



NICU Graduate Clinic Intern Christine Egu, Psychology, Fall 2019

Professional
Development

SUMMARY

During the Summer of 2019 I was granted the opportunity to intern with pediatrician, Dr. Jennifer Aguilar, at Robert B. Green and University Hospital, in San Antonio. Both hospitals are apart of the University Health Systems, which help foster academic medicine, especially for medical students and residents at UTHSCSA. Dr. Aguilar provided care in the NICU Graduate Clinic in each hospital. The NICU Graduate Clinic serves infants that required time in the NICU before being released. Dr. Aguilar and her team provides extensive services to premature neonates and infants that are born with complex medical issues. Dr. Aguilar described her occupation as “the abnormal side of pediatrics”. My duties included, reviewing patients charts before and after exams, reading literature regarding newborn anomalies, taking vitals signs with supervision, observing exams and discharging patients with the physician. I was also allowed to observe Dr. Aguilar’s team which was comprised of: a dietician, social worker, medical assistant, and nurse. As a pre-med student, my main goal was to immerse myself into the role of a physician and gain valuable knowledge on how to be a successful medical school applicant and student, as well as a future physician.



SPICES

This experience emulated key aspects of Professional Development. I am seeking to matriculate into medical school in the Fall of 2020, I acquired many valuable skills through this internship. These skills included: proper patient-provider communication, analyzing patient history, interview etiquette, and so many more things that will allow me to be a successful medical student and future physician.

HERBS

This experience truly embodied the personal ethics of: Honor, Benevolence, and Support. Following HIPAA guidelines, I had to maintain the confidentiality of the patients and their caregivers. Furthermore, I was benevolent when encountering caregivers who endured significant distress, such as post-partum depression. Lastly, I was honored to be apart of such an intelligent and strong group of women that managed the clinic. Even when were short-staffed, office operations still proceeded efficiently.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

This experience undoubtedly allowed me to reflect on my path to becoming a physician and become more aware of my responsibilities to my future patients and the community. Dr. Aguilar was the first physician that I have shadowed, and it was truly inspiring to see a successful minority woman excelling in a specialty that I am interested in. I realized how impactful having supportive representation was to me, and I plan to mentor students in the future, so they understand that this is an attainable goal.



IMPACT

This experience impacted the uncertain ideologies I had about the role of a physician. I believed I would be in a high-stress environment, with someone with a neurotic personality. I was wrong. Dr. Aguilar is so compassionate and intelligent, and I hope to emulate those positive attributes as a physician. She also provided guidance and encouragement, as I begun my application for medical school, and that certainly allowed me to relieve some stress. Not only was I impacted from this experiences, but I know I positively impacted a few patients. Many families require assistant from the social worker for various reasons, so during those appointments I would be a voice of comfort or support to those families. Lastly, I was inspired to change my goal from becoming a psychiatrist to becoming a pediatrician. I loved working with high-risk children, I enjoyed interacting with their families, and I admired how they sought help and trusted Dr. Aguilar’s recommendations. Reflecting over this experience, I can envision myself being in that role in the future.

ADVICE

I would advise any pre-med student, or someone seeking a career in the medical field to intern or shadow a physician. Even if they do not have an extensive primary team, it is worth the experience. You will be able to discern if medicine is the right field for you, and you may even find a specialty that you enjoy. It will also put you in contact with medical professionals, in the event that you need advice or encouragement. I strongly suggest that you seek a similar opportunity to really immerse yourself in the duties and responsibilities of medical personnel.