wrong answers to my questions. I will guide you through the interview so that we finish it all in about an hour. We covered this before but are required to tell you again here. The interview is for research purposes only, and everything you say is voluntary, anonymous, and confidential. If you want to stop at any point, just say so. Do you have any questions?

1. Life Story (5 minutes)

Why did you decide to practice medicine?

Were there any particular formative times?

What led you to want/think this?

2. Key Moments (20 minutes)

I would now like to hear about key points in your medical career, possibly including classmates, other healthcare providers, patients, or others. Can you think of any key moments in your preclinical and premed training?

In asking about these key events, make sure to ask about both high points and low points. Also ask about turning points.

Follow up probes for each key moment/experience (These are just examples. The key is to find out what the experience was like, why the student believes it was important, what they learned about themselves, etc):

- Why do you think this was significant?
- Did you learn anything about yourself?
- Did you do anything differently after that?
- Did that change the way you think about being a doctor?

Can you now think of key moments during your clinical training?

3. Positive role model (5 min). Tell me about a physician who stands out as a *positive* role model for you?

Follow up probes:

- Was this someone you worked with? In what capacity?
- What stands out about him/her? (what qualities/characteristics?)
- What was it like for you personally to work with him/her?
- How did it make you feel?
- Did you learn from him/her?
- Do you think working with him/her impacted how you think about your future work as a physician?

4. Negative role model (5 min). How about on the opposite end of the spectrum, can you think of a physician who stood out in a negative way for you?

Follow up probes:

- Was this someone you worked with? In what capacity?
- What stands out about him/her? (what qualities/characteristics?)
- What was it like for you personally to work with him/her?
- How did it make you feel?
- Did you learn anything from him/her?
- Do you think working with him/her impacted how you think about your future work as a physician?

5. Challenges (5-10min). What are the biggest personal, academic, and professional challenges you have faced so far in your medical training?

Follow-up probes:

- How did you cope? Or, how did you deal with that challenge?
- [If it has not yet been mentioned], Do you consider yourself religious or spiritual?
- If so, did you look to the religious or spiritual aspects of your life to overcome these challenges? (Faith and religious community)
- Were any particular patient interactions difficult? What did you learn?

6. Burnout (5 min). Thinking back on your clinical experiences, have you at any point in your medical training felt burned out? Tell me about that...

If the answer is no: What enabled you from getting burned out?

Follow-up probes:

- What were you doing at the time?
- What do you think led to being burned out?
- How did you cope with that?
- How do you think it affected you?
- How are you now compared to then?
- Did your religion or spirituality play a role in helping you recover from burnout?

- [If religious], how is going to religious services affecting your life?
- Did this make you feel disillusioned or cynical?
- Do you think this will impact your future career?

7. Future Script (5-10 min)

Tell me what you plan to be and do in your medical career?

Follow up probes:

- Have you chosen a specialty for residency? How did you choose?
- What context (academic vs. community, outpatient vs inpatient, ...)
- Patient population? (Why? Why is that important to you?)
- Did your medical school support your career goals? Hinder your career goals?
- [If appropriate], your intention to work with the underserved?
- How is paying off your loans factoring into your specialty choice? If this pressure was not present, do you think you would pursue a different direction?

8. Most Important Characteristics (5 min)

- What is **most** important to you in your future practice?
- If you were a future attending and had to emphasize only one important characteristic about what it means to be a good physician, what do you think would be that most important characteristic?

9. Legacy (2 min). When you look back over your medical career 30 or 40 years from now, how do you want your colleagues and patients to remember you?

10. Religion (5 min). You previously mentioned your religious beliefs. Can you talk a little more how they impacted your clinical training? How are your motivations connected to your faith?

11. Final Reflections (5 min)

Thank you for your time. We have finished the core part of the interview. I have just one more question for you. I'm wondering if you might reflect for one last moment about what this interview today has been like for you.

- What were your thoughts and feelings during the interview?
- Do you think this interview has affected you?
- Do you have any other comments about the interview process?
- Lastly, is there anything we haven't covered that you think is important to share with us?