
Personal Statement

When we were younger, my older sister Lisa and I were not close due to a large age difference. Unexpectedly, in 2006, my sister's life-threatening complications following a wisdom-tooth extraction brought us closer together. As a result, she has become one of my greatest role models, and her tribulations and experiences have inspired me to become a physician.

What began as a simple procedure to remove four wisdom teeth turned into a nightmare for our family. Three days after the extraction, my sister developed an infection and was airlifted to Seattle to remove the abscess obstructing her airway. I can vividly recall Lisa's swollen face, the bandages around her neck, the pain she endured, and my feelings of helplessness. I could only sit and wait. When my sister became well enough to eat, all she wanted was a bowl of soup from her favorite restaurant—which my dad and I bought after walking three miles. The simple joy that bowl of soup brought Lisa meant a great deal to me, as I finally felt useful. Watching the team of physicians and healthcare professionals who provided round-the-clock care for Lisa opened my eyes to the field of medicine. The physicians not only monitored Lisa's physical recovery, but went beyond the basic requirements of caring for the body by ensuring that she healed emotionally by speaking with her about schoolwork, hobbies, and aspirations in life. Watching the physicians who focused on the person behind the disease, similar to how we focused on Lisa's needs by bringing her that bowl of soup, inspired me to make the same difference in the lives of other people by becoming a physician myself.

The first step I took to familiarize myself with the field of medicine was to begin volunteering at the Emergency Department at Lourdes Medical Center. Being involved in procedures, such as watching wounds being cleaned, analyzing x-ray scans, and taking vitals were fascinating, but the most valuable lesson I learned was the significance of communication in developing a strong patient-physician relationship, a vital component in the healing process. Furthermore, I have also volunteered as the Webmaster for the local medical organization, What's New in Medicine, a member of the American College of Physicians, and was able to attend their annual conference in 2010 about internal and infectious disease. Finally, as a volunteer pianist at the Avalon Rehabilitation Center, I have also been able to learn about the importance of patience and compassion in medical care, especially with mentally ill and elderly patients. Volunteering in medical environments were some of my favorite extracurricular school activities that ultimately helped establish and confirm my interest in helping others as a physician.

Although I am determined to reach my goal, one barrier I will encounter in the future is the overwhelming cost of post-secondary education. Currently, my parents are financially assisting my sister through medical school, which is over \$70,000 per year, and financially supporting my grandparents. In order to relieve my parents' burden and become as independent as possible, I plan to continue working part-time and applying for scholarships throughout my college experience at the University of Washington, where I plan to earn my bachelor's degree in biology. As a student who's been on the President's Academic Honors List for six consecutive quarters at Columbia Basin College and an AP student with honors, I believe I can succeed in college. Through a variety of experiences as a self-sufficient student, I hope to become a well-rounded physician in the future.