

SAMPLE HEALTHCARE HIGH SCHOOL INTERNSHIP

Sonoma County Healthcare Pathways Internship Program (Spring 2026)

Total Weekly Hours: Approximately 5 hours/week **Total Program Duration:** 10 weeks

Total Internship Hours: 50 hours (plus orientation & H&S)

Program Goals:

- Provide high school students with a comprehensive, equitable, and meaningful exposure to diverse roles and environments within the healthcare industry.
- Offer hands-on, observational, and simulated experiences aligned with high-priority community feedback.
- Foster career exploration and inspire the next generation of healthcare professionals.
- Ensure a balance of consistency across placements and flexibility for host organizations.

Weekly Breakdown & Integrated Activities:

Week 1: Foundations & First Impressions

- **Total Hours:** Approximately 8 hours (5 internship hours + 2 hrs Orientation + 1 hr Health & Safety)
- **Activities:**
 - **Orientation (2 hrs):** Welcome, program overview, expectations, introduction to the host organization, meet primary supervisor.
 - **Health & Safety Protocols (1 hr):** Essential training on confidentiality (HIPAA overview), universal precautions, emergency procedures, facility-specific safety rules.
 - **Initial Department Tour & Wayfinding (2 hrs):** A guided tour of the primary department/unit, understanding the layout and basic navigation. Begin a core support task, such as setting up a wayfinding station or preparing informational packets.
 - **Basic Administrative Support (1 hr):** Introduction to simple clerical tasks relevant to the department.

Week 2: Deep Dive into Departmental Routines & Initial Explorations

- **Total Hours:** 5 hours
- **Activities:**
 - **Departmental Shadowing (3 hrs - Observational & Career Exploration):** Begin observing the daily routines of various roles within the primary department (e.g., front desk staff, unit clerk, support staff). Focus on understanding their daily tasks and interactions.
 - **Expand Administrative Tasks (1.5 hrs):** Continue and broaden administrative support, such as organizing materials, light data entry, or preparing common area resources.
 - **Supervisor Check-in (0.5 hr):** First brief check-in with the primary supervisor to discuss initial impressions and answer questions.

Week 3: Broadening Horizons & Understanding Roles

- **Total Hours:** 5 hours
- **Activities:**
 - **Departmental Shadowing (3 hrs - Observational & Career Exploration):** Continue observing roles within the primary department. Host organizations can "plug and play" here, focusing on roles most relevant to their setting (e.g., observing a physical therapy assistant in a rehab clinic, a lab technician in a hospital lab).
 - **Informational Interviews (1 hr - Observational & Career Exploration):** Facilitate a brief, structured interview with 1-2 staff members within the primary department about their roles, career paths, and daily responsibilities. Provide students with pre-prepared questions.
 - **Patient Engagement Activities (1 hr - Patient Experience & Support):** Engage in non-clinical patient support, such as preparing materials for common areas, organizing activities, or distributing non-clinical comfort items.

Week 4: Specialized Tours & Indirect Patient Support

- **Total Hours:** 5 hours
- **Activities:**
 - **Tour of Specialized Units (2.5 hrs - Observational & Career Exploration):** Guided tours of areas like imaging, pharmacy, or a laboratory (from a distance, emphasizing safety and privacy). Focus on explanations of the function of the unit and the roles within it.
 - **Lobby/Waiting Area Host (2 hrs - Patient Experience & Support):** Students act as a welcoming presence, greeting visitors, offering comfort items (blankets, water), answering general, non-confidential

questions, and assisting with general sign-in (e.g., directing to the correct kiosk).

- **Supervisor Check-in (0.5 hr):** Brief progress check-in.

Week 5: Clinical Observations & Service Support

- **Total Hours:** 5 hours
- **Activities:**
 - **Medical Assisting Role Shadowing (2 hrs - Observational & Simulated Clinical Exposure):** Observe a medical assistant during non-invasive patient intake, vital signs (if permitted and simulated), or preparing exam rooms. Emphasize observation of professional conduct and patient interaction.
 - **Patient Survey Distribution (2.5 hrs - Patient Experience & Support):** Hand out patient satisfaction surveys (stressing that no personal health information is collected or discussed with students). Students can assist with organizing returned surveys.
 - **Reflective Journaling/Discussion (0.5 hr):** Dedicate time for students to reflect on their observations and experiences from the first half of the program.

Week 6: Infection Control & Behind-the-Scenes Health Promotion

- **Total Hours:** 5 hours
- **Activities:**
 - **Infection Control Practices Observation (2 hrs - Observational & Simulated Clinical Exposure):** Observe staff adherence to infection control protocols (e.g., proper hand hygiene, PPE use and donning/doffing demonstrations, cleaning procedures in common areas). Focus on understanding the importance of these practices.
 - **Health Promotion & Education (Behind-the-Scenes) (2.5 hrs - Health Promotion & Education):** Assist with preparing materials for health education campaigns, organizing health fair resources, or researching information for patient handouts (not direct patient education).
 - **Supervisor Check-in (0.5 hr):** Mid-program check-in.

Week 7: Rehabilitation & Patient Comfort

- **Total Hours:** 5 hours
- **Activities:**
 - **Observation of Rehabilitation Sessions (2.5 hrs - Observational & Career Exploration):** Observe physical or occupational therapy

sessions (with patient consent and maintaining privacy). Focus on the therapist's interaction, different exercises, and patient progress.

- **Patient Rounding (Non-Clinical) (2 hrs - Patient Experience & Support):** Under supervision, students can check on patient comfort (not medical needs), offering to get ice, magazines, or adjusting blinds/lighting in common areas or non-acute patient rooms.
- **Reflective Journaling/Discussion (0.5 hr):** Time for students to process observations.

Week 8: Volunteer Program Support & Career Discussion

- **Total Hours:** 5 hours
- **Activities:**
 - **Volunteer Program Support (3 hrs - Observational & Career Exploration):** Assist the volunteer coordinator with onboarding tasks for new volunteers (e.g., preparing orientation packets, organizing supplies, data entry for volunteer records). This offers a unique look at the operational side of support services.
 - **Informational Interviews (1.5 hrs - Observational & Career Exploration):** Conduct brief interviews with 1-2 additional staff members, potentially from a different department, focusing on varied career paths.
 - **Supervisor Check-in (0.5 hr):** Check-in on progress and address any questions.

Week 9: Simulation & Program Wrap-Up Prep

- **Total Hours:** 5 hours
- **Activities:**
 - **Patient Simulation Lab Experience (3 hrs - Observational & Simulated Clinical Exposure):** If available, participate in high-fidelity simulation scenarios. This is a crucial "plug and play" activity. Students can practice vital signs on mannequins, basic first aid, and communication with "patients" in a controlled environment. If a simulation lab isn't available, this time can be reallocated to more in-depth departmental shadowing, administrative support, or a second round of informational interviews.
 - **Preparation for Final Reflection (2 hrs):** Students begin organizing their experiences, notes, and questions to prepare for their final reflection and presentation.

Week 10: Conclusion & Celebration

- **Total Hours:** 6 hours (5 internship hours + 1 hr final reflection/celebration)
- **Activities:**
 - **Conclude Core Activities (3 hrs):** Finalize any ongoing tasks, ensure all administrative duties are completed, and conduct final observations if time permits.
 - **Review Progress & Future Steps (1 hr):** Individual meeting with supervisor to review the internship, discuss achievements, and explore potential next steps or resources for future career exploration.
 - **Final Reflection & Celebration (2 hrs):** Students present their reflections on the experience (e.g., key learnings, surprising discoveries, impact on career interest) to their supervisor and potentially other staff. This can be a small celebration of their accomplishments.