

Vidant Health Advance Care Planning Scholar Reviews

Olivia Olsher (2022)

No feedback provided.

Adam Ushpol (2021)

My internship was with the Advance Care Planning (ACP) team at Vidant Health. The mission of the ACP team is to promote the completion of Advance Directives, which identify a person's preferences for treatment if they are unable to speak for themselves, and to reform the culture of medicine from time-starved and emotionally-stunted to patient-centered. I assisted my internship coordinator, Vicki Dougherty, with her education and outreach efforts, shadowed the palliative care physician, made weekly visits with a terminally ill man, and completed a Mortality and Morbidity (M&M) audit for Vidant-Edgecombe Hospital. The M&M project was the centerpiece of my summer experience and involved assessing the electronic health records of all of the patients who died at the hospital in April, May, and June for the presence of Advance Directives, reports of end-of-life discussions between doctor and patient, and whether life-prolonging measures were undertaken, among other things. After collecting this data, I created a report, which will be used to guide enhanced palliative care/ACP interventions at the hospital.

Death and dying may turn a lot of people off of this internship. But for anyone with an interest in medicine, this internship is important, because death is an inevitable and fundamental part of health care.

My only advice for living in Tarboro is to take advantage of the many opportunities the ENCIP Board offers, because this is the best way to integrate into the community.

Divya Mahesh (2020)

I worked in Tarboro, NC on an Advance Care Planning community outreach project with Vidant Health Edgecombe County. Advance Care Planning is the pre-planning of one's end-of-life decisions, which can ultimately be summarized by the healthcare power of attorney and living will forms. Edgecombe County (where Tarboro is located) has one of the lowest rates in eastern North Carolina of people completing their advance directives and having those difficult conversations, so I was working to bring that important information to general public. However, my day-to-day activities varied widely, sometimes allowing me to work from home and other times requiring me to travel 2-3 hours for an event. I met with community members/groups to make contacts for future events, volunteered at an inpatient hospice facility, shadowed nurses/social workers/chaplains to understand the various aspects of end-of-life care, and coordinated community advance care planning clinics.

Advice for other Scholars

Internship:

- You must be self-motivated (plan a lot of your internship) and able to stay positive even after a difficult day (parts of this internship were emotionally draining).
- You must have a car for this internship. It's technically optional, but I would have struggled to complete at least half of my internship if I didn't have a car.
- Try to narrow down your project topic within the first couple weeks. There is a lot to be done with Advance Care Planning and you can't possibly do it all, so narrow down your topic as soon as you can.
- Because there is so much to be done, I sometimes felt like I wasn't having as much of an impact as I could or should be. Just remember, that you will not be able to "fix" the problem in 8 weeks and that everything you are doing is moving Vidant closer to its goal.

Tarboro:

- Get to know the Eastern North Carolina Internship Program (ENCIP) group. It was a huge resource for us.
- Get involved in the community. The ENCIP group really tried to integrate us into the community through community dinners, trivia night at the local brewery, etc, so make use of these opportunities!
- Communicate with the other scholars.
- Travel! Tarboro has a great central location with access to beaches, mountains, lakes, etc. We went to Wrightsville Beach near Wilmington, Asheville, Lake Gaston, and Edenton. I also visited the Outer Banks and New Bern for work.