

## Personal Statement: Why I want to be a physician

I remember as a child attempting to read my father's American Family Physician and JAMA magazines, and being utterly dumbfounded. And anytime I felt unwell, he had nearly every answer. I couldn't understand how any person could know so much, and the standard of rigor I saw in him engendered my initial hesitation of pursuing a career in medicine. I first pushed back against that reluctance later in life, after breaking my hand early in high school. I was panic stricken, but in his clinic he walked me through my own treatment, exposing me to the careful and nuanced work of a general practitioner. It was that experience that made me realize how honorable it is to be one who relieves pain and distress for other people, and the unique human connection that can spawn from treatment. After visiting Ethiopia at 11, and having the opportunity to help the homeless community by providing food and other provisions, it became clear that service must play a large role in my future. I went on to spend more time in the clinical setting, and through volunteering, research, and conversations with physicians and mentors about what life in the field is like, my attraction to it grew. Now, I enjoy flipping through medical literature and keeping up with the new yields of clinical research, and love being apart of this research as well. I am completely enraptured with the human body and the healthcare industry. Under my father's supervision, I would participate in minor procedures at home, immersing me more in the craft. Those experiences coupled with different surgeries and procedures I had observed while shadowing physicians in various fields of medicine, engendered in me a deep fascination with the delivery of care. I aspire to be the type of doctor who's quality of care is motivated not by the metrics of the establishment he works with, but by my core drive to do a good job, and having patients leave with a solid understanding of what is happening with them, and a hope that they can live a healthy, better life. The rigor that had once stalled my ambition is now the source, spurring me forward. My whole life I've been astounded at the knowledge of my father, his colleagues, and my friends in medical school, and once, I believed they'll know more than I ever could. But my experience volunteering alongside medical students at the Agape clinic helped see how acquiring that knowledge is a process. Much like all the mentors in my life, I want to be among those pioneers on the frontier of finding the answers to our collective issues, and take others out of their suffering.

In Ethiopia, after mass on Sundays and Saturdays, we would hand out food to the maimed and mangled of the streets: it was this experience that I began feel it was my responsibility to help those who can't help themselves. Years later, while volunteering to hand-out food and supplies to homeless people taking refuge underneath a highway, I met a hemiplegic woman, Yolanda. What shook me wasn't so much her circumstance or the history of her loved ones who failed to save her from a life of begging, as her hopeless temperament about it. There was a mental nihilism about her. A kind of irredeemable dread that can only come from having to ask strangers for your existenc. My interactions with her, and the men, women, and children on the streets of Dallas and Addis Ababa, sparked a state of vigilance; to protect my opportunity, and capitalize on my luck and privilege so that one day I would have the capability to give more than a small parcel of food. I majored in Healthcare Management, so I could get the tools I need in order to organize the distribution of care to those who fall between the cracks. A dream of mine is to volunteer for a service-driven medical group after medical school, and eventually organize my own to tackle the issues we face in the US.

I derive meaning for my life in growth, not in comfort. I concern myself with what I will have to show at the end of my youth. I can think of no better purpose, than to be a lifelong student, and caretaker. Nietzsche believed the ideal state of being, "Übermensch", is to be in a perpetual state of learning and growth. To be at peace, we must always be learning, and striving to discover new solutions to the issues of today, and tomorrow; it's with this perspective that I find the medical field so attractive. If there is anything I've learned in all the years of my life, it's that you can be shocked by how much you can learn, how far you can go, how happy you can be, if you live to improve a little bit each day. Being a competent physician is an unfulfilled and integral core of my identity; to continue without the knowledge and ability to serve in this way would only allow me to be an arid shell of who I could be. I have so much to give. I want this more than anything. I'm ready to be a lifelong learner.

I appreciate you taking my application into consideration and I hope to hear from you!

Best,

Jonathan Claycomb