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Congratulations! Celebrate the rewards of four years of hard work during graduation week. I am sure you'll smile broadly when you get your diploma, and when those lieutenant bars are placed on your shoulders. I am proud of you!

You'll soon be off to medical school. What a brilliant choice you have made. Make sure you thoroughly enjoy any vacation you have this summer. This will be the biggest chunk of “down time” you'll have for years.

My career path was less direct than yours. After graduation, I served as an astronautical engineer in Northern California. I changed careers and entered Medical School. It was a great choice, and my career as an orthopedic surgeon was a perfect fit. My career has taken me around the world. I served with great people, in great assignments. All this is waiting for you.

This might be a good time to offer advice. Take care of your patients. Tell them they are your boss. Tell them you will do anything possible to protect them and their family from illness. Take care of your staff - nurses, techs, doctors. Tell them the same thing you tell your patients. Come to work everyday with a cheerful smile and a good attitude. You no longer have the option of being in a sour mood. It's your responsibility to set the tone for your clinic (or operating room).

A small caution - medicine will command all of your time, if you let it. Resist. Strive to maintain a balance in your life - exercise, read liberally, foster a solid family and social life. Doctors, in my experience, are not very good at this. I have no doubt you will excel.

Congratulations again! I and my USAFA '69 classmates share your joy. I wish you the very best in your career as an Air Force doctor!