

COPE HEALTH SCHOLARS INTERNSHIP AT ST. JOHN'S HOSPITALS



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Introduction

COPE Health Scholars, a division of COPE Health Solutions, is a Community Outreach Prevention and Education (COPE) program founded by student volunteers at UCLA to provide health education to underprivileged communities. My hospital placement is at St. John's Regional Medical Center hospitals in Oxnard and Pleasant Valley which is the only participating hospitals in the Ventura area that allows health scholars to do experiential learning in the CATH LAB.

Abstract

As a Health Scholar intern, my goal was to learn and implement preventive care and health education into my role while rotating through various hospital departments becoming a member of the patient care team working alongside medical professionals in a clinical setting. I will have over 300 hours with clinical and project hours combined. My shifting departments have included Acute care (ACU), telemetry (2S), Human Resources, Direct observation (DOU), MED/SURG, Mother-Infant (MIU), and Radiology.

Learning objectives

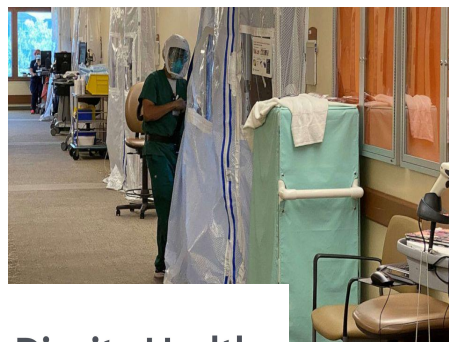
My experience at St. John's Regional Medical hospital allows me to gain valuable job skills interacting with patients, medical professionals, and peers, while learning about the hospital environment, careers, and health practices. Going into COPE, I was most interested in the radiology department. I have been able to work in the department alongside nurses, radiology technicians, ultrasound technicians, radiologists, surgeons, and neurology specialists such as nurse practitioners and doctors. Each of which I got to see what their day in the hospital may look like and their responsibilities.

Key responsibilities

- Assisting the department in distributing supplies and equipment
- Using medical equipment such as gurneys, crash carts, ECG leads
- Assisting with patient tasks such as changing, ambulating, feeding, and vitals
- Understanding scope of practice and patient confidentiality
- Distribute patient education technology
- Take every educational opportunity possible

COVID impacts:

I observed what the hospital environment was forced to evolve to as a result of the pandemic. Each room was turned into an isolation room via plastic zipper doors sealed outside of each patient room to accommodate for the mass numbers of infection as shown on the right.



Impacts of the pandemic spread throughout the hospital to the most vulnerable. While working in the Mother- Infant Unit, there were several instances where the department brought in multiple isolation cribs for incoming COVID patients as shown on the left.

Application of courses

Medical sociology- As a non-profit hospital, I have worked with many patients in the community who may be underrepresented and I was able to identify some of the issues in the healthcare system directly related to the differences in care of these communities. Fortunately, I learned from this course that some ways I am able to help are educating myself on the community's needs, communication about care, and educating patients and families on preventive care.

Pre-Health seminar- I was able to work with and ask a wide range of professionals about their paths into the medical field. This class allowed me to learn about roles and traditional paths, however, real world experience has taught me that many professionals with the same job may have taken a different routes and that its normal to change paths based on changing interests and opportunities

Exercise psychology- This material focused on exercise and a means of both preventive care and treatment. Within the hospital I was able to directly implement education to my patients through projects focusing on mobility, fall prevention, and other topics on a case by case basis.

Health psychology- This course largely emphasized culture and health habits. Culturally in America, we see a much higher rate of heart related illnesses, which largely influenced my time at the hospital as four of my departments were telemetry based and two of those were considered priority departments where medical staff needed the most assistance.

Lessons learned

My future as a healthcare provider: This internship has allowed me to understand what roles in the hospital may not suit me in my professional career. I have realized that my passion lies in preventive care and not treatment or diagnostic care. In addition, I am extremely grateful for my diverse experience because it has led me to understand the cohesiveness of different departments in the role of patient care.

I have also learned the power of cultural competency in care. Many patients at the hospitals had various language and religious differences that I had not seen before. Understanding the patients' needs through means of family members, providers, and translators was essential for my role in the patient care team.

Acknowledgements

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