

My name is Peter. I am a 4th year medical student at SUNY Downstate College of Medicine and I am planning to go into Surgery. I am originally from Brooklyn but was raised in Westchester County after which I headed to New York University and went on to earn my B.A. in Computer Science. Before deciding to go to medical school, I planned on pursuing a career in International Public Health, working with various organizations in the Dominican Republic and United States, including the International Family AIDS Program at Columbia University. I soon came to realize, that my interest in health went beyond that of populations and my most sincere interests were in one-on-one interactions with people suffering from disease. When it came time to choosing a medical school, the answer was not so clear but I am certain I made the right choice. I turned down a large scholarship at a private medical school in favor of attending Downstate, a medical school renowned for developing students into astute hands-on clinicians with an eye for delivering the best care for populations in most need.

From day one, my experience could not be more positive and opportunities for hands-on involvement were present early. I almost immediately became involved with the Brooklyn Free Clinic, using my past experience to develop the RISE program, an HIV testing and counseling program for students from all of Downstate's schools. In the classroom Downstate enabled me to learn in context the inner workings of the human body in its most physiologic as well as pathologic states, while developing clinical problem solving skills. As clinical rotations began at Kings County Hospital my interests shifted toward the world of Trauma Surgery and I am forever grateful for the mentors I met there. Not only did I learn how to sew and cut with some of the best Trauma Surgeons in the field, but they also helped guide me in exploring my interests in the Public Health of Trauma Surgery, starting a research project to explore the relationship between the obesity and handgun violence epidemics.

Yes, medical school is very challenging, but its rewards are bountiful. As I conclude my 4th year and reflect on what I learned from books and clinical experience, I am sure that no other place could prepare me like Downstate.