

Personal Statement for Fellowship

During a recent nephrology elective, I was struck by the compassion shared by loved ones. I was privileged to help care for a man whose wife had served as his kidney donor. The couple had been married for 43 years—they were high school sweet hearts—and had four children together. The thought of a life apart was unbearable to either of them. I found this history just as compelling as the medicine that I was performing. I realized how closely intertwined compassion, community and patient care are in the practice of nephrology. As a nephrologist, the people whom I will help have often lived long productive lives that benefitted and touched those around them.

The main reason why I want to become a nephrologist is because, as a nephrologist, I will be able to make compassionate and lasting therapeutic connections with my patients. For example, continuity of care means much to a patient on dialysis. Such a patient can be under the treatment of the same nephrologist for months or years and form a close and trusting relationship with this specialist; indubitably, the nephrologist is in large part responsible for improving this patient's length and quality of life. I'm also interested in becoming a nephrologist because I am intrigued by the physiology and pathophysiology of the renal system. From the histology of a single nephron to the magnitude of multi-organ interaction, the kidneys form an almost ineffable means of homeostasis. One final reason that I like nephrology is that, by nature, I am detail oriented and enjoy poring over calculations and historical details in order to truly understand my patients' needs. I feel gratified when I'm able to see improvements in fluid and metabolic status thanks to minute attention to detail.

As a nephrology fellow and clinical attending, I look forward to teaching medical students and residents. I like teaching and find that explaining medical concepts to others reinforces my own understanding. Furthermore, by teaching a student or physician how to care for a fellow human being, I will be able to help more people than I will ever know. In particular, whenever I teach medical students and interns, I stress the importance of the history and physical exam; it's important for others to understand the power of observation and inquiry and the value of diagnostic imagery as a means of confirmation. Earlier this year, I helped develop a training module for medical students which focuses on physical examination skills.

As a resident, I have taken great interest in improving the quality of health care afforded to our patients and community. I am an active member of our hospital's Quality Improvement and Clinical Benchmark Committee. I have also helped organize a community health fair which was staffed by several physicians from our internal medicine department. Furthermore, I am on the internal medicine curriculum committee and have learned much about the educational competencies required of each resident. As a fellow and attending physician, I hope to continue to work with hospital administration in order to improve service and training programs.

I know that the only way to guarantee the advancement of medicine is through research. I also understand that research takes many forms, and sometimes the best way to prevent negative outcomes is to examine the past. As a resident, I have helped analyze data for a retrospective chart review that examines the number of adverse events that occurred within our department. Adverse events are iatrogenic mistakes that result in prolonged stay, disability or death. Of note, I have also published a case study on a patient with renal medullary carcinoma and sickle cell disease.

In my spare time, I enjoy many pastimes. I am an avid scuba diver and have dived throughout the Caribbean and in the Philippines. I like scuba diving because I enjoy the serenity of undersea worlds and take pleasure from examining diverse fauna. I also like to jog and work out at the gym. I find that my dedication to fitness improves my relationship with patients many of who are cognizant of the importance of exercise.

As a nephrologist, I hope to serve my patients and community to the best of my ability. I look forward to a lifetime of helping people such as the man who received a kidney from his wife—an act that exemplified human compassion and inspired me. I also look forward to teaching others and performing research. I someday foresee myself becoming clinical faculty at a major medical center; I believe that this balance of patient care, teaching and research will give me great satisfaction. In conclusion, I am a hard-working, compassionate person who has a passion for nephrology. I appreciate your consideration, and I hope to interview with your program.