

A few years ago, we found out that my little sister has a telomere biology disorder. Her diagnosis has impacted my family to the point that I no longer dream of being a teacher like my mother. But, I do know I want to work in healthcare to help children, like my sister, facing serious diseases. Over the years, as we have traveled to more and more doctor's appointments and have been treated in more and more hospitals around the country, I have seen more and more sick children. It didn't take long to realize that I didn't want to be the person who diagnosed them or gave them bad news; I did know, however, that I wanted to help.

Throughout my sister's illness, she's faced many issues with her teeth because of genetic disorders, and I have decided I want to be a pediatric dentist to help children like her. One issue I would also like to improve is the lack of a pediatric dentist trained to assist with medical needs in the area where we live, the Mississippi Delta. Currently, we have to drive over an hour, so she can be seen by a pediatric dentist; I want to change that for other children. I believe all children deserve access to quality health and dental care, and I plan to become a pediatric dentist and serve patients in rural Mississippi to be part of the solution to the lack of healthcare access that has affected my own family.

Following graduation from the University of Mississippi, I hope to enroll in dental school. I am hopeful that after dental school I will be able to come back to my hometown, which has done so much for my family throughout my sister's illness, and be able to give back to my community by serving the children of Leflore County as a pediatric dentist.

In order to be able to make a difference, I have to first pay for college and dental school. I understand first hand the financial burden my sister's illness has had on my

family. This scholarship could help me to not add the cost of school on top of the already steep medical bills my family faces.