

## Coming Home

April 20, 2020 I was supposed to begin my 3<sup>rd</sup> year pediatrics rotation at Bayhealth Medical Center in Kent County; instead, I woke up and turned on my laptop for an online lecture. This was not what my rotation was supposed to be like, but here we are, making the best of a difficult situation. The COVID-19 pandemic pulled thousands of medical students across the country out of their clinical rotations, including me. It has been over 2 months since I last saw a patient in-person. For my last rotation of the year, I was excited to return to my hometown of Dover, DE. I would finally have the chance to work at Kent General Hospital, the same place my dad treated patients as an Internal Medicine physician for over 20 years.

This rotation was one I had been looking forward to all year; finally, the chance to learn and practice medicine in the place I grew up. Kent General will always be a special place to me. I remember doing homework in the doctor's lounge as a kid after school, waiting for my dad to finish work for the day. It was the first place I ever volunteered, helping in the pharmacy as a freshman in high school. It was the first place I ever shadowed a physician and came to realize that medicine is what I wanted to do with my life. Additionally, many of my childhood friends now work at Bayhealth in various patient-care roles. I was excited to return, learn from, and work with healthcare professionals that I have known my entire life.

When I started medical school at the Philadelphia College of Osteopathic Medicine in August 2017, I always knew at some point I would return to Delaware, be it on rotations, for residency, or to practice. Through the Delaware Institute for Medical Education and Research (DIMER), various opportunities are available to Delaware residents to advance their medical education at Delaware institutions like Christiana Care or Nemours/A.I. Dupont Children's Hospital. Then, in the summer of 2018, my parents moved away from Delaware. My childhood home cleaned out and sold. A year later in 2019, Bayhealth became a DIMER Branch Campus, opening opportunities in central and southern Delaware. As soon as I learned of an opportunity to return to Dover I jumped on it. Even though I would not be able to stay in my old house, central Delaware is still home. I have been treated by pediatricians that work at or with Bayhealth since I was an infant. Everything from colds and coughs, to broken bones, to sports physicals all done right in Dover, DE. Finally, 26 years later, I was going to have a chance to give back to the community that played a part in raising me.

Unfortunately, my clinical education curriculum has been moved completely online. It is understandable and PCOM is doing everything they can do to ensure that we as students are safe while still being able to receive an effective education. However, I would be lying if I said I was not disappointed. Luckily, I have another year of medical school and plenty of years as a physician in front of me, and one day I will eventually return to my home, Delaware.