

RESIDENT ADVOCATE LEADERSHIP COMPETITION STATEMENT

Eight years ago, I learned the Quechua word “ayni”, an Andean principle describing a common devotion to the growth and well-being of all persons in the community; the idea that we all are an essential part of something larger than ourselves. I had already spent many months in the field with indigent and marginalized communities in India and rural Nicaragua, learning what their basic health needs were and bringing their voices to larger organizations, government and non-government alike; but that word, the zeitgeist of the Andean communities, captured my spirit and never let go.

I pursued my medical degree and a masters in international health with the intention of returning to do my part in these resource-poor communities domestically and abroad. I had seen systems that appeared irrevocably broken, due to lacking infrastructure and personnel, but more so due to misplaced values without the focus on the health of the individuals in the community.

I have learned how to develop ideas for healthcare improvement, to create metrics to measure their impact, and to analyze the significance of their measured outcomes. I have not learned yet how to move the larger vision from its conception to the peak of its potential; the intangible qualities that conjure confidence and buy-in by a room of government officials or hospital administrators.

I foresee the Leadership and Advocacy Summit as yielding the opportunity for profound professional and personal maturation in ways very different than in my current surgical training. This conference provides the unique circumstance to interact with individuals who are impassioned by the potential to metamorphose our healthcare system into one that protects and promotes its physicians and advocates for the best care of our patients. I have been searching for the environment where I am surrounded by that energy and by individuals with the strategic foresight to enact that change. I seek to learn how to propel these efforts forward in our country and to participate in similar efforts if needed abroad. I want to be on the front line of surgeons who are motivated to move our profession forward for our whole community; to be a voice, a change-agent, for something much larger.