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# Medical School Personal Statement

My friend's father always warned him not to run too much, since he had asthma. But when he used an inhaler, it enabled him to run longer. I was fascinated by how the small particles in that inhaler could treat his big lungs, and I was most impressed by the amount of relief he got from the drug, which his life depended on. What began as a childhood fascination eventually led to my ambitions in pharmacy science.

When I was at the University of Houston in 2009 pursuing my undergraduate degree in science, I wanted to further my knowledge beyond the classroom setting. For this reason, I decided to work as a pharmacy technician to obtain a sense of what my professional life might be like. I observed the day-to-day performance of the pharmacists and their interactions with community members, and the knowledge I gained motivated me to continue working as a pharmacy tech even after I graduated.

My experience as a pharmacy technician was as educational as it was emotionally rewarding. In my four years of working at CVS, Walgreens and the University of Pittsburgh Medical Center Hospital, I came to understand that pharmacists are able to make a difference in the community simply by counseling patients about the dangers of certain drug interactions (such as drug-drug, drug-food, and drug-disease). I could see that pharmacists serve as the last line of defense in protecting patients against any drug contraindications or other problems. Furthermore, I learned that pharmacists have become therapy experts through handling the challenges of the biotechnology and pharmaceutical revolutions that are creating complicated new drugs. /// My encounters with patients taught me that pharmacists must look beyond the prescription counter. Every time I had the opportunity to meet new people, I would talk to them, try to get to know them, and listen to their problems. These interactions allowed me to improve my communication and personal skills while realizing that I could have a positive impact on people just by listening and focusing on their ailments. I learned that companionship and patience are the best ways to approach patients' problems.

My experience as a pharmacy technician also motivated me to pursue my master's in public health. I became interested in community health while working with patients who came to the pharmacy for vaccinations. As I considered ways to improve vaccine delivery in our community, I developed an interest in school-based vaccine initiatives. Improving the vaccine compliance rate in our patient population would be an invaluable benefit to our community. Vaccine programs in the pharmacies I worked at were very well-organized, with a central computer system for tracking; however, improvements in the delivery of vaccines could be achieved by school-based vaccine programs. This would be of particular benefit to influenza prevention, as many of our patients did not obtain annual flu shots. I committed myself to improving community health and decided to enter an MPH program in order to pursue this goal.

Being a public health professional has shown me that early preventive education is the most effective way to change behavior patterns, which has enabled me to gain a broader perspective regarding healthcare. It is clear that public health and pharmacy are two fields that go hand-in-hand. In order for pharmacists to have a more substantial public health impact, they will need to continue to provide clinical services such as lipid screenings and immunizations, as well as increase their knowledge of the five core competencies in public health. My MPH program included classes in social and behavioral sciences, health policy and administration, epidemiology, biostatistics, and environmental health sciences. This has prepared me to contribute to the field of pharmaceuticals.

Becoming a pharmacist is a lifelong dream that is the product of both the good and the bad experiences in my life. My ability to work hard and persevere through difficult circumstances, coupled with my ability to communicate effectively with others, will enhance my capacity to contribute to the healthcare delivery system as a pharmacist. I believe that serving as a pharmacist will involve both intrinsic and extrinsic rewards throughout my career.

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