

The headlines were ripe with familiar words such as “revolution,” “democracy,” and “change,” evoking memories of the unrest in Iran nearly three decades ago. Behind my cubicle, I find myself reading *Twitter* updates or viewing television images about my volatile homeland; while in 1979, the Islamic Revolution crushed my parent’s aspiration of rearing a family in their beloved. Both parents were recent medical school graduates, but the sweep of repressive reform shifted my parent’s plans *westward*, and ultimately, toward Colorado. Like the activists rallying in Teheran calling for democracy, my parents also placed their *life on the line*. The images of Iran that I view from my cubicle were identical to those that brought my family to America. I realized that my family narrative was unfolding *again* in Iran’s streets – a story that fuels my passion for medicine, and more critically, my desire to serve those whose very *life is on the line* both abroad, and at home.

Education proved to be the lone passport for a better life outside of Iran. Therefore, immediately upon arriving in the US, my parents commenced preparation for their dental licenses exams. My uncle’s dour New York City basement was home, and also the very setting where I was born. My uncle, himself a physician, delivered a lifeless baby who literally had to be *slapped* to life. Ironically, my very life was in jeopardy before I took my first breath. After my parents passed their exams, we moved to Los Angeles – home to an emerging Iranian enclave within a vibrant multicultural landscape. I befriended classmates of all cultures, developed an ear for *musica en Espanol*, and joined the swimming team. My coach once commented, “Kevin, you swim like your life is on the line!” a poignant observation given that the race in the pool was preceded by a life that started with near fatality. Living in LA helped me develop a consciousness for sociopolitical challenges faced by indigents and communities of color, who endured a set of challenges that were not far unlike those faced by my family. This consciousness pioneered my desire to serve individuals in need and humanity at large.

At Northwestern University, I resolved that medicine’s inherent philanthropy made it the ideal profession to provide those in need with medical safe haven. I tailored my academic progression toward a career in medicine, but initially groomed my research and analytical acumen as a graduate student in Biomedical Engineering. Biomedical Engineering was a natural transition from my undergraduate studies, but also an ideal opportunity to marry foundational science with engineering principles and also delve into rigorous study and cutting-edge research. I thrived as a graduate student, and collaborated in cutting-edge research focusing on a range of issues from chemotherapies to lumbar spine athrodesis, which enriched my insight into medicine. However, I coupled my studies and research with practical medical experience. Volunteering at the Chicago General Hospital provided me with invaluable insight into the routine life of a physician. I took on a range of duties, but was principally inspired by the collaborative spirit between the physicians, researchers, and medical staff.

While being a scientist was challenging, I coveted the human interaction and service I participated in at the Hospital. In addition to primary care, I also developed a keen interest in healthcare reform, preventative medicine efforts, and cutting-edge medical research and development. My engineering and graduate training also bestowed me with an interdisciplinary prism into medicine, which fuels my desire to harmonize my passion for scientific research, engineering and medical practice as a means to design innovative surgical procedures. Identical to the language of science, medicine also transcended national and linguistic boundaries. Therefore, medicine served as a dynamic platform to serve humanity at large, a realization I encountered in Brazil. In Rio de Janeiro, I received a firsthand education about how socioeconomic realities impact medical access. This account proved to be a universal theme in developing countries such as Ecuador, thereby disenfranchising

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billions of people from adequate medical attention. Serving as an international physician, committed to helping alleviate the globe's most pressing medical crises, ranks among my principal aims. Whether in Brazil, the US or any point in between, I will seek to develop a practice centered on tending to neglected communities. Just like education proved to be my parents' passport toward refuge from oppression in Iran, I envision employing my medical degree as my passport to serve patients from all points of the globe ravaged by preventable diseases and epidemics.

The powder-keg that is contemporary Iran and the distressing imagery that emanates from it affirms that my parent's sacrifice was not in vain. Democracy empowered my parents with the opportunity to achieve their goals, and furnish me with the platform to aspire toward my own. My mosaic of experiences, which are most brilliantly highlighted by the achievements I have attained thus far, illustrates my passion for learning and human service. This passion brings me toward medical school, and more specifically, an enhanced commitment to cultivating my practical and intellectual capacity as a primary care physician. I look forward to the prospect of commencing my medical career as a member of your educational community, and ultimately, developing the ability to tend to patients whether from a developing nation or community at home, whose life sits precariously on that proverbial *line*.