

American dream: my path to become a physician

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The allure of the philosophy behind the American dream is the promise that hard work can solve all problems. With endless opportunity, it just takes a person willing to push forward to achieve their destiny, to make the most of whatever is given to them. When I came to the United States it was with that same drive and passion, forged by my family's desire to make a better life for all of us in California.

We left behind our home in Nepal, but I remember the lessons I learned in the lead up to our move. It was a time that never strays far from my mind, because that was when I decided to become a doctor in the first place. I lost my cousin to bone cancer that metastasized throughout his body a few years before we moved. I was helpless to do anything but comfort him throughout the final stages, a feeling I never wanted to repeat. I was determined to make my dream in America a legacy to his memory by becoming a physician. That path wasn't always straightforward; I returned to Nepal for medical school and came back to the United States in preparation for my USMLE exams and residency. I struggled with the exams at first due to a combination of inexperience with the test format and an unfortunate delay when Hurricane Harvey postponed one of my exams, but the constant challenges along my journey to residency served as an important reminder of what it would take to forge my own legacy as a doctor.

In my chosen speciality of internal medicine, there are no straightforward paths, no silver bullet that fixes a disease without fail. Every treatment must be nuanced, catered to the needs of an individual patient both physically and emotionally. Some patients need more empathy than others because of the trials they face in their own lives. I understand that feeling on a fundamental

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level; it's easy to feel frustrated at your most vulnerable moment, surrounded by strangers. As their physician though, it is my responsibility to deliver more than a diagnosis and treatment. I have to be a mentor, a friend, a leader in the patient's healthcare journey in a way that they can understand. Whatever that role is, I have to meet the emotional needs of a patient with both scientific accuracy and empathy.

Combining those two sides of the coin in practice is where I knew my future as a physician lay, so to ensure that the struggles I faced during the USMLE's would not impact my ability to contribute as a resident, I completed months of observership, externship and postgraduate subinternship programs around the country to hone my clinical skill. During my postgraduate subinternship at Larkin Community Hospital in Miami, I combined all of the skills I had learned thus far and put them into motion in an intense, residency-like environment that tested everything I had. I followed fellows and senior residents during rounds, and able to discuss and implement the evolving biomedical and clinical knowledge towards the patient health by assisting in ordering the appropriate tests after discussing with the senior residents. Larkin helped polish the motivation and strength I knew I needed to become an internist and apply internal medicine residency.

No matter where I am, whether providing emergency healthcare in the aftermath of earthquakes or hurricanes, or one-on-one with a patient in a clinic, I've learned to confidently push for better results even in the toughest moments. I've overcome every obstacle in my way to arrive here, and I know I'll continue to surpass my own expectations as a part of your program.