

How have your experiences prepared you to be a physician?

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From an early age, I was impacted by the empathetic physicians who were a support to my family and me through the difficult period after the birth of my sister, who was born with [REDACTED]. My sister's kind, knowledgeable physicians gave us the confidence to know that she would be fine. Since then, knowing the true difference this makes, I have aspired to be a support to others, specifically via medicine. Being accepted to the Medical Sciences Academy (MSA) at [REDACTED] High School was the first major step in my pursuit of becoming a physician. My professors there infused the drive to make a difference, whether it be in one's community or in the broader society. At MSA, not only was I able to observe physicians during practice, but I also gained more insight into the influence and corresponding responsibility that physicians have.

My eagerness to learn while giving back gained more traction when volunteering at [REDACTED] Medical Center, where I obtained more exposure to a medical center environment and found it fulfilling assisting throughout the patient discharge process. During college, volunteering at [REDACTED] Medical Center's Emergency Department exposed me to a fast-paced environment where remaining calm under pressure and thinking "on your feet" are integral to patients obtaining the care they need. Even in emergency settings, the physicians I assisted there directed their efforts not only to restoration of life, but also to ensuring comfort and trust.

I was also fortunate to have the opportunity to shadow Dr. [REDACTED] and Dr. [REDACTED] both of whom are attending physicians of the Cardiovascular Medicine Fellowship GME Faculty at the [REDACTED] Center of Excellence at [REDACTED] Health Medical Center. In Dr. [REDACTED]'s Cardiology clinic, I directly assisted patients dealing with health conditions such as diabetes, hypertension and other heart-related conditions, and I learned from Dr. [REDACTED] to encourage patients to take initiative for their own health. With Dr. [REDACTED], I was able to observe how important cultural relativism is in caring for one's patients. Furthermore, his ability to speak Spanish and French as needed with his patients was a major asset, and taught me that any skill I possess can and should be sharpened to aid in the medical care of others. These experiences shaped my further goal to study epidemiology and specific health trends seen in diverse groups of patients, to obtain the tools to provide even more effective healthcare.

Describe a time or situation where you have been unsuccessful or failed.

What did you learn from this experience and how have you applied this learning to your work and/or life?

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Throughout college, I devoted many hours of study to the rigorous courses I took as a Biology major. I have had to juggle my studies with my need to maintain a steady income. My parents worked hard their entire lives, but they do not have the means to support my extracurricular activities, interests and endeavors. Upon getting hired at [REDACTED] Crab and Steakhouse, as a server, I had to work five to six nights a week in order to maintain my employment there. Being registered for a full semester of courses at the same time, it was challenging to maintain a balanced work schedule, amidst finding time to study for those classes. I reached the end of my semester unable to make a satisfactory grade in Genetics, because I had not allotted enough study time early in the semester. My time management and adjustment period were not developed enough to handle the workload at the time, but after self-reflection and obtaining resourceful advice, I was able to create a balance at work and school. I managed to do so by instituting a beneficial way to organize my monthly objectives and goals. Every night before I went to bed, I listed every task I would need to accomplish the next day to stay on track in achieving my goals. I prepared all of my meals for the week each Sunday, and organized my schedule down to the minute, to ensure I would be able to designate time not just for work, study and classes, but also for all of the other parts of a well-rounded and healthy life. For instance, I planned and scheduled routine household maintenance, and family and extracurricular activities around my imperative responsibilities like studying and employment.

My skills in time management and monthly planning have never been more efficient. I learned a great deal about the importance of punctuality, responsibility and adaptability to new, sometimes stressful situations. This manifested into organization and preparation becoming my second nature, because that is what I had to ingrain in myself to eventually, successfully handle the myriad responsibilities that school and work comprise.

What would you like to contribute and be remembered for in medicine?

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During my time shadowing Dr. [REDACTED], I admired the trusting physician-patient relationships he has developed over his career as a Cardiologist. A vast number of his patients place him in such high regard for the healthcare they have received over the years. The impact he has had on his patients, as a physician, has influenced and is exemplary of what I aim to contribute to my patients. Because they trust that he is highly competent and has their best interests at heart, they share with Dr. [REDACTED] many details about their lives, like their diet and habits. Because he has built up this trust, and he pays attention, documents and reviews his observations, he has discovered ways to improve his patients' lives by recommending simple changes in lifestyle, diet and medication. He also does this by examining health trends. Dr. [REDACTED] proactively noticed when many patients came in for the same complaint or condition, and when he found a treatment that improved their health, he would apply it to other patients with the same or similar issue. He has much success with this strategy.

By learning from Dr. [REDACTED], and after years of experience in research, I have come to understand that health trends are what comprise the foundation for medical discovery. Knowing how important observation is, I have made a conscious effort to hone this skill for many years; I intend to employ observation, along with, of course, effective and compassionate patient care, to discover health trends and effect progress in how we care for and improve the lives of our patients. The mark I would like to leave from a career in medicine is one that involves continuity of care for patients for whom I aspire to have had a life-altering impact on their well-being and health. The recognition is not what matters to me, but rather, how strong the trust and comfort levels are between my patients and I, and, of course, how their health has improved. Additionally, my experience with diverse patient populations has motivated me to give back by volunteering for annual mission trips to various countries, like my mission trip to [REDACTED] with the [REDACTED] World Mission organization. Witnessing their contribution to the underserved, disadvantaged [REDACTED] citizens was the impetus for my desire to be involved in such meaningful ventures that improve the lives of people all around the world.