

Job Description

PICS Intern Summer 2015

BHCHP

Boston Health Care for the Homeless Program (BHCHP) is committed to a singular, powerful mission—to provide and assure access to the highest quality health care for Boston’s homeless men, women and children. BHCHP maintains strong ties with the medical community, operating daily hospital-based primary care clinics for homeless patients on the campuses of Massachusetts General Hospital and Boston Medical Center. In addition, BHCHP’s multi-disciplinary teams deliver direct medical, dental and behavioral health services to homeless men, women, and children in over 80 unconventional locations – in shelters and soup kitchens, under bridges, along back alleys, and even behind the backstretch barns of a local thoroughbred racetrack. BHCHP also runs a unique 104-bed medical respite program that provides sophisticated, round-the-clock medical and nursing care for homeless individuals when they are too sick for shelters or the street but not in need of a costly inpatient hospital stay.

BHCHP has been fortunate to host a Princeton intern for the past seven summers and their contributions to the agency have been numerous. First and foremost, our Princeton interns have allowed us to truly expand the amount of work that can be accomplished by our Institute of Research, Quality and Policy. With multiple research projects in progress, having an intern enables us to dedicate the time and resources to projects that would not otherwise be possible. It is also valuable to have a fresh perspective when conducting research. Our previous interns have done a remarkable job learning about the various elements of our program and applying that knowledge when making suggestions for the direction of the projects. Finally, having an intern “forces” our program to be more introspective and deliberate about our approach and methodology. This is beneficial for an intern whom we want to teach and mentor, but also allows our busy program to take a step back and consider the “big picture” and the finer details of our research.

Internship Opportunity: Description

Boston Health Care for the Homeless Program / McInnis Health Group has a history of quality activities resulting in ongoing improvement in the access and quality of the medical care that is received by our underserved clients. All quality activities have oversight by the Chief Medical Officer with additional oversight roles by the Director of Operations.

Years of very active research by the Institute of Research, Quality, and Policy at BHCHP have resulted in many quality improvements and an expanded base of published literature that is used nationally as key reference material for other organizations serving homeless persons. This activity is integrated into the remainder of the organization through many communication vehicles, including meetings and other forums. The Institute continues to work on many projects that incorporate data and information from our practice databases and uses it in studies and projects that will provide answers to some of the questions about the best way to serve our population’s needs.

The PICS intern will be involved in the ongoing Institute quality improvement, program evaluation, and research projects. H/she will also have the opportunity to develop a quality research question and work with us to complete a project based on this question. The quality projects include but are not limited to: patient satisfaction, chronic disease measures (such as hypertension, diabetes, and asthma), cancer screening methods, vaccination, and tobacco cessation. The Institute is also working to improve our internal library database and a project could include database management and/or literature reviews to supplement our current archives. We have a bi-annual newsletter that will have a publication during the summer that an intern could contribute to as well.

He or she will have the opportunity to learn first-hand about the impact of homelessness on the health and well-being of our patients. The intern will have the opportunity to work closely with the Street Team and other program clinicians and staff during clinic hours and “house calls”. He or she will accompany the clinicians and will work with staff in the support and care of patients.

In the past, interns have also led recreational activities for patients staying in the BHCHP respite facility and shadowed providers in other areas of our program. We hope that through this personal interaction with our patients and clinicians, the intern will begin to understand the complex lives, medical and social needs, and rich histories of people experiencing homelessness. Through participation with the institute and work in a variety of settings, we are confident that the intern will gain an increased and nuanced understanding of the public health and medical issues surrounding homelessness and health care. Perhaps the intern will even catch our passion for caring for some of our society’s most vulnerable citizens.

Intern Qualifications

*Please list **required** skills and/or experience you are seeking.*

- Strong interpersonal skills, including being comfortable in a variety of settings and with people of many different backgrounds (physicians, patients, staff, funders, etc.)
- Flexibility and adaptability, as intern may be needed to assist with other research tasks, program operations, or patients
- A demonstrated interest in medicine, public policy, and/or public health
- Desire to explore and understand the intersection of medical, cultural, and social histories of people who have experienced homelessness
- A mature, compassionate student; *preferably* in junior or senior year, but not a requirement
- Highly motivated and self-directed; comfortable taking initiative with little supervision
- Strong writing skills
- Attention to detail and thorough review of work