

WORKFORCE HIGHLIGHT

Peer-to-peer sharing of innovation
& lessons learned



Summer High School Internship Program (SHIP)

Foundation Health Partners, Fairbanks

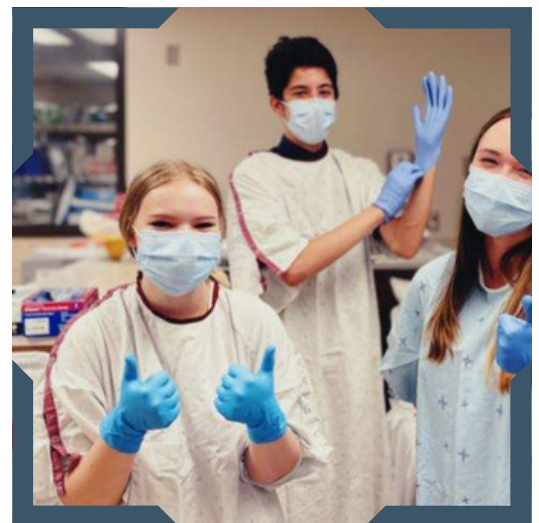
Program Overview

Foundation Health Partners (FHP) in Fairbanks has developed a successful model to engage young people in exploring healthcare careers through their Summer High School Internship Program (SHIP).

The program hosts two 5-to-6-week cohorts of 12-13 rising high school sophomores through graduates. The interns, or SHIPers, work 10-15 hours per week in unpaid positions, each assigned to one department and paired with a mentor.

SHIPers do real work, this is not simply a job shadow program. Each department develops a list of unlicensed assistive tasks the interns can complete that complement, not replace, existing employees' work while providing beneficial learning. In addition, weekly 2-hour workshops introduce the interns to other healthcare careers.

Thanks go to Karen Lapp and Jessie Beyer for their willingness to share their story of this program, its design, and some lessons learned.



"It's great to go to the workshops and after one think maybe it's not what I want to do but after another think I REALLY can see myself doing this ."

Madison Fitzgerald, SHIP intern 2022

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About SHIP

SHIP Structure

FHP runs two 5-to-6-week cohorts of 12-13 interns, or SHIPers, during the summer. Eligible participants include rising high school sophomores through graduates; they work 10-15 hours per week in these unpaid internships.

Each SHIPer is assigned to one department and paired with a mentor. Together they build an individual work schedule that fits with activities outside the internship, such as paid work, sports practice, family duties, etc. The department has the autonomy to determine what specific job the intern will do, adhering to Alaska State laws regarding the employment of minors.

Departments that host interns include Long-Term Care, In-Patient Nursing, Radiology, Sterile Processing, Laboratory, Emergency Medicine, ICU, IT, PR, Medical Records, Out-Patient Clinics, and Respiratory Therapy. During the application process, students select their top three department choices, and an effort is made to match students based on their interests and availability. [Click here](#) for a description of an intern's general responsibilities.

This is not simply a job shadow program - SHIPers are expected to do real work from a list of ongoing unlicensed assistive tasks developed by the department such as taking patient meal orders, restocking or organizing supplies, clerical support, etc. Intern activities complement, not replace, existing employees' work while providing beneficial learning.

In addition to time spent in their assigned department, weekly 2-hour workshops expose interns, as a group, to other healthcare careers.

Departments create a "WorkSHIP" by reflecting on what they love about their department and what they want young people to know about it. WorkSHIPS are structured as engaging conversations with hands-on activities and allow students to explore areas that may be inappropriate for intern placement, such as OR, Pharmacy, and Behavioral Health.

Some examples of popular WorkSHIP activities:

- SHIPers were taught about the importance of sterile processing for surgical equipment, experienced the process from start to finish with professionals, and learned about the different QA/QI steps that support healthcare.
- The surgical team had surgical techs, nurses, and surgeons teach scrubbing-in and then set up a mock laparoscopy, with a box and artificial organs, for the SHIPers to use the DaVinci for an "appendectomy."
- The laboratory team created stations for phlebotomy practice on a fake arm - prepping dishes and reviewing slides.

Intern Selection Process

Applications are accepted beginning in March each year. Interested students are screened and interviewed; if selected, they will complete PennFoster Career Readiness Boot Camp, which teaches them about working in a professional environment. Students who have not previously participated in SHIP have priority, with returning interns accepted on a space-available basis.

A 30-minute, one-on-one interview is conducted with each applicant. The interviewer assesses the student's personality characteristics, interests, and prior experiences that help determine a successful placement. Placement may not necessarily be what the student indicates as their preference. For example, Peds and Emergency Medicine are the most requested placements. Interns with no experience working with children may instead be assigned to the in-house childcare, while those with significant experience may be assigned to Peds. The interview with students interested in Emergency Medicine includes discussing their comfort dealing with intoxicated, naked, and combative patients and explaining when they may be asked to leave a room. Candidates for an Emergency Medicine placement need to have the capability of self-reflection to understand that this is about patient care first.

Program Marketing

FHP has established and maintains relationships with high school teachers and counselors, especially those teaching in the healthcare track and HOSA clubs. Informational flyers go to schools in January, and the application period opens during spring break. Social media and internal digital scroll boards in the hospital and clinic are used if an extra push is needed. Feedback from applicants indicates that word of mouth has been the best promotion of the program – from previous interns and teachers.

Program Outcomes

SHIPers receive a certificate from Penn Foster for the Career Readiness Boot Camp and an FHP completion letter with their department and hours worked. Some SHIPers impress their mentors enough to write letters of recommendation for work, college, and scholarships.

Every year at least one SHIPer decides that healthcare is not for them - a positive outcome for the individual who avoids years of debt following a path they learn early on is not a good fit. FHP has hired former SHIPers, including a pharmacy tech, several CNAs, and a sterile processing tech. One CNA volunteered at the end of SHIP, applied when she turned 18, and is now in an EMT I class. Another intern referred others to apply for jobs, and FHP has interns who continue to volunteer until they can apply when they turn 18. FHP is actively building their program to be able to hire minors after SHIP.