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What Drives Me?

I was in the hospital emergency room, in excruciating pain, watching the doctor through the glass door. I began to see mom's anxious face looking at me in bed. I needed surgery—soon. That night, wheeling through the doors, I left my parents behind. The last people I saw were surgical techs moving all around me. A surgeon told me I would fall asleep because of the medicine and that it was all going to be okay. I trusted that it *was*. As I slowly closed my eyes, the last image was four techs standing at the foot of my bed, competent and confident. Over the next three days in hospital, I observed the doctor and nurses. As an eight-year-old, it was not fun having my appendix removed, but it sparked fascination. How important a medical professional's job is! Being in awe of those turquoise-clad pros that helped me; drives me to pursue a career in medicine and help others.

As someone who comes from an immigrant family, I am already the first in my family to go to college at all. My Mexican background taught me a strong work ethic from a young age. Both my parents immigrated to the United States—not an easy transition. They both work hard to provide for our family. Growing up bicultural taught me those values; I see how hard my parents work. I learned to work to achieve—no matter how daunting. I have their work ethic in me. I have worked hard, unflinchingly, these past few years to earn dual credit. I had to first learn to manage all the classwork in order to succeed in the college classes. Yet taking so many college

courses has not discouraged me—it encourages me; I am closer to my goal.

Being bicultural—Mexican-American—I also reap the benefits of diverse role models. Growing up, I never heard of Mexican women who want to become doctors. There are few women in the field as it is, and of those, there are even fewer women of color. I've always insisted that I would become a doctor. Yet being from the South Valley—a neighborhood with few clinics—I was always discouraged from a career like that because of my Mexican background and being a woman. (This only made me more determined). Diversity in health care is crucial because when you acknowledge that there are many different cultures, ethnicities, languages, and values, and build a diverse medical team to serve those individuals, it provides different perspectives on social determinants of health and it may go a long way in mediating some of those. People should have access to proper healthcare—no matter their neighborhood or level of education. Everyone deserves that privilege, no matter where you come from. Just like eight-year old me was helped, I want to help those here in our medically underserved communities here in New Mexico. This is what drives me to continue in this path, and reach my destination of joining medical professionals to demonstrate diversity and cultural humility in healthcare.