

# Student Profile



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**Doctors have the unique opportunity to practice simultaneously as caregivers, researchers, community servants and innovators in healthcare.** It has always been my dream to provide care with an integrative approach to focus on the person as a whole: mentally, physically and emotionally. This idea came to me when I witnessed my mother provide free exercise and nutrition classes at our church in Oakland, CA. Many of the women were overweight, struggling with high blood pressure and various health problems. Yet formal treatment received from their doctors did not seem to alleviate their ailments, leaving them frustrated and hopeless, like many patients today. To see the joy these women gained by being proactive in their own health care greatly influenced my aspirations to become a physician. The vast improvements in their health, all from holistic approaches and the attention of one dedicated individual, truly changed their lives.

Prior to attending Morehouse School of Medicine (MSM), I was a Division One basketball player at the University of San Diego. As a student-athlete, I learned to push beyond my limits and that hard work will always lead to success. However working hard, alone, is not enough and admitting that you need help is acceptable. Since attending MSM, I have learned the value of asking for help and the importance of community, and I am thriving in ways I never have before.

As future physicians, we have been challenged to consider the social determinants of health; those necessities that go beyond the realm of medicine, but greatly influence health outcomes. MSM has inspired me to conduct my own research within underserved communities to examine how the social determinants of health prevent individuals from utilizing healthcare. It is within these communities where I witness the frustrations that stem from unanswered questions and feeling overlooked. I see the hopelessness from competing life stressors that force individuals to put other's needs, before their own health. It is within the voices of these individuals that I hear hope when I tell them I will be a future doctor and I ask "what should change?" once I am a physician to provide better care and improve their experiences.

I intend to learn more about preventative services and continue to have conversations within medically underserved communities about their needs. I believe this will give patients, who have been struggling to manage their care without the value of real collaboration with their doctor, a voice in their health promotion, increasing compliance, as treatment will be tailored by and for each individual.