Noam Berkovitz - Application packet (AMCAS 2026 and Albert Einstein College of Medicine secondary)

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Applying to: Albert Einstein College of Medicine MD program, 2026-27

Fictional applicant written for this sample. The person, his employers, his supervisors and the organisations he volunteers with are invented.

Academics

- **Binghamton University (SUNY)** - BS Integrative Neuroscience, minor in Spanish, May 2022. GPA 3.58 (science 3.47). Dean's List four of eight semesters.
- **Lowest grade:** C in Organic Chemistry II (spring 2020). A- in Biochemistry the following fall.
- **MCAT:** August 2023, 501 (125/126/125/125). May 2025, 511 (127/128/128/128).
- **Housing:** Health Professions Living-Learning Community, Dickinson Community (first and second year); Resident Assistant on the same floor (2020-2022).
- **Languages:** English (native), Hebrew (conversational; my father's first language), Spanish (working - I consent participants in it, slowly).

Honors

- Harpur College Undergraduate Research Award, $1,000, 2021 (actigraphy watches for my thesis study).
- Mosholu Family Health Center Staff Recognition Award, 2024 (participant retention).

AMCAS personal comments essay

The first time a participant fired me, I deserved it. Mr. Ortiz, 64, had enrolled in our health center's text-message study for type 2 diabetes, and I had spent our second visit explaining, in my careful Spanish, why his A1c of 9.8 mattered. He listened, then said in English, 'You talk like the pamphlet.' He skipped the next two visits.

I had come to the Bronx after college expecting research to be about data. At Mosholu Family Health Center it turned out to be about whether a man with three jobs believes you are worth forty minutes. I called Mr. Ortiz on a Saturday, which was the only day he picked up, and asked what the texts were actually like to receive. He told me: they arrived at 7 a.m., when he was already on a delivery truck, and they told him to 'choose a healthy breakfast' he had eaten at 5. I brought that to our PI. We moved reminder times to participant choice for everyone enrolled after March 2023. Mr. Ortiz finished the study. His A1c was 8.1. That is not a triumph, but it is better than a man who stopped coming.

I grew up twenty minutes north, in Yonkers. My father, who came from Haifa at 24, repairs heating and air-conditioning systems; my mother is a secretary at an elementary school. When I was fifteen my father had a kidney stone and waited eleven hours in an emergency department, and the only person who explained anything was a physician assistant who drew him a diagram on the back of a discharge sheet. He kept it in his toolbox for years. I think about that diagram more than anything I learned in neuroscience.

College was uneven. I loved my sleep research lab and my RA job, and I got a C in Organic Chemistry II the spring my father lost his job and I was home, sharing a laptop with my sister. My first MCAT, 501, was worse. I took it while working full time without a real plan. The second time I studied for five months, mornings before work, and scored 511. I learned that discipline without honesty about my weak spots does not work.

Scribing in an emergency department showed me the pace of medicine; four years in the Bronx showed me its limits. Our best protocol could not fix a participant's insulin running out because his pharmacy closed. I want to be the physician who can manage the diabetes and also ask what time the texts should come.

Work and activities

1. **Clinical research assistant**, Mosholu Family Health Center, Bronx (Jul 2022 - present, ~6,800 hours). *Most meaningful.* Recruit, consent (English/Spanish) and follow participants in a randomized trial of text-message support for type 2 diabetes (PI: Dr. Lena Marchetti). Enrolled 212 of 240 target; 86% six-month retention. Draw point-of-care A1c, manage REDCap database.
2. **Volunteer, Sedgwick Avenue Community Pantry**, Bronx (Sep 2022 - present, ~380 hours). *Most meaningful.* Saturday distribution for ~150 households; since 2024 I run intake and the SNAP-application help table.
3. **Undergraduate researcher, Sleep and Stress Lab** (Dr. Paula Engström), Binghamton University (Jan 2020 - May 2022, ~640 hours). *Most meaningful.* Honors thesis: sleep timing and test anxiety in 58 first-year students using wrist actigraphy. In-person collection stopped in March 2020; I rebuilt the study around mailed watches in fall 2020.
4. **Resident Assistant**, Dickinson Community, Binghamton (Aug 2020 - May 2022, ~1,500 hours). 42 residents on a pre-health floor during COVID quarantine rules; ran a weekly 'study hall and soup' night.
5. **Emergency department scribe**, ScribeBridge at Northgate Community Hospital, Yonkers (summers 2020-2021; per diem weekends 2022-2024; ~1,150 hours).
6. **Physician shadowing** (2021 - 2024, 80 hours). Family medicine (40), emergency medicine outside scribing (24), pediatrics (16).
7. **Bicycle mechanic**, Spoke & Chain Cycles, Yonkers (summers 2017 - 2019, ~900 hours).
8. **Hobbies:** Sunday pickup soccer in Van Cortlandt Park, rebuilding old bikes to give away through the pantry (nine so far), baking challah with my father on Fridays.

Most meaningful: Sedgwick Avenue Community Pantry

I started by stacking cans. I stayed because of the intake line, where people tell you the truth about their month. In 2024 I noticed that about a third of families eligible for SNAP weren't enrolled, mostly because the online form timed out on phones. I started a table with two donated laptops; we have helped with 61 applications.

Einstein secondary essays

Einstein is located in the Bronx and is committed to serving its community. Describe experiences that have prepared you to care for a diverse, underserved population.

The Bronx has about 1.4 million people; more than half are Latino and about a third Black, and it is consistently ranked last among New York's 62 counties in health outcomes. Those numbers became people for me. Most of our study participants were Dominican or Puerto Rican, many over 55, many working jobs with no fixed lunch. I learned to schedule visits around shift changes, to hold consent forms in two languages and to sit through a long story before asking a short question. At the pantry I learned how close a household is to choosing between food and insulin. At Einstein I want to work at ECHO, the student-run free clinic, and keep my Saturdays at the pantry, where I hope to recruit classmates for the SNAP table.

Describe an ethical challenge you faced.

In 2023 I noticed that one of our part-time staff was completing six-month follow-up surveys by phone in under four minutes, when they took me twenty. When I checked the call logs, several calls had lasted under a minute. He was a friend and was supporting his mother. I asked him first; he said participants 'always answer the same.' I told him I had to tell Dr. Marchetti, and I did. We re-contacted 19 participants and excluded three surveys we could not verify. He was moved to a non-research role. I still think it was right, and I still feel bad about how it went.

Why Einstein?

I have worked four years ten minutes from your campus. Einstein's patients are the people I already know. I want the Scholarly Paper requirement to let me keep doing community research with Montefiore's primary care sites, and I want training where the Bronx is not a rotation but the place.

If you are not currently a student, describe your activities since graduation.

Full-time research at Mosholu (40 hours/week), the pantry on Saturdays, and MCAT preparation in 2024-25. A team note: when our two enrollment sites disagreed about who owned follow-up calls in 2023, retention dropped to 71%. I proposed one shared call list with named owners; we were back above 85% in four months.