

**Health Career Connection  
Internship Case Study**

Please contact [jjain@healthcareers.org](mailto:jjain@healthcareers.org) if you have any questions.

<b>About You</b>	
1. Name	Alexandra Mendonca
2. College	Boston University
3. Year in School	Junior (Class of 2007)
4. Major	Human Physiology
5. Career Objective	To become a Pediatrician

<b>About the Host Organization</b>	
6. Organization Name	Brookside Community Health Center
7. Department	Pediatrics
8. City	Jamaica Plain
9. Primary Preceptor	Nurse Manager
10. Secondary Preceptor	N/A

<b>About the Internship</b>	
11. Learning Objectives	I had various objectives: Firstly, I wanted to independently screen patients in the departments of Pediatrics, Adult Medicine, and OB/GYN. This entails assessing patients by taking appropriate vital signs, documenting symptoms of illness, and evaluating reason(s) for visit. I also wanted to become comfortable with the computer system at Brookside, especially the electronic medical records of all patients entitled "Longitudinal Medical Records" (LMR), from which providers and other health professionals gather information in order to successfully examine patients. Lastly, I aimed to observe how Brookside Community Health Center was successful at maintaining a diverse patient population by serving a majority of Hispanic and African American patients. Specifically, I was eager to observe how patients were offered the resource of communicating in their own native language(s) at Brookside

	and the advantages and/or disadvantages of this resource.
12. Major Project Description	By shadowing medical assistants, RN's, and LPN's in Pediatrics, Internal Medicine, and OB/GYN, I was trained to independently screen patients according to what these departments call for. This process involved putting together paperwork such as encounter forms (where vital signs are initially recorded before being entered into LMR), lab requisition forms, etc. I observed the preparation of injections and how to analyze the vaccination history of patients, including vaccines given and/or needed. Other patient demographics taken and recorded were be weight, height, blood pressure, temperature, and oxygen saturation, throat cultures, etc.
13. Minor Project Description	My minor project involved working with the nurse who specialized in chronic illnesses such as diabetes and asthma. I updated her computerized database of approximately 385 patients on Microsoft Access and Microsoft Excel by extracting and analyzing numerical data. By updating dates of eye exams, cholesterol levels, and blood analyzes of diabetic patients the nurse specialist was able to determine continuity of care and proper treatment plans.
14. Typical Day	I worked from 8:30am to 5:00pm from Monday to Friday at Brookside, where there were four pediatricians and two family nurse practitioners. The dress code was no jeans, sneakers, or open-toe shoes--rather business casual attire was appropriate. In the morning, I would check the schedule of appointments for the day, depending on which provider I was assigned to. The average number of appointments ranged from 20-25 appointments per day. As patients checked in at the front desk, I would pull up their charts to get a better idea of their medical history. I then would call a patient from the waiting room into the examination room and proceed to take appropriate vital signs and record why they were coming in. When the visit was over, I would make sure the exam room was clean and ready for the next patient. Throughout the day, I had an hour lunch break.
15. Benefits of HCC Workshops	The workshops were great in order to get to know the other student interns that were also working in the area. Workshops covered topics such as Career Planning, Graduate School Preparation, Leadership, and Cultural Competency. The speakers at these seminars were knowledgeable HCC alumni and leaders in the community. I learned tips on how to manage my time, what grad schools look for in qualified applicants, and how to be a leader in my future and in life.
16. Internship's Connection to Career/Academic Goals	This internship met all my expectations because I was placed in a more clinically focused site. I knew I wanted to interact with patients and be around providers who could tell me how they achieved their goals. I wanted to reinforce my interest in medical school and I knew that Brookside was the place for me. I conversed with doctors, residents, and other medical professionals who took time to tell me about their path into health care.
17. Long-Term	I met people who I will keep in touch with for years to come and who

Benefits of Experience	can offer my their advise and guidance. I learned the structure and functions of a community health center ranging from the services offered to the administrative and managerial aspects of a health care center. I learn how providers catered to and worked with a large Latino population and grew to understand how language barriers impact the patient-provider relationship.
18. Suggestions for Future Intern	Communicate with your preceptor as early as possible what your goals are and what you want to learn from this internship. Make sure that you go over your objectives with your preceptor in detail so that the both of you know what to expect from each other. Also, don't be afraid to ask questions. On the other hand, I would encourage a future intern to ask many questions and learn from co-workers and fellow students. Lastly, I would recommend completing as many informational interviews as possible in order to network successfully.
19. Comments	HCC gave me an opportunity to really strengthen my career goals and be a clinical setting where I had direct patient contact and great mentors around me. This internship was a great experience that helped me have a more concrete look on my future and what profession I wanted for myself.