

Personal Statement

The early years of my life deeply influenced my educational and career goals. I grew up in Chelsea, Michigan in a single mother home with an older sister diagnosed with severe mental illness. I have worked a full-time job starting at 15, all the way until the present day. As an undergraduate student, I wanted to be a physician so I could join the middle class and have some financial stability – at that point, I didn't have any sort of vision of who I really wanted to become. Health scares often make people “wake up”, and that is just what happened to me. Summer 2016 I was preparing to take the MCAT. During a study break, I decided to try longboarding, and ended up with a concussion and fractured skull landing me under the care of a neurosurgeon in the ICU for several days. Instead of studying for the MCAT, I had to re-learn how to type on the keyboard and was using a walker. Nine months later in February 2017, I was in a worse accident. While skiing in Breckenridge, Colorado I shattered my left tibia. My injury required a three-week hospitalization, three surgeries, lots of physical therapy, and emotional/physical strength to recover. Surgeons told me I would never bend my leg past 90 degrees. Today I can bend my leg 180 degrees, and I eventually got back on skis.

While I was recovering, my studies were interrupted. The gap in my transcript between 2017-2018 is due to a medical leave and lack of academic counseling for finishing “incomplete” coursework post-medical leave. But the medical leave was good for me because it forced me to think about where I was headed. When you are lying in a hospital bed, unable to do school or work, or anything else that makes up who you think you are, questions about your purpose and reason for getting up in the morning arise. These injuries gave me the space to think deeply about my answers and led me to where I am today. Through these injuries I was exposed to the medical field in a different light and saw how stretched thin doctors are within our current health care system. This experience made me re-evaluate my career goals and think of a new plan for how to improve health care. I began focusing more on research and seeking out a quantitative analyst job where I discovered machine learning in health care. I have been inspired by people like David Feinberg, who initially trained as a child psychiatrist, and is now the head of Google Health after recognizing how technology can broaden a physician's impact on the world and reach more individuals than just those who can afford health care in the US. Looking back at it all, I have confronted extraordinary physical and emotional challenges. But here I am, wiser, stronger, and kinder because of them. I also now stick to yoga, swimming, and cycling!