Teacher Resource 2.1

Timeline: Eras in the History of Medicine

Print out the following sheets of paper. Each sheet contains the title for an era in history. Post the sheets on the wall in chronological order, which is the order that they appear in this resource.

Timeline: Practices and Events in the History of Medicine

The purpose of this activity is to introduce students to the idea that medicine has been an important part of history in every era since prehistoric times.

Before class begins, print Teacher Resource 2.1, Timeline: Eras in the History of Medicine, and post the timeline on the wall. The sheets of the timeline should be posted in chronological order, which is the order that the sheets appear in the resource. In addition, print Teacher Resource 2.2, Timeline Elements: Practices and Events in Health Care History, and cut it into strips along the cutting lines. Each strip in this resource contains events in medical history to be placed on the timeline.

To introduce this activity, explain that throughout history humans have been diagnosing and treating the sick, even before a basic understanding of the human body existed. Point out to students the different eras of human history in the timeline posted on the wall, and explain that in this activity they will explore some of the key practices and events in medicine and health care that happened during each era.

Next, divide students into pairs. Distribute to each pair two timeline elements (one strip) from Teacher Resource 2.2. Instruct students to copy each element onto separate sticky notes.

Ask students to discuss with their partner in which era on the timeline they think that each of their practices and events belong. Encourage students to use what they already know about history and medicine to make educated guesses. Then have students place the sticky notes on the timeline.

Inform students that the correct answers will be revealed in the next activity. Point out that looking at how medical practices have evolved over time will help them understand and appreciate the progress that has led to the health care practices we enjoy today.

Prehistoric Times: 4000 BCE–3000 BCE

Ancient Egypt: 3000 BCE–300 BCE

Ancient China: 1500 BCE–200 CE

India: 1500 BCE–circa 1100 CE

Ancient Greece: 1200 BCE–200 BCE

Ancient Rome: 750 BCE–400 CE

The Dark Ages 400–800 CE

The Middle Ages 800–1400

The Renaissance: 1350–1450

16th, 17th, and 18th Centuries: 1500–1799

19th Century: 1800–1899

20th Century: 1900–1999

21st Century: 2000–present