

I am committed to being an academic family physician for underserved populations. My path to get here has been a tortuous one but all of my experiences have strengthened my commitment.

I was raised in a very close family that valued education, health, service and togetherness. During my elementary school years, my father changed professions from a skilled union tradesperson to a chiropractic physician. He went back to school so that he could spend more time with our family instead of traveling out of town for weeks at a time following the work. Of course, he also chose the career because he believed that he could help improve people's health and lives. During that time, our family was very busy with my dad in school full-time and working on the side in union jobs, my mom teaching elementary school, and all of my older brother and sister and my school activities. My parents still found time to have family dinners and provide us with opportunities to do service. One event I remember still was the Mississippi River flood of 1993 when I was in 6th grade. We lived in the country but my parents drove us to the river bank near the city to help fill and stack sand bags. We helped form a temporary levee to protect people's homes from the rising water. Through experiences like this, I learned early on that there will always be people in need and less fortunate than me.

As an undergraduate at a Catholic Marianist university, I had plenty of opportunities to stay involved with serving others. One memorable experience was volunteering at the Mary Magdalene House in Over-the-Rhine, Cincinnati. The house provides a place for homeless people to shower, get a clean change of clothes and have theirs laundered. I first met Brother Giancarlo, who runs the house, on an Urban Plunge retreat in college. Despite the rigor of medical school, I have returned a few times to the house to volunteer and was even able to take my equipment and do some blood pressure screening. Early on, my girlfriend came with me to volunteer there. She is now my wife and we've continued to return together to make donations or volunteer. I can definitely imagine sharing this experience with our children someday.

My medical training years have been dominated by my involvement in the MD/PhD program. I entered the MD/PhD program because of my interest in research from my undergraduate years. I wanted to make a larger impact for the health of people than I could in a medical practice alone. I felt that biomedical research would be the way to expand my impact. I chose a research lab based on the disease process studied. In other words, I did rotations in labs that studied common diseases that cause the most morbidity and mortality for Americans and others in the world: cancer, obesity and cardiovascular disease. I completed my PhD training in a laboratory that studies cardiovascular disease and cholesterol metabolism. I learned so much as a graduate student and had many great opportunities. My most proud accomplishments include presenting at national meetings and winning a travel award to do so as well as being honored to receive a predoctoral fellowship from the American Heart Association. I plan to stay true to my original research purpose once I am a practicing family physician. This academic year I will undertake a new research project with the Department of Family Medicine at the University of Cincinnati studying barriers to diabetes control in homeless people.

Family medicine is the perfect specialty for me in too many ways to list here. Primary care will allow me to take care of the whole person, or family, which is very important to me. It will allow me to keep a wide perspective on health problems encountered by everyday people. This will guide my research so that I can attempt to improve care for patients whether it is with better diabetic control, better access to care, or better healthcare policy. I see my future self as faculty working with medical students and residents, showing them that primary care is a great

career. I will practice in an underserved area, probably in an urban or rural location, and I will learn from, and of course care for, my patients for the rest of my life.