

Quick recap

The meeting focused on developing a structured healthcare internship program for high school students in Sonoma County, with stakeholders discussing standardization, prioritization of activities, and integration of various healthcare roles. Participants explored ways to provide students with comprehensive exposure to healthcare careers, including clinical, administrative, and community health aspects, while emphasizing the importance of hands-on experience and career exploration. The group also discussed potential collaborations, simulation opportunities, and the creation of a culminating internship experience to better prepare students for future healthcare careers.

Next steps

- Leslie to share out the draft job description and 10-week program plan documents for feedback.
- Leslie to follow up with healthcare partners to get commitments for taking at least one intern in spring 2026.
- Leslie to schedule a meeting with Carla to discuss public and community health internship opportunities.
- Leslie to reach out to Oriana to discuss potential internship opportunities.
- Brandon and Leslie to continue meeting with individual students to understand their interests and career goals for internship placements.
- Leslie to reconvene the group in August or September for further discussion.
- Katie to share the draft internship schedule with her team at Providence for review.
- Leslie to share the draft internship schedule with Kaiser representatives who were not present at the meeting.

Summary

Healthcare Internship Framework Initiative

The meeting served as an introduction and alignment session for various healthcare and education stakeholders in Sonoma County, focusing on building a coherent framework for healthcare internships. Participants discussed the need to standardize internship experiences across different healthcare facilities, ensuring equitable access for students. Leslie emphasized the importance of collaboration to create a structured internship program, while participants shared their current initiatives and expressed interest in contributing to the broader goal of developing a workforce pipeline. The group planned to continue their work by reviewing 60 potential internship activities and addressing challenges collaboratively.

Healthcare Internship Priority Assessment

Leslie presented a prioritization exercise where participants evaluated healthcare internship activities across six categories, with patient experience and support, administrative and clerical support, and logistics and operational support emerging as the top priorities. The group had previously reviewed approximately 8-12 activities within each category and voted on their importance, with the most highly rated activities highlighted in red. Ramona joined the meeting and confirmed she was reviewing the correct slide showing six categories, with three marked in red as top priorities.

Healthcare Career Path Restructuring

Leslie and Gandhi discussed collapsing some healthcare career categories into two main paths: medical careers and ancillary/support roles. Gandhi suggested rethinking how to structure student exposure to these roles within a limited timeframe, while Oriana and Ramona agreed that structured checklists and hands-on experience could effectively cover multiple aspects of healthcare work within a 40-hour period.

Healthcare Internship Program Overview

Leslie explains that the internship activities provide exposure opportunities for students with limited healthcare experience, helping them narrow down their educational and career pursuits. Gandhi asks how these activities differ from volunteer work, to which Leslie admits she needs to consult with employer partners for clarification. Brandon clarifies that there's no significant definitional difference between unpaid internships and volunteer work in this context. The group discusses that the primary goal of the internship program is to provide high-quality career-connected experiences for high school juniors and seniors, helping them explore and prepare for their future, rather than guaranteeing immediate employment. Ramona and Oriana emphasize that the internship allows students to decide if healthcare is the right direction for them.

Healthcare Career Exploration Discussion

The group discussed healthcare career exploration opportunities, with Ramona emphasizing the need to help students discover available healthcare roles beyond doctors and nurses. Leslie presented prioritized categories including observation and career exploration, with Ramona and Brandon agreeing that baseline exposure could help students discover unexpected career paths. The team identified that medical assistant roles were incorrectly excluded from the prioritized categories and agreed to fix this oversight.

Community Health Integration Strategies

The group discussed the need to incorporate community health and public health into their activities, with Carla noting the absence of such initiatives in their current focus. Brittany suggested exploring parallel tracks for community health and healthcare settings, while Leslie mentioned ongoing efforts to collaborate with county health services and coordinate internships for high school students. The team agreed to brainstorm additional ideas for integrating community health aspects into their programs.

Expanding Healthcare Shadowing Opportunities

The group discussed expanding shadowing opportunities to include social workers, discharge planners, and patient navigators in both hospital and community health settings. Ramona emphasized that while clinical care is important, understanding healthcare's broader context outside clinics is crucial, and suggested that shadowing these roles could help students see the full scope of healthcare work and its connection to social determinants of health. Leslie agreed, noting that this broader perspective would be valuable for building a workforce pipeline and helping young people understand the comprehensive support needed for populations beyond clinical care.

AI-Driven Healthcare Internship Planning

Leslie presented a draft job description and 10-week program plan based on prioritized activities, which she developed using an AI model. She shared a potential schedule for a 40-hour internship and discussed the need to further develop the community health component. The group discussed the availability of simulation labs in the area, with Petaluma Valley Hospital having a SIM lab and Fox Home Health having beds and mannequins for practice. Brandon suggested the possibility of collaborative practice agreements between organizations that lack simulation facilities.

Health Career Opportunities for Students

Leslie and the team discussed creating opportunities for high school students to experience public and community health, considering both separate internships and integration into existing programs. Brittany suggested focusing on project-based learning within governmental public health, offering broader exposure without requiring full internships, and proposed collaborating with schools to develop shared projects. Ramona emphasized the importance of health career days to showcase various healthcare roles and educational paths.

High School Internship Program Planning

The group discussed creating a culminating internship experience for high school students, with Leslie explaining that this initiative aims to encourage schools to prepare students better for internships and potentially influence schools to implement similar programs. Ramona suggested the idea of a county-wide career fair for health-related opportunities, while Brandon highlighted that their program will meet individually with students to tailor internships to their career goals and interests. Chris provided an overview of the three main health science pathways in the county, including patient care, biotechnology, and public/community health, and mentioned the JC's efforts to support these pathways with broad courses like medical terminology and nutrition. Leslie concluded by noting that they are still working towards securing commitments from healthcare partners to host interns in spring 2026 and will reconvene in August or September.