

**Health Career Connection
Internship Case Study**

Please contact jjain@healthcareers.org if you have any questions.

About You	
1. Name	Njideka Obijiaku
2. College	Drexel University
3. Year in School	First year graduate student
4. Major	Public Health concentration in community health and prevention
5. Career Objective	Ultimately obtain a DrPH, work with a major healthcare service provider (county, HMO, etc.) work in an impacting non-profit group, and develop 3 running clinics in L.A., Sacramento, and Nigeria

About the Host Organization	
6. Organization Name	T.H.E. Clinic Inc.
7. Department	Chronic Disease Screening, Human Resources, and Finance
8. City	Los Angeles

- a) Learning Objectives: Cite up to four objectives from your Internship Plan.

My major learning objectives at T.H.E. were based on my ultimate comprehension of the dynamics that allowed the clinic to keep its doors open and offer the care that it did to the community that it served. My goals were evaluated on my ability to truly visualize the critical pathways set in place that microscopically encompassed this larger clinical entity that promoted health equality, empowerment, and, most of all, life. My attainment of success with my internship was based on my fluency on administrative, qualitative, and quantitative levels.

- b) Major Project Description: Describe the project's goals, your involvement and responsibilities, people you worked with, and what you learnt from it.

My major task was one of two of my final internship tasks that was so encompassing that they are still being completed today even though my internship technically ended August 19th. It entails me putting together a clinical pathway for our providers to follow. The pathway consists of a schematic detailing treatment for diabetes patients. Working closely with T.H.E.'s medical director, I was able to compile an immense amount of data into an informative colorful, one page presentation diagramming the necessary steps to controlling and maintaining effective diabetes treatment. This diagram ensures that all providers at the clinic will be providing consistent and therefore effective care to its patients. The presentation that I developed will be blown up to poster form and displayed in all exam rooms. Perhaps most exciting is that the diabetes poster turned out so well, that I have been asked to collaborate on another poster targeting hypertensive patients. Partaking in this project allowed me to get

familiar with the common terminology and treatment options associated with the diabetes and hypertension. This large bit of information obtained sparked an interest in me to further make myself aware of these two chronic diseases mostly because they were most affluent amongst people of color and, most importantly, my own family.

My final task at the clinic allowed me to finally experience the patient interaction that I felt was missing throughout a major part of my internship. As part of a grant funding application, T.H.E. is responsible for providing information pertaining to the satisfaction of its patients. Therefore, it was my duty to interact with patients as to obtain this information. I had to administer patient satisfaction surveys. This task truly proved to be easier said than done. On one hand, you have to learn the art of negotiation using incentives and on another, the art of persuasion. Coming in to play on more occasions than one was the importance of cultural competency. While this was not always the case, it did surface frequently. For some patients, it was better for them to be approached by someone of their own ethnic background. By doing so they were more at ease and less threatened by the person requesting the participation. Without knowing it, a person could be conveying dominance and intimidation just through body language. It was important for me to be aware of myself when administering such evaluations.

- c) Minor Project Description: Describe the project's goals, your involvement and responsibilities, people you worked with, and what you learnt from it.

Throughout the summer I completed various projects. My first project was helping in the restoration and improvement of the clinic's referral system. My duties in this major task included understanding the referral paths taken by each unit. This sparked my initial interactions with the providers and supporting staff. I grasped a comprehension for the components necessary to construct and maintain an efficient referral system within the clinic. In addition, I was able to formulate an unbiased point of view of the situation and effectively communicate the necessary areas for improvement. My second task was to identify and reclaim diabetes patients once enrolled in our chronic disease program. From writing letters to making phone calls, I had to familiarize myself with services provided by the clinic and contact the patient in our list serve and make sure they continued to receive proper treatment and care. My third project was to compile information in regards to a Family Planning initiative for which we receive funding. It was my job to audit about 60 charts in order to, amongst other things, make sure that we were following the standards that were set out in the guidelines. In doing so, I was able to comment on many shortcomings the clinic faced in regards to chart input and medical record data. Later on I was able to report my findings at the quality indicator staff meeting.

- d) Typical Day: Describe a typical day at work. What time did you start? What was the dress code? How many and which meetings did you attend?

There was not typical day at work. The only thing recurrent is the interactions with providers and administrators and the fact that I did a lot of work on my computer. My tasks were constantly changing. Typical can very easily become boring.

I would arrive to work by 9:30 every morning. The dress code was more lenient for me because of my position as an intern. While I did take advantage of that fact often enough, I made sure to balance it with professional attire as well.

I attended meetings involving Diabetes community collaborative organizations, staff, executive staff, quality indicator staff, and the auditing of the clinic.

- e) Internship's Connection to Career/Academic Goals: Describe how the internship helped you determine your career path and/or future academic plans. Did you find what you want to do or explore further?

My internship helped me visual and make my goals more tangible. It is very different to be pursuing an ideal aspiration versus actually working at an internship with a mission and better understanding how to improve its strengths and minimize its weaknesses. You have already been, to some extent, placed in your "ideal" career environment.

My internship helped me better map my life with clarity. From the first week in the program to the last week, I have gone to many workshops and sat down with many healthcare providers. From day one to the last, my path has definitely been tweaked. But I welcome and am confident in my changes.

- f) Benefits of HCC Workshops: Describe two workshops. What did you learn? How are you able to apply what you learnt? (As you will go through, we have workshops on Career Planning, Graduate School Preparation, Leadership, and Cultural Competency.)

HCC has definitely given me a confidence and new swagger in my approach to healthcare that definitely wasn't there prior to my internship. Being introduced to so many accomplished professionals and so many accomplished interns adds to my drive in furthering my own accomplishments. Not at all superficially, but realistically and holistically—the workshops definitely made this possible.

- g) Long-Term Benefit of Internship: Describe what you gained from this experience.

I am very grateful to T.H.E. for the knowledge and awareness that I have obtained this summer. Not that I was lost and aimless prior to, but in comparison to my first day at the clinic, I definitely notice a difference. I gained such an understanding of community based clinics. In my internship plan I stated that the quality of my internship would be based on my fluency of the ways in which a clinic functions. I can definitely say that I have attained that success. In addition to knowledge, I have attained so much material these passed weeks. I recently compiled and organized all this information in files that I will take with me to school this fall. I will use them and add to my files often as I am sure they will help me with my future endeavors.

- h) Suggestions for Future Intern: Provide two to three suggestions from your experience that may benefit a future intern. Elaborate if needed.

- 1) *Make sure that you are always professional. Your internship preceptors could very well be your future colleagues and even employers. The world of Public Health is small.*
 - 2) *Enjoy every minute of your internship. You have been blessed with access into a world in which you hope to one day have a career. Don't waste time. Get in everything and ask a lot of questions.*
 - 3) *NETWORK, NETWORK, NETWORK!! Everyone will tell you. There are too many important people walking throughout the halls of your internship for you to be timid and not introduce yourself. Meet, greet, and take many business cards. If the person is someone who could potentially really help you in your career goals, make sure you make an impression with them. Whether it be over lunch, a simple conversation, or just a polite email, make yourself visible.*
- i) Comments: Provide any additional thoughts. This is free form to say whatever you would like that is suitable for website publication.

HCC's program is wonderful. If you feel your interests in Public Health are still too broad, this opportunity will definitely help you focus in on what you truly can visualize as your profession. Although it may sound more like an infomercial, believe me when I tell you that in 10 weeks, the road to the rest of your life becomes much clearer!!