Pranay S. Aryal  
Public Health Personal Statement

I was raised on a hospital campus. My mother was a pediatric charge nurse and my father worked as a hospital clerk. During my childhood, I came to witness and understand firsthand how health disparities and social determinants directly affect illness. I watched how families traveled long distances, some even selling their homes or possessions, in order to seek critical medical attention. I started to develop an appreciation for public health and realize that health should be a universal human right for all people in society.

After completion of medical school, I worked as an independent physician in north-east India (Assam). During this experience, I treated tropical diseases as well as working with surgeons in dealing with amebic liver abscesses and TB lung resection. I was able to enhance my academic study with actual clinical encounters. However, working in this rural setting, I saw what impact occurred when patients delayed seeking health care due to the cumbersome travel and cost. I realized the importance of public health at the community level and how striving for quality improvement initiatives (WHO guidelines) helps establish health equity for marginalized citizens. Because of this conviction, I volunteered at medical camps near areas afflicted by inter-tribal feuds. Helping the refugees allowed me to appreciate how even small medical contributions can greatly impact peoples’ livelihood and overall welfare. Furthermore, I came to realize how the spread of communicable diseases, population displacement/ security, environmental health, and emergency preparedness are all integrally related.

As a physician I feel comfortable managing patients with HIV infection, dengue fever, typhoid fever, tuberculosis, malaria, scrub typhus among others. However, I would like to seek more knowledge in epidemiology and research skills including biostatistics. I am also passionate about public health quality improvement methods focused on preventative medicine. Furthermore, I would like to pursue a degree in public health to also learn more about health policy and health law. I feel that a background in public health will allow me to be a well rounded physician focusing not only on my individual patient/disease but also on my community as a whole. As Mahatma Gandhi once stated, “The true measure of any society can be found in how it treats its most vulnerable members.” I am so excited in broadening my knowledge in public health and working towards the challenges that this field faces. I feel confident that University of Louisville Public Health program will allow me to accomplish all my goals and be successful in my long-term career plan.