

2023 SUMMER INTERNSHIP ACADEMY

District: Virginia Beach
Offices: Environmental Health and Communicable Diseases

Internship Summary

The intern's assignment involved spending equal time between the Environmental Health (EH) office and the Communicable Diseases' STI clinic. During her time spent in the EH office, the intern was able to accompany health inspectors in the field and gain insights into the health and safety policies mandated by the state. In addition to this, she also devoted significant effort towards a project aimed at assessing the efficiency of plan review processing times (see project 1).

While in the STI clinic, the intern had the privilege of closely observing the collaborative efforts of the physician and nursing team, as they delivered comprehensive care to patients. This experience provided the intern with an invaluable opportunity to encounter and study various patient cases, enabling her to acquire knowledge pertaining to a diverse range of infectious diseases. Her experiences in the clinic inspired her to conduct independent research and compose a policy brief addressing one of the administrative challenges she witnessed (see project 2).

It is worth highlighting that the intern's involvement extended beyond the STI clinic, encompassing shadowing experiences within the TB clinic as well as WIC services. These additional exposures further broadened the intern's understanding of public health practices, as well as her familiarity with the diverse challenges encountered in the field.

Project 1: An Analysis of Food Establishment Plan Review Processing Times (2022-2023)

Food establishment plan reviews are an extension of the EH's Food Protection Program. Average turn around time (TAT) is 30 days. **Objective** of analysis was to identify root causes of processing delays.

Methods: Intern gathered raw data from HSGOVTECH, organized data in Excel, then conducted a statistical analysis to calculate TAT averages. Also collected qualitative data through anonymous employee satisfaction surveys.

Conclusion/recommendations: Intern provided both short term and long term recommendations.

1. Improving accessibility of PR application packets
 - Collaborating with Office of Information Management's new Regional Task Force Team to update current website layout to improve navigation and revising packets
2. Adopting Lean management principles for waste reduction
 - Resolving "bottlenecks" in TAT, Utilizing root cause analysis

Project 2: Reducing Excess Administrative Costs: A Path to Alleviate the Burden on the U.S. Health Care System

Intern conducted a literary analysis to better understand high administrative costs in the U.S. She then compiled her findings into a policy brief. **Policy**

recommendations: implementing a health care automated clearinghouse, standardizations/simplification of processes, and fostering collaboration between diverse stakeholders.

Internship Takeaways

My time interning with the VDH has been a truly enriching experience that has only increased my knowledge and passion for public health. The lessons and insights I've gained are ones that I have no doubt will shape my career moving forward.

Acknowledgments

I would like to extend my heartfelt gratitude to Jeff Stover and Sam Walmsley for their unwavering dedication and efforts in coordinating the internship academy. Their commitment has played a crucial role in making this experience so meaningful. I am also immensely grateful to Dr. Jill Flood and Devin Armstrong, RN, whose invaluable guidance and commitment to academic mentorship have been instrumental in my growth. Their unwavering passion for public health and their compassionate approach to patient care serve as an inspiration for me. Lastly, I would like to express my sincere appreciation to my mentor, Orville Nolen, for his constant enthusiasm and support.



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