Minh Huynh - Application packet (TMDSAS 2026 and McGovern Medical School secondary)

Houston, Texas (grew up in Alief) · minh.huynh.test@example.com

Applying to: McGovern Medical School at UTHealth Houston MD program, 2026-27

Fictional applicant written for this sample. The person, her employers and her organizations are invented.

Academics

- University of Houston, BS Biology, minor in Psychology, May 2022. GPA 3.58 (science 3.46). Dean's List four semesters.
- Spring 2020: withdrew (W) from Organic Chemistry II; C in Genetics; semester GPA 2.71. Retook Organic Chemistry II in fall 2020 (B+).
- MCAT: June 2024, 501 (125/126/125/125). March 2026, 510 (127/128/128/127).
- Reapplicant: applied through TMDSAS in the 2024 cycle; no interviews.
- Languages: English (native), Vietnamese (fluent spoken; reads medication labels, writes slowly).

Employment

1. **Clinical research assistant, Gulf Coast Kidney Associates**, Houston (Aug 2023 - present, 40 hrs/week, about 5,200 hours). Consent and follow participants in an observational study of home blood pressure monitoring in stage 3-4 chronic kidney disease. Of 140 participants, I enrolled 61, including 23 in Vietnamese. REDCap data entry, monthly follow-up calls, and the missed-visit list. Co-author, poster at the 2025 Houston Area Kidney Research Day.
2. **Medical scribe, MedNote Scribes, placed at Bellaire Family & Urgent Care** (Jun 2022 - Jul 2023, about 1,650 hours). Charted for three family physicians, 25-35 patients per shift. The clinic switched to an AI ambient-documentation tool in July 2023 and the scribe positions ended. I trained one physician on the new tool during my last two weeks.
3. **Front desk and nail technician, Lotus Nails (family salon)**, Sugar Land (2015 - 2022, about 20 hrs/week; full time spring-summer 2020).

Research

Undergraduate researcher, Dr. Steven Marchetti's zebrafish regeneration lab, University of Houston (Jan 2020 - May 2022, about 600 hours). My knockdown of a candidate fin-regeneration gene never produced a consistent phenotype across three rounds of injections. Poster at UH Undergraduate Research Day 2022 on what we tried and why it may have failed.

Healthcare activities

- **Volunteer, Alief Saturday Community Clinic** (Sep 2019 - present, about 380 hours). Intake, blood pressure checks, and Vietnamese interpretation for a free clinic run out of a church hall.
- **Shadowing** (2021 - 2025, 82 hours): nephrology (40, including the dialysis unit), family medicine (30), inpatient hospice (12).

Community service and leadership

- **Volunteer teacher, Song Quê Saturday School**, Houston (2018 - present, about 300 hours). Teach Vietnamese reading to a class of 12 second-graders.
- **Supplemental Instruction leader, General Chemistry I**, UH (Aug 2021 - May 2022, 280 hours). Three sessions a week for about 40 students.

Extracurricular

Fishing the Galveston jetties with my father most Sunday mornings; recreational coed volleyball league (setter, badly); cooking bánh xèo and trying to get my mother's recipe right; karaoke at family parties.

Recognition

- UH Dean's List (4 semesters)
- Gulf Coast Kidney Associates staff award for participant retention, 2025

Top three most meaningful experiences

1. Alief Saturday Community Clinic
2. Clinical research assistant, Gulf Coast Kidney Associates
3. Song Quê Saturday School

Personal statement

The first time I interpreted a diagnosis wrong, the patient disappeared for a month. Mr. Lâm, a 68-year-old retired shrimper from Seabrook, came to our Saturday clinic with a blood pressure of 178/96. The volunteer physician told him his kidneys were getting weak, and I translated it the way any textbook would: thận yếu. Mr. Lâm went quiet. In Vietnamese, "weak kidneys" is also what older men say about losing their vitality. He thought he had been told something shameful in front of his wife.

When he came back, it was because his wife made him. I apologized, and we started again with a drawing of a filter and the words "the filter is getting clogged." He told us he took his pills only when he felt dizzy, because he believed Western medicine damaged the kidneys. That belief was the real problem, and nobody had asked about it.

I have been asking ever since. At Gulf Coast Kidney Associates I call 40 to 50 study participants a month. The ones who drop out rarely say they disagree with their doctor. They say the cuff is confusing, the bus takes ninety minutes, or a daughter who used to translate moved to Dallas. I keep a list of those reasons, and our team changed two study procedures because of it.

I have also seen what I cannot do. Watching Dr. Patel in the dialysis unit, I saw a physician hold a patient's lab trends, her fear of needles and her son's work schedule at the same time, and then make a recommendation and own it. Nurses taught me more about dialysis than anyone, and the social worker found Mrs. Đỗ a ride. But I want to be the person responsible for the diagnosis and the decision, and accountable when it is wrong.

I did not get here quickly. I withdrew from organic chemistry in 2020, applied once without an interview, and took the MCAT twice. Those years gave me 5,000 hours with kidney patients and a clearer reason than I had at twenty-one. I want to practice in Houston, in the neighborhoods where people like Mr. Lâm go months without a physician who can explain things in a language that does not shame them.

Personal characteristics essay (optional)

My parents came from Biên Hòa in 1994. My mother has done nails for 30 years; my father welded at a Pasadena shipyard until his back gave out in 2019. In March 2020 our salon closed for two months, and I worked full time helping my mother apply for a small-business loan, answer the phone for rescheduling, and reopen with new rules. I was also taking organic chemistry and genetics. I withdrew from organic chemistry in April after failing the second exam, and finished genetics with a C. I retook organic chemistry that fall and earned a B+. My first MCAT, in 2024, I took while working full time and studying only on weekends; I scored 501 and did not change my plan when practice tests told me to. For the second, I cut back on Saturday clinic for four months, took a practice exam every two weeks, and asked a coworker who had just started medical school to quiz me on biochemistry.

McGovern secondary

Why McGovern?

I grew up twenty minutes from the Texas Medical Center and have sent study participants to Harris Health clinics for three years. I want to train where patients look like the people I already serve: uninsured, Spanish- or Vietnamese-speaking, managing kidney disease and diabetes on a bus schedule. McGovern's training at LBJ Hospital and its student-run clinics would let me keep doing Saturday clinic work as a student, with better tools. I plan to practice in Houston, and I want classmates and mentors who will practice here too.

Describe your activities between now and matriculation.

I will continue full time at Gulf Coast Kidney Associates through June 2027, finishing two-year follow-up for our study and helping draft a manuscript. I will keep volunteering at the Alief clinic twice a month and teaching Saturday school.

Is there anything else you would like the committee to know?

When the urgent care replaced my scribe job with an AI tool, I was angry for about a week. Then I noticed that the notes were faster but sometimes recorded Vietnamese-speaking patients' words wrong. I want to help decide how these tools are used, not just be replaced by them.