

Wrapping up at 504HealthNet

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Through researching and writing proposals for progressive legislation, I learned about the intersection of economics and health policy at the state level. I continued to develop my research and analysis skills as I moved on to my second project related to the social determinants of health. At first it was difficult for me to set my own deadlines, since I was given so much leeway. However, I gradually learned what I could reasonably expect to accomplish in a set amount of time, and would write down 1-3 goals at the beginning of each day that I wanted to accomplish as part of the bigger projects that I worked on. I exchanged quite a few emails with my

supervisor over the course of the summer, which helped me learn how to communicate formally in a professional setting. Additionally, I engaged in small talk with the other women in my office and looked forward to hearing about everyone's weekends on Monday mornings. This helped me figure out how to communicate informally in a professional setting. Sharing information about one's personal life is not always appropriate in the workplace, but when done correctly, it can strengthen bonds between coworkers and serves as a reminder that everyone has a life outside of the office. Finally, I had an excellent conversation with my supervisor (she graduated from Tulane and is only a few years older than me) about life after college. Learning about her work experience so far has made me reconsider what I want to do after I finish my Bachelor's degree.

I am studying abroad this semester, but I have asked my supervisor to keep me updated on the progression of the projects I worked on but could not see to completion due to timing. I also offered to help out at my organization, as needed and fairly informally, after I return.

Most of the research I did at my internship was focused on health policy at the state level. In the future, I am interested in learning more about national health policy. It would be a dream come true to intern in Washington DC next summer!

I would advise future 504HealthNet interns to not be afraid to ask questions, and to set reasonable expectations for themselves. I always strive to do my best, but sometimes I take on too much or put so much pressure on myself to get things "perfect" that the quality of my work actually starts to suffer. It's important to remember that as an intern, you are still learning and not expected to know everything or never make mistakes. To be a successful intern in the health policy field, it is important to stay informed about current events and politics, as these have a substantial impact on healthcare.

My understanding of race in healthcare has certainly been altered by my time as an intern. I had no idea that minorities are so incredibly underrepresented in basically every field of healthcare, from physicians to policy officials. As a white, middle-class, cisgender, able-bodied person, I feel that my demographic is already represented fairly in leadership. Rather than only focusing on my personal advancement, I want to find ways to make space for and empower historically marginalized individuals and communities to seek representation and leadership roles.

Before my internship, I knew that I wanted to have a positive impact on the community of New Orleans. This is a noble goal, but very vague. At my internship I was able to learn more about legislation and the processes that actually create meaningful, lasting change. I am excited to see where the future takes me and how I am able to serve others.