

Dear reader,

If you've made it this far, I want to first thank you for clicking on the icon of the handsome young man at the bottom of the page. He is flattered and appreciates your interest.

This letter's purpose is to encourage those of you reading to go out and do what you so desperately desire to do, and to do a damn good job at it. If you manage to get fairly compensated for your skillset in the process, more power to you.

The main question I would like to address is "Why Podiatry?"

It took countless hours volunteering at health fairs, perusing online forums, and immeasurable personal conversations with aspiring future doctors to discover a common theme that plays a crucial role in molding a podiatric physician who first presents as a lost college student. I've discovered that the best way to be an advocate for the drastic change I have experienced is to simply tell others my story.

At the time, I was a college senior set to graduate. Simply put, my grades were not competitive enough for M.D. and D.O. programs. I was force fed into a biology degree I felt lukewarm about and told from the day I was born to become a doctor by both parents and relatives alike. This could not happen numerically without putting significant time into reinvention- whether it be post-baccalaureate studies or a specialized Master's Program. I was given 1 option by my family: Stay at home, study for the MCAT, and work. I chose to do everything my parents and relatives told me not to do.

I moved into another city, started a master's of science I was genuinely interested in, and took on even more student loans to do so. I worked tirelessly for those 2 years, did research while going to my graduate classes, and seriously considered other medical professions such as optometry, physician assistant studies, physical therapy, and podiatric medicine. I wanted a career in the health field, I just did not know *what*.

Physician Assistant studies were the quickest way out. I would still be involved in the healthcare field with a plethora of specialties to dabble in, schooling was short, and I could potentially make money and live my life while others had only finished 1/4th of their medical training. It was enticing, but I wanted an education that would push me to my absolute limits. I considered optometry. I had shadowed before and thoroughly enjoyed the professional expertise optometrists were trained for regarding the eyes and its pathologies. I would still be called a doctor, and would still be able to manage my own patients. But I realized while optometrists are very well trained, real-world pathologies are few and far inbetween. A majority of the time in office was focused on patient education regarding contacts as well as refractions for glasses (which are all essential to our health). I wanted something more hands-on. Enter podiatric medicine.

It offered everything I was looking for on paper. The medical training was similar if not equivalent with M.D. and D.O. programs. It required a 3 year surgical residency, and it offered a wide depth of treatment options ranging from wound care to limb salvage to surgery. You were trained as a physician and a surgeon, with the caveat that your specialty was chosen and locked-in from the very first day of podiatric medical school.

I had many obstacles along the way, both by people within this profession and outside of it, and I realized these obstacles were simply what made life interesting and worth living. I stepped into this profession almost by coincidentally, and since the day I chose to commit, I have only continued to enjoy it further and further into my medical training.

The only question that mattered before jumping was this: Do I enjoy what I do? And will I be compensated enough to raise a family and live life to the fullest? This view may change as I continue to grow, but for now I am thoroughly and *delightfully* enjoying the ride.

Again, thank you for taking the time to read this.

I hope you will work tirelessly for the life you want, and that you are happy doing so.

Sincerely,

Paul Nguyen