

When my dad was thirteen years old his dad died of AIDS. I have known this since I was young especially since my grandmother had to be tested every few years for HIV so this was something I have been familiar with almost my entire life. I think this kept me away from the usual stigma people have about HIV and I have always been interested in the spread of the virus and how easily it mutates.

I know the immunology program for University of Maryland Baltimore has one of the top leading research projects in HIV and that really drew me into the program. I want to be a part of that team and work to create a vaccine to help stop the spread of the virus and create preventative measures to inform the public about. I always wanted to make a change in the world and do something important and I believe this work is something I could really excel in. I love working with people and doing the analytical work. I know what it is like to fear the disease and how to comfort patients. I want to do what I can to spread awareness and end the stigma of the virus and help as many people as possible.

I have a lot of experience collecting lab data and working with DNA sequences including viral sequences. I have recently taken a class Modern Genetics where the focus was SARS-coV-2 and we looked at the different variants of the virus and where the mutations occurred. This was very interesting to me as I had never actually picked a DNA strand and went through the open reading frames and seeing if specific mutations were present. This class really sparked my interest in virology and how vaccines work against viruses and changed my career path from optometry to immunology and vaccine work.

I believe this program would be a great fit for me and that I could bring a lot of good qualities to it. I am very excited to hear from you and thank you for the consideration.

Angelina Sherba