

Personal Statement

'Welcome to Utah!' the sign reads. "Hey, can we stop to look at the stone arches and formations?", my brother asked. "No, we can't afford to waste any time," I replied. Determined to reach Milwaukee the next day so I can get settled in before medical school starts, I stepped on the gas.

My younger brother was nice enough to accompany me on my move from California to Wisconsin. This was also going to be an awesome road trip just for the two of us, except I was more concerned about getting there than having fun. My brother got quiet as we left Utah without any sightseeing. I turned on the radio and some classical music piece came on and reminded me of my days playing with the UCLA Symphony Orchestra. I started taking violin lessons when I was little and would practice at least an hour a day. I would listen to CDs and emulate the masters until I had the intonation and dynamics just right. Not only did I develop attention to detail, I also learned discipline and how to listen to others. Now as I pursue the field of Internal Medicine, I want to apply these principles and become a master clinician who takes a clear history, performs a thorough exam, and uses evidence-based medicine to properly diagnose and treat my patients. This is my first and foremost goal.

As the gorgeous Colorado mountains and winding river burst into view, both of us uttered a sigh of amazement. The scenic route took us higher and higher and out of the blue my brother asked me why many of the Olympic athletes choose to train at a high altitude. Remembering molecular biology from various undergraduate courses, I started by explaining the molecular structure of the hemoglobin and as I was getting excited to go on with the oxygen-dissociation curve, my brother yawned and said, "That's fine. Forget I asked." Though a little disappointed, I was still glad I had the chance to teach him something. I have always loved sharing my knowledge with others, from explaining simple algebra to 9th graders as a substitute teacher to the importance of smoking cessation to patients in clinics. I believe patient education is a key ingredient in patient care. It empowers them and gives them more control over their own illnesses. As an Internist, I will strive to empower and equip my patients with knowledge through each visit with the hopes that together we will make tomorrow a better day.

Beyond patient encounter in the hospital, I also want to care for those in the surrounding community by being involved in free clinics, perhaps even running one with other physicians. Through my participation in free clinics for the uninsured, I was able to at least provide some healthcare screening, if not intervention, in their disease processes. Their smiles and a simple "thanks" would make my day. As an Internist, I will be able to do much more for these people so they will not end up in the ER and even the ICU with their lives hanging by a thread.

In addition to hard work, education, and community involvement, I am also drawn to Internal Medicine because of its adult patient population. I appreciate being able to rationalize with my patients and the fact that most of them are mature enough to take responsibility for their illnesses. Through my interaction with faculty, fellows, and residents, I feel my temperament is also a good fit for the field. My character is professional, my personality is easy-going, my approach is analytical, my strength is flexibility, my weakness is *The Simpsons*, my secret is laughter, my imagination is *Star Trek*, my indulgence is pizza, my fun is friends and family, and my professional goal is to be a humble and respected physician.

As we were passing through Nebraska, my brother asked again if we could take another detour. Only this time it's for something else: Omaha steak. Finally giving in, I exited the interstate in hopes of some good sirloin. Looking back, I realized that in Internal Medicine as in road trips, it is important to take some time to consider other differentials because one of them just might be the best diagnosis. I'm sure glad I made the detour, because a sirloin steak has never tasted so good in my life.