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X3 UNMH Internship Evaluation Report

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Summary

Future Focused Education (FFE) partners with healthcare organizations like the University of New Mexico Hospital (UNMH) to provide meaningful internship experiences that equip young people with professional mentorship, career exposure, and real-world skills.

These internships not only support students in building confidence and expertise but also contribute to a stronger, community-driven healthcare workforce.

By investing in young talent, these programs create equitable career pathways while addressing critical workforce shortages in innovative and sustainable ways. **Research shows that internships and hands-on learning experiences inspire students to enter healthcare careers, making these programs a valuable investment in workforce development.**^{1 2 3}

New Mexico has a growing need for additional healthcare workers: 200 primary care, 73 mental health care, and 171 dental health professionals are currently needed to ensure care for all New Mexicans. These numbers increase when taking into account those who leave the workforce due to retirement or other reasons.⁴ While healthcare shortages persist — particularly in primary care, mental health, and dental health — there is great potential to develop future professionals by expanding early career exposure.

Strengthening and diversifying the healthcare workforce through development programs could improve:

- Access to and quality of healthcare, particularly for underserved populations,
- Cultural competence of the workforce, and
- The educational experience of healthcare students.⁵

Youth who interned at UNMH with the X3 program reported **developing both interpersonal and technical skills** that could help them succeed in the workplace. They report **increased confidence and clearer career goals**, as well as **stronger professional networks** due to the connections they made during their internships.

Many stated that the internships reinforced their **choice of a healthcare career** and taught them more about day-to-day tasks and experiences in healthcare workplaces.

How Much Did We Do?

Between Summer of 2023 and Fall of 2024, 114 interns participated in 147 healthcare internships, with 106 UNMH placements.

78 interns (68%) completed at least one internship at UNMH.

Interns primarily identified as female (88%) and Hispanic, Latinx, Chicano, or Mexican only (63%). Most were 16-18 years old at the start of their first internships (77%).

74 healthcare mentors supported interns, with many returning for multiple sessions.

89% or more of internships were completed in four of the five sessions analyzed. The completion rate was 70% in the Fall of 2023, which reflects the experiences of 6 students who ended early, never started, or were rematched after the session started.

How Well Did We Do It?

Interns gained valuable skills in both interpersonal (e.g., empathy, communication, confidence) and technical (e.g., taking vitals, patient scheduling) areas.

Healthcare mentors reported high satisfaction, emphasizing the importance of providing young people with workplace exposure and career mentorship.

Post-survey results indicated interns increased confidence in:

- Navigating the healthcare system
- Speaking up for themselves in healthcare settings
- Asking for more information to support their own and family members' health

88% of interns reported more knowledge of healthcare career opportunities.

Interns valued the opportunity for mentorship, professional development, and exposure to various healthcare roles.

Is Anyone Better Off?

Interns have clearer career goals and more confidence in their ability to succeed.

Interns are more prepared to join the workforce, equipped with industry-aligned interpersonal and technical skills.

Interns established valuable connections with healthcare professionals, mentors, and potential employers.

Several interns expressed interest in future employment within the healthcare sector.

UNMH identified opportunities to further engage interns in diverse hospital roles beyond patient care.

About Future Focused Education

Future Focused Education’s mission is to build healthier, more prosperous communities by advancing high-quality education for the students who need it most. The organization envisions schools as hubs of innovation and opportunity, where young people create thriving communities.

Future Focused Education (FFE) was founded in Albuquerque, New Mexico, a region where completing high school and transitioning to college or careers presents significant challenges—especially for youth of color and those from underprivileged backgrounds.

FFE works across student, school, district, and state levels to create supportive career pathways, aiming to break cycles of poverty and expand opportunities for young people.

Change is generated through work-based learning and paid internship programs, assessment reform, capstone pathways, and social-emotional learning.

Through this work, FFE seeks to make communities healthier and more prosperous by helping young people see that their future is rooted in investing in their own communities.



*Working locally.
Transforming
education
nationally.*

FFE's Four Levers for Change

Future Focused Education bases its programming and initiatives on four “levers for change”: **community partnerships, communities of care and well-being, work-based learning, and learning by doing.** By integrating these pillars into education, FFE is transforming schools into spaces where students are empowered to lead, innovate, and build brighter futures.

Community Partnerships

Rooted in the principle of “local wisdom for local schools,” FFE believes that communities understand their own needs best and should have spaces to advocate for and shape education that reflects those needs.

Communities of Care and Well-Being

Support is focused on treating young people as assets to be nurtured rather than problems to be solved. This pillar is about building a school culture that is intellectually and emotionally safe and supportive for students.



Learning by Doing

Through project-based learning, students apply their knowledge to solve real-world problems, gaining critical skills along the way.

Work-Based Learning

Programs like X3 provide students with meaningful, hands-on experiences that prepare them for future careers while fostering relationships with mentors and potential employers.

About X3 Internship Programs

The X3 internship programs leverage partnerships with local schools and employers to support career development for marginalized high school students, recent graduates, and out-of-school youth.

Interns are paired with caring adult mentors in local workplaces and organizations and receive **educational stipends** for their participation. X3 and NeXt program staff offer **personalized support** to interns, mentors, and school staff to ensure meaningful experiences, personal growth, and future success. These programs provide **real-world learning experiences**, helping young people gain skills, build networks, and prepare for future careers.

Program Structure

X3 INTERNSHIPS

Designed for high school students, X3 provides **early workforce experience while students continue their education**. Interns commit up to **12 hours per week** at their internship site. There are three types of X3 internships. X3 Albuquerque offers individual paid internships. X3 Group offers group internships. X3 Northern NM offers individual internships in Northern New Mexico, allowing young people from these communities to participate in work-based learning without having to commute.

X3 NeXt INTERNSHIPS

Designed for youth who have obtained a high school diploma or GED equivalent, NeXt interns work up to **25 hours per week** at their internship site. Students can transition from a high school X3 internship to NeXt programs after graduation, known in FFE as **“Flexible Pathways”**. Participation in X3 is not required to enroll in NeXt.

Internship Settings and Schedule

Internships are customized based on each intern’s interests and, when applicable, their academic program. Opportunities are available in both **individual (1:1) and group settings** and can be conducted **in-person or in hybrid formats** at the worksite.

Internships are offered during **three sessions**. In the Fall & Spring Sessions, each internship lasts 10-13 weeks and primarily serves students enrolled in school. Summer Session internships, conducted in partnership with the New Mexico Public Education Department, last eight weeks and are open to all, including youth not currently enrolled in school.

Purpose and Importance of Healthcare Internships

The **University of New Mexico Hospital (UNMH)** is the state's only Level 1 Trauma Center, providing critical care to patients from across New Mexico, including children at the state's only pediatric emergency care center. UNMH is also home to the first NIH-designated Comprehensive Cancer Center and the award-winning Advanced Care Stroke Center.

As an Academic Health Center and teaching hospital, UNMH plays a vital role in training future healthcare professionals by offering hands-on learning experiences in community-responsive, culturally competent patient care, education, and clinical research.

Because UNMH serves a **diverse patient population** statewide, it has implemented several specialized services and programs to address the unique needs of New Mexicans, including:

- **Priority access to care for Native Americans**, supported by patient care coordinators, community liaisons, and referral coordination.
- **Free, 24/7 interpreter services**, available in over 200 languages, accessible in-person, by phone, or via video.
- **LGBTQ+ affirming care**, recognized by the Human Rights Campaign Healthcare Equality Index.
- **Telehealth services** to expand access to care across rural and underserved areas.
- **Health Hubs** that bring essential healthcare services directly to communities.

Future Focused Education (FFE) has collaborated closely with the UNMH Talent Acquisition team to place interns across the UNMH system. Since launching the X3 internship program in 2017, FFE has also placed interns at other healthcare sites across New Mexico, expanding career exploration opportunities for young people interested in the healthcare field.

Why Invest in Healthcare Internships?

The demand for healthcare internships has grown significantly, particularly in response to workforce shortages and the long-term impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. FFE has been a key partner in **UNMH's efforts to develop a diverse, equitable, and inclusive healthcare workforce**, starting as early as high school. By bridging the gap between education and employment, FFE's healthcare internship model provides young people with:

- **Early exposure to healthcare careers** through real-world, hands-on experience.
- **Mentorship and professional development**, guided by experienced healthcare professionals.
- **A structured pathway into post-secondary education and employment**, ensuring a pipeline of skilled, community-centered healthcare workers.

National and New Mexico Trends in Healthcare Employment

Healthcare organizations nationwide are increasingly implementing youth internships and early exposure programs to address workforce challenges. **Research indicates that early exposure to healthcare careers influences students' decisions to pursue healthcare professions.** High school volunteering and shadowing opportunities in hospitals have been shown to increase interest in medical education.^{3 4 5}

In New Mexico, the urgency of engaging youth in healthcare careers is particularly pronounced. The New Mexico Health Care Workforce Committee Report highlights **severe shortages in primary care, behavioral health, and rural healthcare.**

As of December 31, 2024, there were 105 primary care, 95 mental health care, and 105 dental health care professional shortage areas in New Mexico.⁴ To reach a threshold population-to-provider ratio, 200 primary care, 73 mental health care, and 171 dental health practitioners need to join the workforce.⁴ This net increase must also account for practitioners leaving the workforce because they are retiring, moving, switching careers, or leaving for other reasons. An aging workforce, post-pandemic attrition, and high vacancy rates worsen the crisis.

Efforts to address these challenges include **investing in early pipeline development strategies.** Programs like Future Focused Education's healthcare internships connect high school students and recent graduates with meaningful healthcare experiences, providing structured pathways into healthcare careers starting in high school. Expanding such initiatives is crucial to developing a sustainable healthcare workforce and mitigating long-term shortages across the state.



Findings

About This Evaluation

The main goals of this evaluation are:

- **to assess the number of internship placements at healthcare organizations**, focusing on whether/how the number of placements has increased;
- **to understand the skills, abilities, and experiences youth who intern gain** through their placement and how those skills can be transferred to a full-time position in healthcare;
- **to learn how mentors view young people** and what skills they see as important for their workplaces.

The findings from this evaluation will support Future Focused and UNMH in developing and refining healthcare internship placements, ensuring that young people are prepared for a full-time career in healthcare.

The current three-year contract between UNMH and FFE resulted from a competitive RFP process, has facilitated an even closer partnership between the organizations, and is evidence of a strong professional relationship with a partner that values FFE as an intermediary support for healthcare interns. The UNMH/FFE contract funded this evaluation.

Results-Based Accountability Framework

The findings in this report are framed using the **Results-Based Accountability (RBA©) Framework**, which provides a structured yet adaptable approach to evaluation.

RBA ensures that data is transparent and actionable and focuses on measurable improvements in people's lives rather than simply reporting numbers. Three key questions guide this framework:

1. **How much did we do?** – Measures the quantity of internships and other services and resources provided.
2. **How well did we do it?** – Assesses the quality and effectiveness of internships, including young people, employer and mentor satisfaction.
3. **Is anyone better off?** – Evaluates impact by tracking changes in knowledge, skills, behavior, or overall well-being.

How Much Did We Do?

Since the Summer of 2023 session, 114 young people have been placed in 147 healthcare internships, including **106 internships with UNMH**. About half of healthcare internships (52%) involved interns who were new to the FFE X3 program and the other half were returning to the program after previously completing an internship with FFE (48%). Most interns completed these internships as participants of the X3 ABQ (44%) or NeXt (40%) programs. A smaller number of the interns completed internships as participants of the X3 Northern NM program (16%).

88% of interns completed their healthcare internship. 7% ended early, 3% were never started, and 2% involved the intern being placed into a new position before the term officially started. X3 Northern NM participants may experience more barriers to completing their internship - 83% completed their internship and 17% ended early or never started.

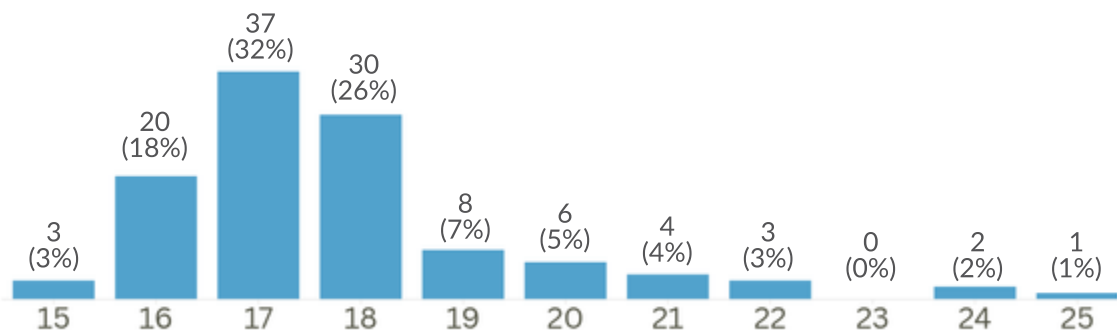
68% of the 114 interns who participated during this time period completed at least one internship at UNMH and the data in this report largely reflects interns who participated in a UNMH internship. All UNMH internships are completed by participants in the X3 ABQ and NeXt programs. No X3 Northern NM program participants have completed an internship at UNMH. Internships with UNMH are less accessible to interns who are located in Northern New Mexico, including the areas of Santa Fe and Española, which are about 65-90 miles from UNMH by car and 2.5 to 3.5 hours away by transit.

53 interns returned for multiple internships. Most of them had at least one experience at UNMH (77%). X3 Northern NM interns are less likely to return for multiple sessions (5%).

Healthcare Internship Participant Demographics

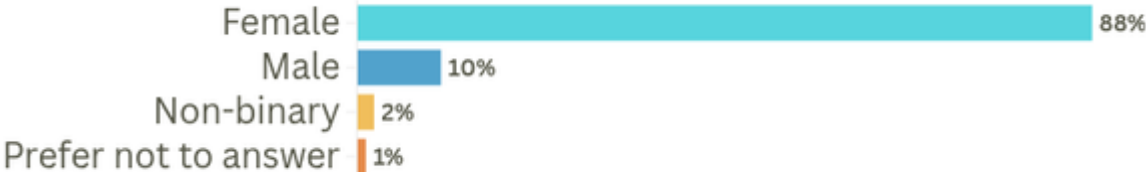
The 114 youth who interned between Summer 2023 and Fall 2024 were 15 to 25 years old at the start of their first internship, with 77% aged 16 to 18. 85% of UNMH interns are 16 to 18 years old, while 58% of X3 Northern NM participants are in this same age group. Further, 57% of all interns were in high school when their internship started, 36% were in college, and 8% were not enrolled in school.

Most Interns Are 16-18 Years Old



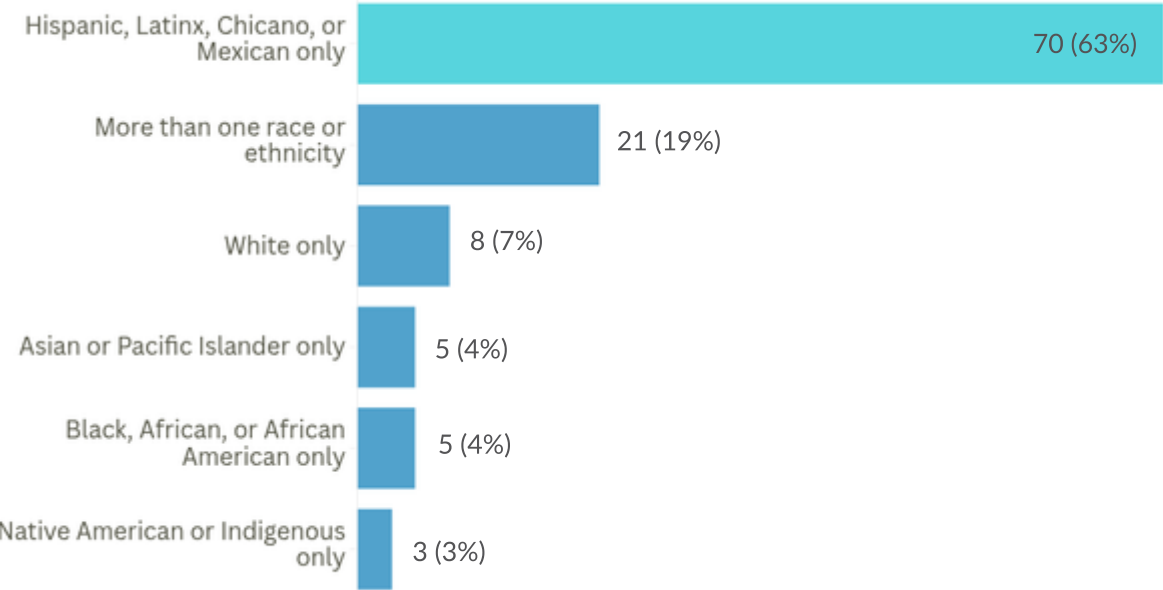
88% of interns identify as female, 10% identify as male, and 2% identify as non-binary. More than half of the interns who identify as male participate in the X3 Northern NM program.

Most Internship Participants Identify as Female

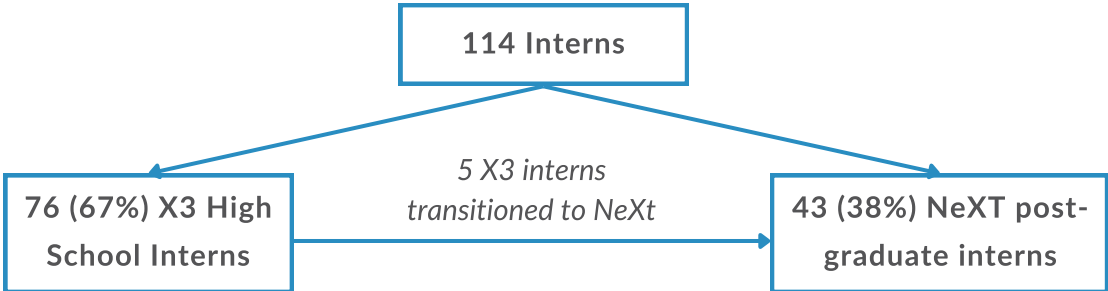


63% of internship participants identify as Hispanic, Latinx, Chicano, or Mexican.

Most Internship Participants Identify as Hispanic, Latinx, Chicano, or Mexican. ^{6 7}



67% of the 114 interns participated in the X3 ABQ or Northern NM programs at least once and 38% participated in NeXt at least once. Five interns transitioned from X3 to NeXt, which demonstrates the Flexible Pathways aspect of the FFE program structure. All five of these interns had at least one placement with UNMH.



Healthcare Internship Trends Over Time

The number of healthcare internships per session has ranged from 23 to 36 from Summer of 2023 to Fall of 2024.

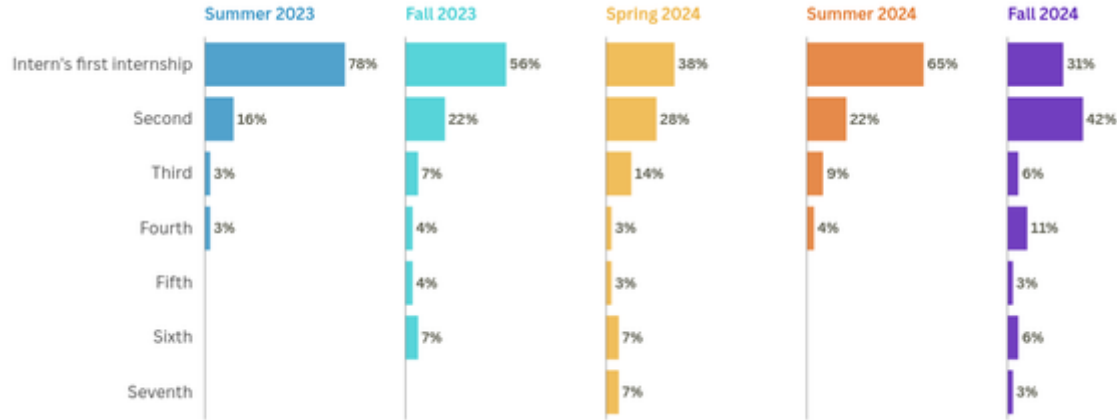
Number of Internships by Session



Summer 2024 saw the lowest number of internships, with 23 placements.

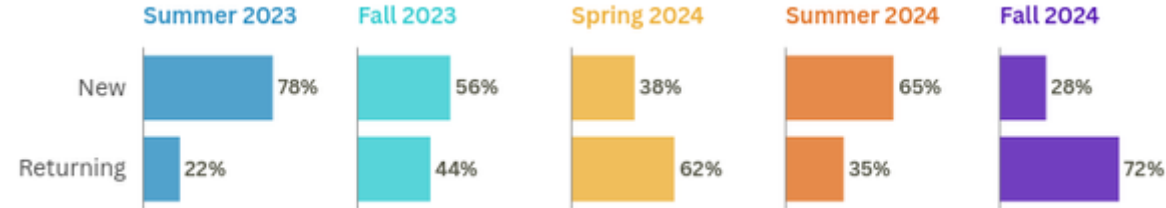
Once students enter the program, those who stay tend to participate in multiple sessions until they exit. X3 Northern NM interns have participated in a up to two sessions so far and, in the Fall of 2024, all interns were returning for a second session.

Recent Sessions Have More Interns That Have Completed Multiple Internships



In recent school-year sessions, the majority of the interns are returning interns who have decided to complete additional internships.

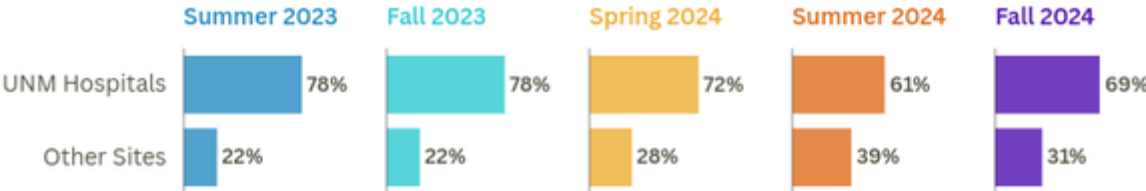
Recent School-Year Sessions Have More Returning Interns



UNMH hosts most of X3's healthcare internships, and this is consistent over time. The number of UNMH internships decreased to 61% in the Summer of 2024 session from 72% or 78% in previous sessions, but then increased again in the Fall of 2024 session.

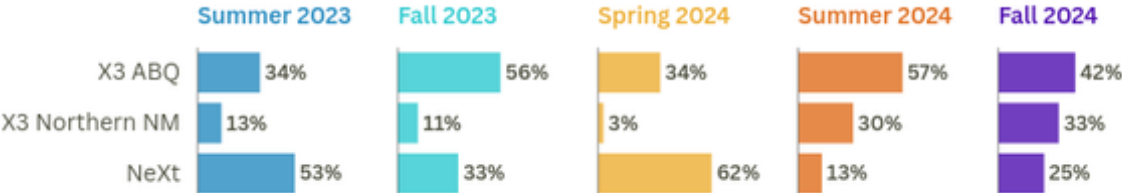
Other healthcare internship placements include Christus St. Vincent Regional Medical Center in Santa Fe, which increased over the last three sessions from one to three interns per sessions. TeamBuilders hosted the most X3 Northern NM interns since Summer 2023.

Most X3 Healthcare Internships Take Place at UNMH



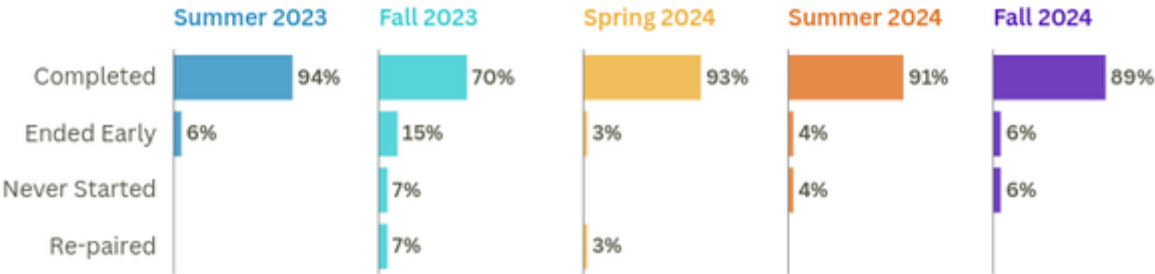
The percentage of interns that are participating in the X3 ABQ, X3 Northern NM, and NeXt programs has varied quite a bit each session. Interns representing X3 Northern NM have increased as a percentage of the total number of interns over the last two sessions.

Healthcare Internships in Northern NM Have Increased in Recent Sessions



89% or more of participants consistently completed their internships in each session, except in the Fall of 2023. During that session, 4 interns ended their internship early, 2 never started, and 2 were matched to a new placement after the start of the session.

Most Interns Complete Their Internships

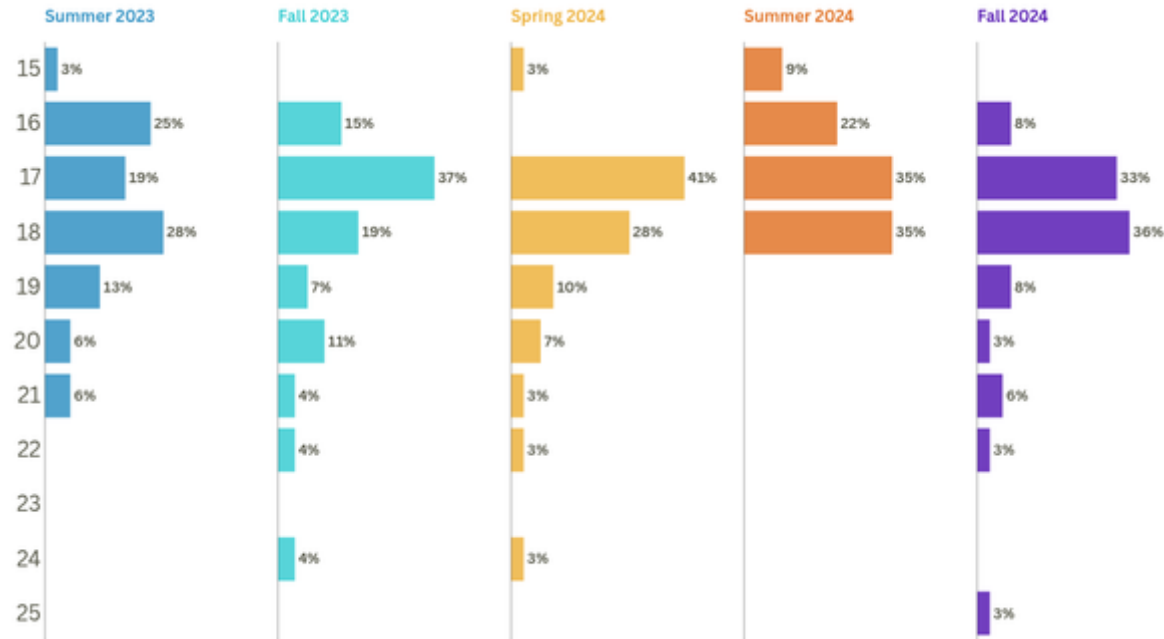


Among those who ended their internships early, one was hired into a permanent position, while two others struggled to balance their internship with other commitments. Some interns were “re-paired”, meaning they had to switch placements because their original mentor or hosting organization was no longer available.

Demographic Trends Over Time

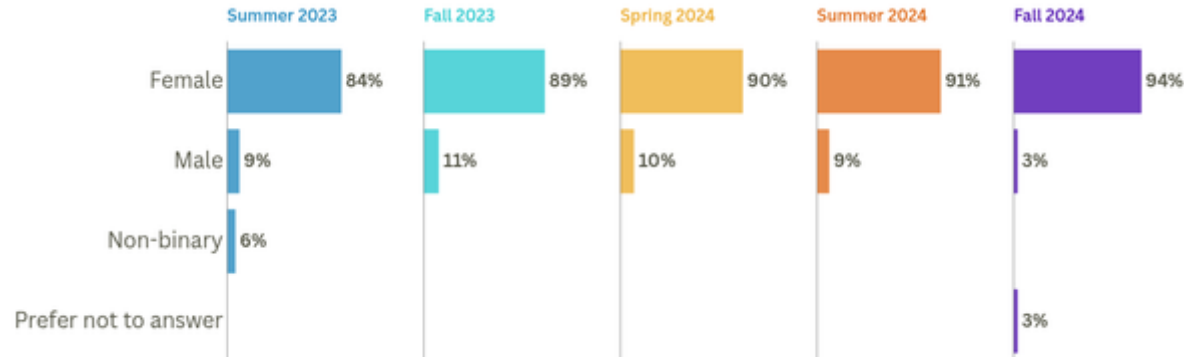
Interns seemed to get a little older from the Summer 2023 to Spring 2024 sessions, but then more younger interns joined the program in the Summer of 2024 session.

Most Interns Are 16-18 Years Old Across Sessions



The percentage of interns who identify as female as a proportion of all interns has been very high for all of the sessions included in this analysis and consistently increased from 84% in the Summer of 2023 session to 94% in the Fall 2024 session.

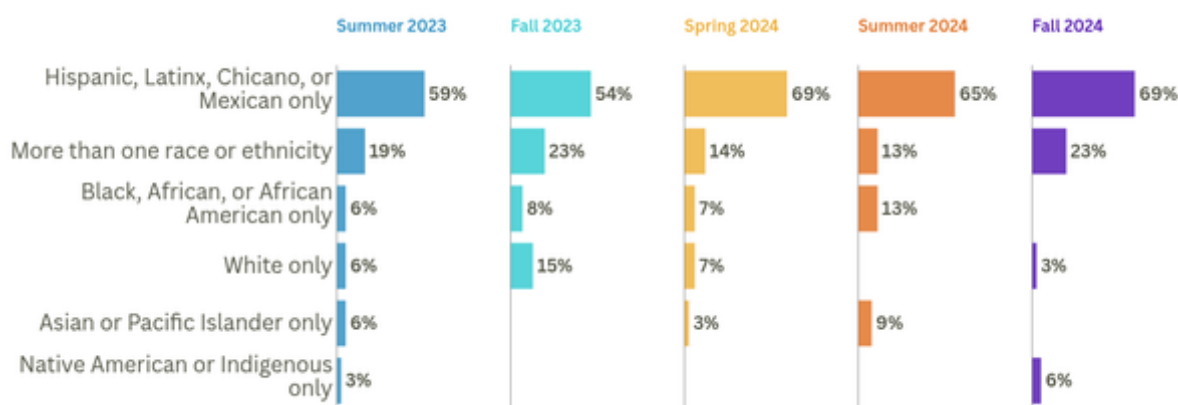
Most Interns Are Female Across Sessions



Interns in healthcare placements have consistently included **a large percentage of young people who identify as Hispanic, Latinx, Chicano, or Mexican only**. 50% of New Mexico's population identifies as Hispanic or Latinx.

Individuals who identify with more than one race or ethnicity or identify as White only are also consistently represented, though in smaller percentages. The number of interns who identify as Black, African, or African American only; Asian or Pacific Islander only; or Native American or Indigenous only has varied over the last several sessions.

Intern Race and Ethnicity by Session



Healthcare Internship Mentors

74 mentors have been involved with the program to support interns since the Summer of 2023 session. Their job titles include:

Leadership/Executive

- VP & Chief Development Officer
- Executive Director
- Director of Student Support

Management

- Operations Manager
- Talent Development Manager
- Laboratory Outpatient Assistant Manager
- Patient Access Services Director
- Program Manager
- Supervisor for Community Programs
- Clinic Supervisor/Office Supervisor
- Diabetes Program Manager

Management (cont'd)

- Manager of Orthotics & Prosthetics
- Registered Nurse (RN) Supervisor

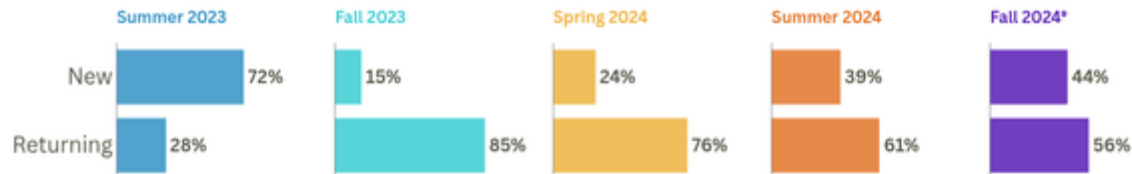
Direct Service/Support

- Administrative Assistant
- Outreach & Training Specialist
- Certified Peer Support Worker
- Youth Education & Prevention Coordinator
- Case Manager/Care Coordinator
- School Social Worker
- Physical Therapist
- Medical Assistant
- Psychiatric/Mental Health Nurse

Some mentors support more than one intern per session, and many mentors return to participate again and again. Between the Summer of 2023 session and the Fall of 2024 session, 43 mentors supported one intern, 19 supported two or three interns, and 12 supported four or more interns. Mentors at UNMH are especially likely to return (65% returning between Summer 2023 and Fall 2024). While X3 Northern NM interns are increasing in their likelihood to return, X3 Northern NM mentors have an established pattern of returning (38% returning between Summer 2023 and Fall 2024).

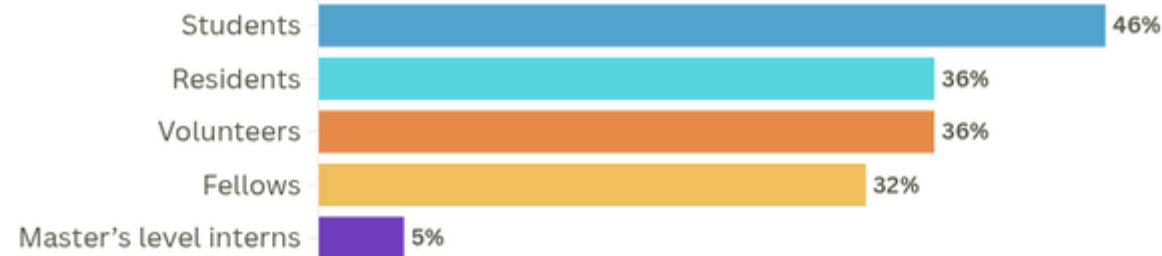
The number of returning mentors has stayed consistently high over the past several sessions, but still a significant number of mentors are new each year. This reflects a dual strategy to retain existing mentors while also recruiting new mentors to build the program.

Mentors Tend to Return For More Sessions⁸



Mentors also support other types of learners in the hospital system that are not part of X3 programs. 46% of mentors report supporting students studying allied health, medical, nursing, and other health-related fields of study, while more than 30% were supervising fellows, residents, or volunteers. A smaller percentage support master’s level interns, such as those in a graduate-level mental health therapist practicum position.

Mentors Support Many Types of Learners Other Than X3 Interns



In the fall of 2024, 100% of the 22 healthcare mentors who completed the mentor orientation survey said it was “very important” to them to support young people in being familiarized with healthcare workplaces.

96% also responded that their organization is very open to supporting young people and learners.

How Well Did We Do It?’

Healthcare Interns’ Experiences

Youth who intern participate in healthcare internships to gain skills, experience, and knowledge that will be useful to them in their careers. Some interns seek opportunities to have new experiences, regardless of their utility and usefulness to future career positions.

“My main goal is to experience this new journey and see if I would consider going into healthcare.”

X3 Healthcare Intern

Some interns are already pursuing a college degree or targeting a specific career, and they may be seeking job-specific training. Last, many interns interested in healthcare are motivated by a desire to help people.

“I am currently a nursing student and I want to get more hands-on experience.”

X3 Healthcare Intern

“I’ve always been interested in working in the medical field, I want to be able to help people and expand my knowledge.”

X3 Healthcare Intern

Interns in a healthcare setting are motivated to develop both interpersonal and technical skills. **Interpersonal skills** include empathy, patience, and effective communication with patients to assess their needs and provide assistance. **Technical skills** include taking vitals and scheduling appointments. Through hands-on experience, interns gain valuable industry-specific knowledge and expertise.

“I want to pursue a career in nursing and surgery, this internship will help me because I’ll hopefully get to see how things run in the hospital and see different specialties.”

X3 Healthcare Intern

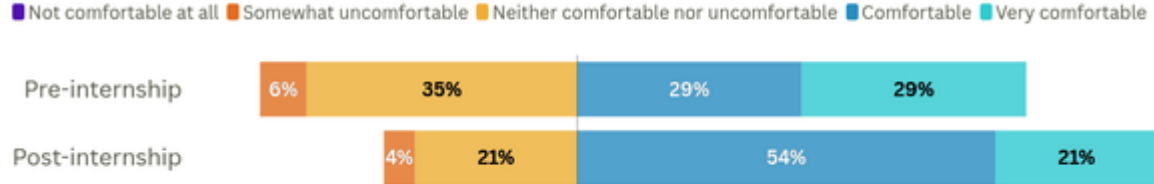
After completing the internship, participants reported that they benefited from this experience. They also reported knowing more about different types of jobs in healthcare settings.

Intern Comfort Navigating Healthcare Systems¹⁰

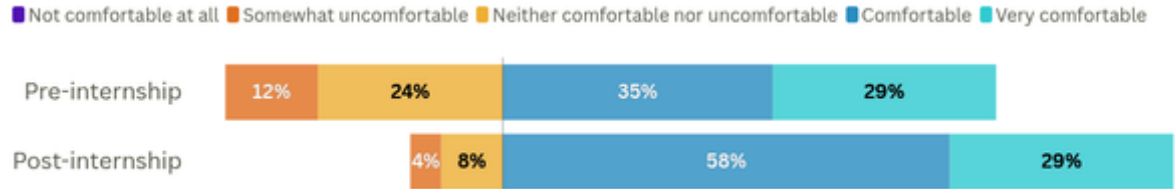
Overall, healthcare interns report feeling **more comfortable** navigating the healthcare system and speaking up for themselves or their family members in a healthcare setting after their internship than at the beginning.

However, a smaller percentage of interns reported the highest level of comfort with these tasks before their internship. This may reflect that interns better appreciated the challenges of navigating the healthcare system and its complexities after their internship.

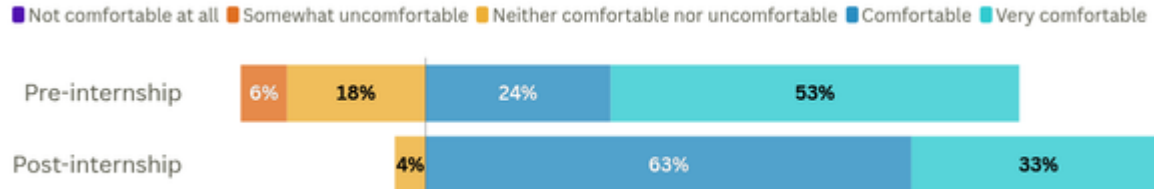
How Comfortable Interns Feel Going Through the Healthcare System, Before and After Their Internship



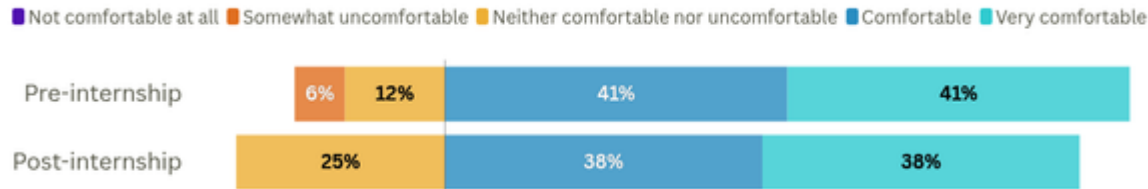
How Comfortable Interns Feel Speaking Up for Themselves in a Healthcare Setting, Before and After Their Internship



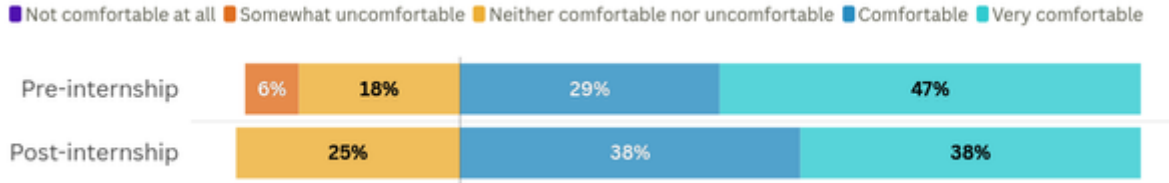
How Comfortable Interns Feel in Asking for More Information to Support Their Health, Before and After Their Internship



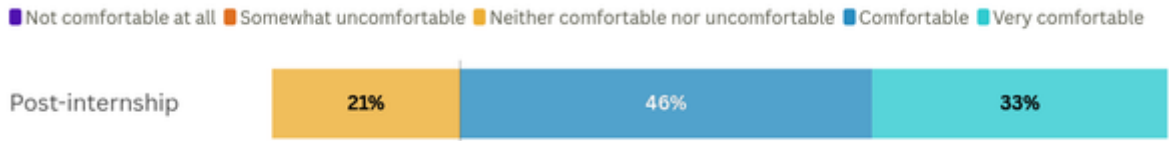
How Comfortable Interns Feel in Asking for More Information to Support A Family Member's Health, Before and After Their Internship



How Comfortable Interns Feel Speaking Up for a Family Member in a Healthcare Setting, Before and After Their Internship



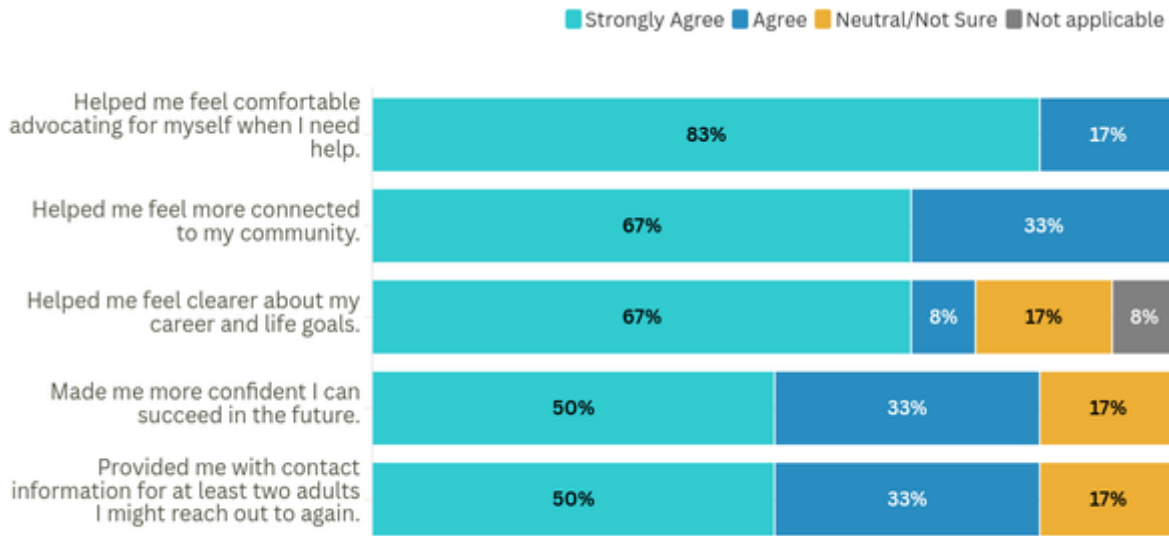
How Comfortable Interns Feel Seeing a Doctor or Other Healthcare Professional After Their Internship



Most healthcare interns **agreed or strongly agreed** that participating in the program:

- Made them more confident they can succeed in the future.
- Provided them with contact information for adults they might reach out to again.
- Helped them feel clearer about their career and life goals.
- Helped them feel comfortable advocating for themselves when they needed help.
- Helped them feel more connected to their community.

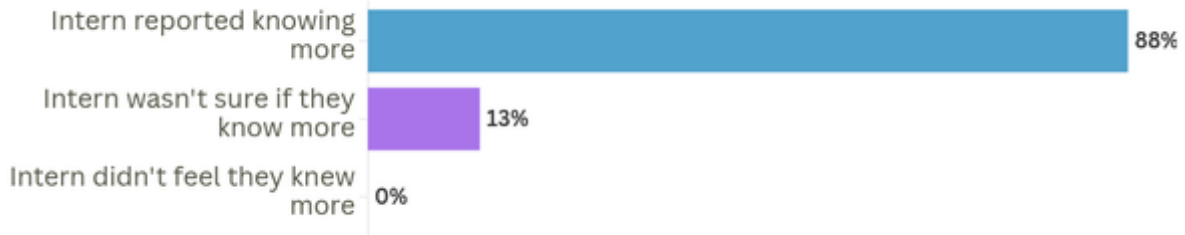
Participating in the X3 Program:



“I think this program is run incredibly well, I think it has helped me a lot in several different aspects of my life, and I have never had a problem with the program.”

X3 Healthcare Intern

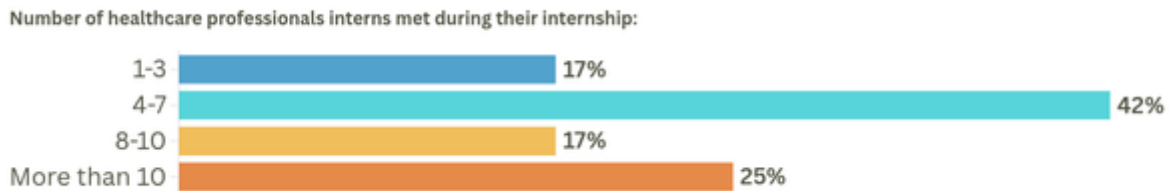
Most interns feel they know more about the different types of jobs in healthcare settings after their internships



“I appreciate how they help students who are in college gain the hands-on experience not offered at school.”

X3 Healthcare Intern

Interns met a variety of healthcare professionals (not including their mentor) during their internships



“I appreciate that this program has tons of support, and works around my schedule being in college. It is helpful that I can choose my schedule based on when I’m in school and also any other activities I have. I also appreciate that this program has terms so that I can have a break and also so that I can try new things and get different experiences.”

X3 Healthcare Intern

Healthcare Mentors’ Experiences

Mentors participate in healthcare internships because they want **to support young people and help build a better workforce**. They seek to inspire, offer opportunities, give exposure to different occupations, support exploration, provide experiences, and be a part of a young person’s journey to find themselves.

“I never had internship opportunities and I feel like exposure to occupations early in life would have been a benefit. I would love to help a young person explore the world, gain life experience, and find their calling.”

X3 Healthcare Mentor

They also feel there is an opportunity to invest in the next generation of healthcare workers, sometimes in ways that they feel they could have benefited from themselves.

Mentors mentioned that they seek:

“To support young people, particularly young people of color, in attaining or strengthening skills to join the workforce.”

“To help young people acclimate in a healthcare setting.”

“To help provide an experience to the younger generation of what a healthcare job experience looks like and to help them grow individually and prepare for their future.”

Healthcare mentors also described the benefits they hoped to receive from being a mentor, which included gratification from watching a young person they supported succeed, growing themselves as an individual and professional, and giving back.

They hoped for:

“Understanding more of what teens look for in a mentor.”

“Self-reflection and how I could improve as well.”

“Seeing my intern be excited about their future and how they plan to succeed in their future endeavors.”

“Seeing my mentee flourish.”

“I hope to share some of my experience and expertise with a young person who might gain knowledge or benefit.”



Is Anyone Better Off?

Outcomes for Healthcare Interns

Healthcare interns who completed a post-internship survey in the fall of 2024 described primary outcomes of the internship that included developing interpersonal and technical industry-specific skills, gaining exposure to their goal career environment, and networking with or building relationships with other professionals in that environment that may be useful as they continue in their education and career.

“This internship gave me a sense of how it would be to work in a related environment of my interest. For example, I have always wanted to work with babies/younger children, and this internship gave me a sense of that.”

X3 Healthcare Intern



INTERNS DEVELOPED INDUSTRY-SPECIFIC INTERPERSONAL SKILLS

- Empathy
- Confidence
- Translating/Interpreting
- Communication about scheduling
- Speaking up for help
- Patience
- Customer Service
- Listening and retaining information to complete a task
- Organization and management activities
- Asking questions
- Patient care
- Active listening
- Cleanliness
- Responsibility
- Trauma-informed communication and care

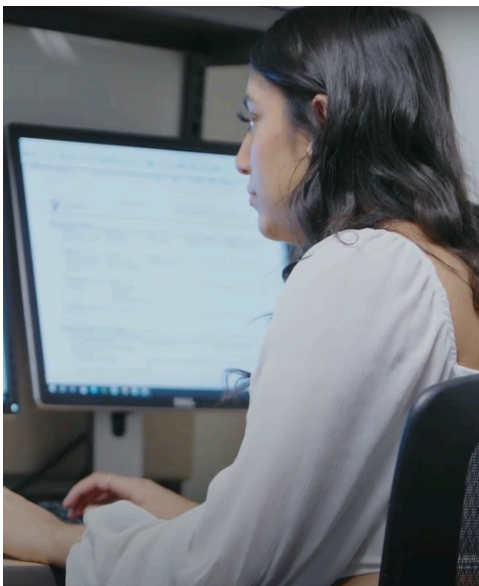
“It connected me to nurses who are willing to help me once I enter the workforce as a professional.”

X3 Healthcare Intern



INTERNS DEVELOPED INDUSTRY-SPECIFIC TECHNICAL SKILLS

- Computer skills, including learning new software programs
- Imaging
- Complete blood-/lab-work, including drawing blood, ordering blood draws, labeling correctly, processing bloodwork
- Handling sensitive information responsibly aligned with HIPAA
- Taking vital signs such as blood pressure, temperature, pulse, and oxygen.
- Document results of a urinalysis test
- Taking medical notes
- Mammography
- Diabetic foot assessment
- Injections
- Send referrals
- Patient scheduling, including create appointments, rescheduling appointments, checking in patients, and creating medical record numbers
- Medical and healthcare terminology
- Patient in-take
- Hospital organizational structure (i.e., departments)
- Tracking program participation
- Enrolling clients in programs
- How to read insurance documents
- Reviewing health screens to triage patients



“I gained a better understanding of how hard therapists work and how much they care. The main thing I took away was the kindness and respect I was shown despite being young and inexperienced. I want to run a company in my future and I want to make that work environment feel as good as this one felt for me.”

X3 Healthcare Intern

Outcomes for Healthcare Mentors¹¹

Healthcare mentors described benefits for themselves and their organizations as a result of participating in the program. Healthcare interns contributed to the overall workplace, including supporting other staff with their work and contributing to the overall mission of the team. Aligned with their reasons for wanting to be a mentor, some mentors reported feeling like they grew as a coworker and manager as a result of their participation and that it has been a rewarding experience to see the intern(s) develop.

“The clients we work with were better served by the addition of our interns this semester. They provided enriching activities and took a hands-on approach! Our employed providers also greatly benefitted from their support, as they were able to help share the load with the interns and build trusting, supportive relationships with one another.”

X3 Healthcare Mentor

Mentors noted interns' development of industry-specific skills:

Interpersonal Skills

- Communicate professionally
- Confidence
- Working independently
- Interacting with patients
- Patience
- Asking for help
- Relationship-building with clients and colleagues
- Eagerness to do the work
- Problem-solving
- Conflict resolution
- Using a person-centered approach
- Time and task management

Technical Skills

- Writing and editing skills
- Use a project management system





“We had a great time participating in the program, having an intern’s support was necessary to complete this project and it was great to have the intern’s insight into recruiting young adult volunteers.”

X3 Healthcare Mentor

Finally, one outcome or benefit for both interns and mentors is **future employment opportunities** at the internship placement site. Job-seeking and hiring are resource-intensive processes for both the employee and the employer. Through an internship, both individuals can essentially try on the experience, including the type of work, the team, and the overall environment and culture. If it is a positive experience for both individuals, it can lead to employment opportunities later on that are less resource-intensive for either or both parties.

This can include hiring immediately at the end of the internship but also can include **developing relationships** that are sustained over a career and lead to employment later on or even through the network created by these relationships. During a final exhibition of learning in December of 2024, one organization that hosted an intern said that “there is always a place for the intern if they want to continue this work”.

“I really enjoyed mentoring, I think it helped me grow as a coworker and manager.”

X3 Healthcare Mentor

“It’s rewarding to show the next generation what this field looks like and the positive impact each person can have on the life of a child.”

X3 Healthcare Mentor



Internship Preparedness for the Workforce

Core competencies across 35 UNMH job descriptions and 6 FFE position descriptions include: **effective communication and customer service, data entry and computer skills, administrative support, and patient and interaction support.** The UNMH job descriptions all had a minimum educational requirement of a high school diploma or GED equivalent. Preferred education included an Associate’s or Bachelor’s in a related field. Preferred experience also included roles with prior experience in customer service, and bilingual skills. All UNMH positions and FFE internships are listed in the appendices along with a brief summary of the responsibilities for these roles.

Specific skills outlined in the FFE internship descriptions map directly onto skills required as part of UNMH jobs, and to work in the healthcare field more broadly. Interns and mentors identify priority skills and tasks for growth in their learning plan, and these also align with skills shared across FFE internship descriptions and UNMH jobs.

Interns receive relevant opportunities and training to practice **administrative tasks, data entry/record handling, basic patient care, and customer service skills in a public-facing, quick-paced clinical setting.** Interns worked closely with their mentors to develop a learning plan and prioritize growth around key skills and tasks to ensure success in their role. Interns shadowed and observed their mentors, completed hands-on training, and met for regular check-ins.

Skill Category	Skills Shared between UNMH Job Descriptions and FFE Internship Descriptions	Skills Chosen by Interns and Mentors to Develop in Learning Plans ¹²
Administrative	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Updating patient demographic information and managing EMR and patient records • Chart preparation • Faxing/scanning documents • Scheduling appointments • Verifying insurance • Escorting, registering and checking in patients • Answering and directing calls, directing inquiries and taking messages 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Being able to take calls and assist patients with their needs • Working the front desk, check-in patients • Patient-facing interaction - learning how to talk to others

Skill Category	Skills Shared between UNMH Job Descriptions and FFE Internship Descriptions	Skills Chosen by Interns and Mentors to Develop in Learning Plans ¹²
Interpersonal skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Active listening/empathy • Customer service • Teamwork • Quick work pace • Ability to ask for help • Training on customer service; use of UNMH Customer Care Guidelines (AIDET) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teamwork & Collaboration • Writing clear and useful digital communications • Contribute to a team's effort to achieve shared goals • Speaking clearly and using nonverbal expression and tone appropriate for the situation • Listening skills to understand others. • Offering to help as appropriate • Solving any problems I can and asking for help when I can not solve a problem myself
Technical skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keyboarding, basic computer knowledge, printers/copiers/fax • Understanding of HIPAA • Training on use of EPIC, Cerner, other electronic medical records platforms • MS Office/Outlook • Phone skills • Obtaining medical history and vital signs, ensuring accurate list of medications • Reporting any patient concerns or complaints 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discharging patients, including clinical next steps and technical steps in the electronic medical record system • Patient intake (conducting assessment which includes vitals, recording and reviewing pt family history and reviewing pt medication list and working in referrals) • Assist in cast removals or placements • Learning the triage and each specialty. • What provider requires what forms and medical history how to process x-ray information patients bring

Interns' Impressions of the Healthcare Field After the Internship

Participating in a healthcare internship confirmed or influenced interns' decisions to pursue a career in the healthcare field.

“As mentioned before, this internship helped me confirm that being a pediatrician is the right career for me due to having shadowing experience in the clinic.”

X3 Healthcare Intern

“Healthcare has always been something I wanted to do, but I didn't know what part of healthcare. This experience made me decide what I wanted to be in the healthcare field.”

X3 Healthcare Intern

The internship also allowed interns to network with other individuals in the healthcare field, which helped expose them to the diversity of employment opportunities in this industry. This includes a handful of interns who worked in health advocacy organizations or community-based organizations such as the New Mexico Alliance for School-Based Health Care, East Central Ministries, and San Ildefonso Pueblo.

“It influenced me to change my career path. I was doing a business major, but I realized that I am passionate about the health care field. Through my internship I have learned the different specialities in the health care. I learned how amazing it is to work with a team who shares the same goal.”

X3 Healthcare Intern

There may be more untapped opportunities to show young people the breadth of healthcare industry positions and careers available to them. Alex Walker, UNMH Talent Acquisition Supervisor, explained that there are more than just patient-serving roles within healthcare, but the vast majority of interns are placed in and desire to be placed in patient-serving roles to gain experience for a future career in healthcare. This is probably influenced by requirements for experience such as clinical hours in healthcare degree programs.

Hospitals in particular are essentially small villages that include food service, security, maintenance, technicians, talent acquisition and development, parking, administration, finance, education, and research and evaluation roles, in addition to direct patient-care roles such as physicians, nurses, and medical assistants. In fact, **as UNMH completes construction on its new Critical Care Tower, the biggest staffing needs are for facilities and security.** There is an opportunity to continue to **expand how young people view the opportunities available within the healthcare industry.**

Differences in Skills Developed by Program and Demographics

Youth who intern at UNMH may learn different skills than interns placed at other healthcare sites. Older interns may develop more technical skills while younger interns focus on interpersonal skills. The group of Fall 2024 interns who completed the post-healthcare internship survey was fairly similar by gender, race, and ethnicity. There is not enough data to determine any differences in skill development by these demographic factors.

UNMH is a large hospital system that includes many departments and locations. The other healthcare internship placement sites are diverse and range from another large hospital system to a behavioral health clinic to a tribal government to a community-based organization. Interns at UNMH are currently almost unanimously placed in patient care roles with exposure to large hospital systems and the many ways they could contribute to patient healthcare needs.

Regardless of their tasks, UNMH interns are introduced to a greater diversity of healthcare professionals and types of work than most other healthcare interns.

Depending on their internship site, other healthcare interns may be focused on a special project, advocacy, or providing patient care in another setting. The skills they develop may include using computer software, event planning, or looking up medical records, for example. Regardless of their tasks, **UNMH interns are introduced to a greater diversity of healthcare professionals and types of work than most other healthcare interns.**

Age correlates with the X3 program interns participate in (X3 is for high school age and NeXt is for college age), but it seems the biggest difference in skill development is by age, rather than by program. This may indicate that **mentors determine which activities and tasks are appropriate for the interns based on their age.**

Younger interns are more likely to be given administrative tasks that involve patient interaction and develop interpersonal industry skills such as empathy, confidence, and translating to Spanish. Technical industry-specific skills they may develop include adhering to HIPAA guidelines, checking in patients, looking up medical record numbers, and containing files. As this may be their first professional work experience, younger interns are also developing general professional interpersonal skills that are beneficial in a variety of workplaces, such as communicating with mentors and colleagues, speaking up for themselves when they have questions or need help, and organizing and managing activities.

On the other hand, **older interns may have more opportunities to develop technical industry-specific skills** like triaging patients, taking vitals, completing lab work, and assessing for certain conditions, as well as observing or directly assisting in patient care activities.

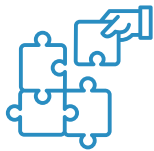
Success Stories



21-YEAR-OLD FIRST-TIME INTERN DEMONSTRATED PERSON-CENTERED CARE

This 21-year-old student at Northern New Mexico Community College participated in X3 in the Fall of 2024 for the first time. She was placed with a behavioral health care organization as a Youth Behavioral Respite Care Intern.

Her mentor said: *“She regularly demonstrated her ability to shift her approach based on which client or provider she was working with. This is an important skill in our field because we work with unique people who each have unique backgrounds and needs. She was able to inadvertently adopt a person-centered approach to her work, which was impressive! Especially knowing that she has had no formal training in behavioral health before this internship”*



19-YEAR-OLD UNIVERSITY STUDENT SOLVED PROBLEMS AND DE-ESCALATED TENSE SITUATIONS

Another intern - who also participated in the Fall of 2024 for the first time - is a 19-year-old student at the University of New Mexico. She was placed with UNMH at the community health center in Southwest Albuquerque as an office staff member.

Her mentor said: *“She came in very shy and slightly afraid to speak to patients. As time has progressed, she has gained all the confidence needed to work entirely on her own and interact with the patients in a confident and friendly manner. It's been a joy to watch. She needed little help towards the end. She has been able to problem solve on her own when problems arise. I witnessed her de-escalate a situation with an upset patient when she got her date/appointment time wrong. I am confident that she has learned the social skills in the workplace to fit in anywhere she wishes.”*

“I have improved my confidence by a lot, I have also gained a lot more knowledge on translating to Spanish-speaking patients. I am proud of my hard work and dedication.”

X3 Healthcare Intern

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this evaluation, Future Focused Education should consider the following next steps as they plan for future internship sessions and further program growth.

01

RECOMMENDATIONS FROM UNMH

- Support interns in understanding the benefits of full-time employment at UNMH, which includes - probably most attractive to people doing internships - tuition remission at UNM for full-time employees.
- Related to this, educate young people on reading and understanding job postings, including benefits.
- Expand internship opportunities with UNMH to include more than patient-centered roles. This also really embraces the FFE model for diverse young people regardless of where they are in their education journey as well as to develop a diverse workforce.
- Collect and share stories from mid-level professionals about how they got to their position to inspire and inform interns.

02

RECOMMENDATIONS FROM HEALTHCARE MENTORS

- Secure support from the leadership of their organization, including supervisors or team leads.
- Develop FFE facilitation of regular communication between intern, mentor, and coach about how the intern's meetings with the coach are going and if there are any areas that the mentor should focus on with them to support their learning and development.

“My team lead was the most supportive factor for me during this mentorship experience. My plate is pretty full with work responsibilities so she helped co-mentor the interns for this session. I think it would be helpful if FFE sent a regular (weekly/biweekly/monthly) email to mentors about how the intern's meetings with their coach have been going and if there are any areas that the mentor should focus on day-to-day.”

X3 Healthcare Mentor

03

RECOMMENDATIONS FROM INTERNS

- Continue to consider interns' career aspirations and interests when placing them for their internship as well as expand community partnerships to offer internship placements across the broad range of industries represented in New Mexico. These are already central strategies of the program.
- Healthcare interns also expressed a desire to practice or observe more technical industry-specific skills such as shadowing providers; room patients after check-in; seeing ultrasounds, wound care, and other procedures; learning about casts and stitches, including helping place a cast; and monitoring the electronic health record (EHR).

“I just wish that NeXt would've taken my interests into more consideration. I loved where I was placed, but I felt as if it had nothing to do with the career I want. I am grateful for the experience, it was amazing, but I wish it was more centered on my interests.”

X3 Healthcare Intern

04

RECOMMENDATIONS FROM APEX EVALUATION

- Some healthcare internships were completed with Christius St. Vincent Regional Medical Center in Santa Fe. This may be a partnership to develop more to provide young people in Northern New Mexico similar work-based learning opportunities in a hospital or healthcare setting like UNMH.
- Consider developing the partnership with UNMH Talent Acquisition to include training by UNMH for interns on how to read and interpret job postings and position descriptions, including benefits.

Next Steps

The next phase of healthcare evaluation will build from the learning and findings in this report to review and revise the data collection tools.

The Apex team will facilitate sense-making sessions with FFE and UNMH staff to explore the findings and recommendations together. These conversations will help refine the report, incorporating any additional recommendations that emerge.

Acknowledgements

Report and Evaluation

Data evaluation and report by Rissa Lane, MS; Lenka Berkowitz, MS; and Dominique Pierre, MPH, at Apex Evaluation. Report design by Erin Rose.

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This evaluation was done in partnership with the team at Future Focused Education. We thank Grace Granillo and Brisa Rodriguez at FFE for their dedication and commitment to supporting the young people of New Mexico through the X3 and NeXt internship programs.

We also wish to acknowledge the UNM Hospital Talent Acquisition Team, led by Robby Toledano and Alex Walker, for providing their expertise and experiences while working with Future Focused Education.

Background content on Future Focused Education and the X3 internship programs was adapted from Future Focused Education’s website. Photos were provided by FFE.

Internship Participants

We wish to acknowledge the expertise and time of youth interns, X3 and NeXt internship coaches, mentors, and Future Focused and UNMH staff, whose wisdom contributed to the findings of this report. We deeply appreciate their commitment to making New Mexico’s workplaces a welcoming and safe space for youth.



Funding

This evaluation was supported by funding from [University of New Mexico Hospital](#) (UNMH).

Appendices

Appendix 1: Apex Evaluation Approach & Goals

Apex Evaluation Approach

Apex is a consulting and technology services firm serving as the third-party evaluator for Future Focused Education (FFE) since 2018. We design and implement evaluation plans tailored to the diverse needs of our clients, the communities they serve, and society as a whole.

Our approach, the **Apex Blend**, integrates multiple frameworks to create meaningful insights while minimizing the burden of data collection on providers and clients, including:

SYSTEMS THINKING

Using the DSRP framework (Distinctions, Systems, Relationships, Perspectives), we analyze complex structures and relationships within FFE's ecosystem.

UTILIZATION-FOCUSED

We ensure deliverables are practical, accessible, and useful for both FFE and its funders.

EQUITABLE EVALUATION

We amplify voices closest to the work, uncover systemic inequities, and co-create the evaluation process with providers through transparent and collaborative methods.

At Apex, we believe evaluation should serve both **learning and equity**. By integrating these approaches, we generate actionable insights that support program improvement, decision-making, and the success of young people, mentors, employers, and FFE's staff.

Evaluation Goals

- Assess how many X3 and NeXt internship placements have been made at UNMH, and how many interns make the transition to full-time employment at UNMH after their internship
- Learn about young people's experiences with the internship, including skills and abilities that they learned during the internship
- Understand mentors' experiences with hosting young interns, including how it affects their job satisfaction
- Map the skills and abilities interns learn to professional qualities identified by mentors and UNMH HR as important for future employment

Key Learning Questions

- Quantity of Internships
 - How many interns have been placed at UNMH?
 - How many interns complete at least one session at UNMH?
 - How many young people are UNMH interns in high school and continue in a UNMH internship after graduation (transition from X3 and NeXt)?
 - How many interns transition to full-time employment at UNMH after their internship?
 - How many interns' career plans include a job in a healthcare field?
- Outcomes (Skills and Abilities)
 - What are the outcomes interns and mentors may experience as a result of the internship?
 - What are the observable experiences that the intern had that felt most professionally relevant?
 - What industry-specific transferable skills or professional qualities did the mentor observe interacting with the intern?
 - Which of the interns' skills, knowledge, and experiences would fit the skills and abilities required to work in a healthcare field?
 - How did participating in the internship affect how young people think about healthcare as a field?

Data Collection and Analysis Methods

The data presented comes from a variety of sources. All evaluation tools were co-designed with FFE evaluation staff to ensure that their perspectives and learning needs were met with the data collected.



SURVEYS

Interns and their mentors are required to complete an orientation and end-of-session online survey, which is maintained and distributed by FFE. Responses were analyzed using SPSS statistical software, Excel, and Condens.

The evaluation team worked with Future Focused and UNMH to develop healthcare-specific questions that were added to the pre- and post-surveys for healthcare interns and mentors. These questions asked about their experiences within healthcare, and the skills and knowledge learned, practiced, or observed during the internship.

Healthcare-specific survey questions were piloted with Summer 2024 interns. The survey questions for Fall 2024 interns were adapted from the pilot survey.



DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

Demographic and participation data was collected and maintained through Future Focused's software, including Salesforce and ImBlaze. This data was shared with the evaluation team to support the analysis of intern demographics. Demographic data was analyzed using SPSS statistical software and Excel.



OBSERVATIONS

Interns are required to complete a Final Exhibition presentation at the end of their internship. The evaluation team was invited to attend five healthcare exhibitions for the Fall 2024 session, including non-UNMH placements, and learned more about the internship process and experience directly from the interns.



CONVERSATION WITH UNMH TALENT ACQUISITION

The evaluation team met with the UNMH Talent Acquisition staff who work most closely with Future Focused in developing host site placements across the UNMH system. The conversation focused on UNMH Talent Acquisition's perspectives on the internships, including how the internships may impact healthcare staffing.



DOCUMENT REVIEW

The evaluation team reviewed programmatic documents provided by Future Focused and UNMH Talent Acquisition to contextualize healthcare internship placements as a stepping stone into full-time employment within a healthcare setting. UNMH Talent Acquisition shared full-time job postings to highlight skills are needed for full-time healthcare employment. UNMH job postings and FFE Internship descriptions were analyzed using notebook LM. Findings from the document review process were cross-walked with survey and observation findings related to skills internships learned, practiced, and observed during their placement.

Appendix 2: UNMH Position and FFE Internship Descriptions

UNMH Positions Title	Description
Aid Child Life	Provides a variety of services including greeting/directing visitors, providing tours, assisting with organizing events, light cleaning duties and basic clerical functions.
Aide Nutrition Care	Performs a variety of clerical duties in support of nutritional care and patient food service area. No patient care assignment.
Aide Patient Sitter	Responsible for basic patient observation and activities of daily living. Complete documentation as required on flow sheet log. Patient care assignment may include neonate, pediatric, adolescent, adult and geriatric age groups.
Aide Security Officer	Provide security officer assistance as required. Works in conjunction with security officers to support operations by providing non-emergency security services including sector service, exterior and interior patrols and minor incident reports.
Aide Welcomer and Wayfinder	Ensure patients/visitors have assistance they need with wayfinding, act as a source of information on hospital layout and promoting a positive image of the hospital.
Assistant Hand Hygiene Observe	Provide direct observation and just in time coaching of healthcare workers' compliance with hand hygiene practices.
Barista	Responsible for delivery of customer service within the assigned retail unit. Operate espresso machine and cash register.

UNMH Positions Title	Description
Behavioral Health Responder	Works with an interdisciplinary team to meet the needs of persons whose lives are disrupted or complicated by mental illness, substance use issues or the inability to function in the community. Provides verbal de-escalation, screening services, and case management of clients.
Cart Driver	Responsible for providing patient, visitor and employee shuttle transports, or collection, special processing and delivery of specified materials.
Cashier	Operate cash register, and manage cash drawer, balance cash drawer, prepare cash register reconciliation reports within assigned food service unit.
Clerk DC and Charge Entry	Perform end of visit charge entry for outpatient ancillary services, clinics and professional charges. Assist with staff and provider billing process education.
Department Secretary	Provide secretarial, clerical and administrative support services such as answering multiple phone lines, receiving visitors, scheduling meetings and maintaining files.
Emergency Medical Tech	Assist in the nursing care of patients. Provides wound care and splints as required. Patient care assignment may include neonate, pediatric, adolescent, adult and geriatric age groups.
Emergency Room Tech	Assist in the nursing care of patients. Provides wound care and splints as required. Patient care assignment may include neonate, pediatric, adolescent, adult and geriatric age groups.
Graduate Nurse	Work within the nursing process to provide direct nursing care to assigned patients.

UNMH Positions Title	Description
Human Resource Tech	Provide technical and clerical human resources support. Ensure integrity and security of confidential employee data.
Inventory Clerk	Process requisitions and input data into computer department system, monitor and maintain inventory, process requests and returns.
Licensed Practical Nurse	Work within the nursing process to provide direct nursing care to assigned patients.
Master Scheduler	Prepare and maintain the daily clinic schedule utilizing current automation systems. Communicate changes in the clinic schedule to supervisors, staff, and patients as needed.
Medical Assistant	Perform a variety of front and back office clerical duties; perform treatment procedures.
Mental Health Tech Driver	Provide child, adolescent or adult patient care in a treatment or educational milieu; may transport patients between behavioral health facilities by vehicle.
Mental Health Tech	Provide child, adolescent, or adult patient care in a treatment or educational milieu; may operate in an in-patient/residential environment.
Nurse Extern	Provide basic patient care and routine treatment procedures and assist in maintenance of a safe, clean environment.
Operator Pbx	Serve as hospital receptionist, operate telephone console, answer and direct phone calls as requested.

UNMH Positions Title	Description
Outpatient Clerk	Perform a variety of customer service duties; provide information and assistance to internal and external customers.
Parking Attendant	Provide parking services, public relations service, enforce parking regulations and traffic control throughout parking structures.
Patient Care Coordinator	Responsible for coordination of appointment and support services for departments/physicians.
Patient Care Tech	Provide direct, non-invasive and routine patient care and related support services within an in-patient or out-patient environment.
Patient Transporter	Responsible for providing safe, timely patient transportation and additional non-patient pick up, and delivery service in assigned areas.
PC Support Tech	Provide PC workstations support to the computer user population; responsibility for installation and correction of hardware and software problems at the end-user level.
Pharmacy Intern	Compound and dispense medications and pharmaceutical supplies upon receiving prescriptions and and provide clerical support.
Pharmacy Tech	Perform a variety of pharmacy tech duties under the supervision of a licensed pharmacist. Includes triaging medication requests, answering pharmacy phone line and prepackaging pharmaceuticals.
Receptionist	Greet and receive visitors and callers; ascertain needs, and appropriately direct visitors and callers.

FFE Internship Descriptions	Description
Rehab Services Tech	Assists physical therapists, physical therapy assistants, occupational therapists, and speech-language pathologists with therapy services.
Spanish Interpreter and Translator	Provide accurate medical written translation and verbal interpretation.
UNMH Pain Clinic Medical Assistant Intern	Engages in patient care by escorting patients, recording vital signs, conducting basic lab tests, managing patient records, and gaining hands-on experience in a multidisciplinary clinical setting focused on holistic pain management
UNMH Carrie Tingley Rehabilitation Technician	Assists with patient care, organizes therapy materials, maintains patient records, and gains hands-on experience in a pediatric rehabilitation setting.
UNMH Financial Planning & Analysis Intern	Works with the team to examine processes, conduct data analysis, create reports and presentations, and assist with financial analysis and ad hoc tasks across departments
UNMH Neurodiagnostics Outpatient Clerk Intern	Supports patient scheduling, insurance verification, and administrative tasks while gaining hands-on experience with EEG studies, electronic medical records, and patient communication in a specialized neurological care setting
UNMH Orthopedics Outpatient Clerk	Supports patient registration, insurance verification, appointment coordination and documentation while assisting with admissions, discharge processes and daily administrative tasks.
UNMH Pulmonary Diagnostics Lab Clerk	Plays vital role in patient registration, appointment scheduling, insurance verification, and managing communications, including phone calls and messages, while ensuring accurate documentation and HIPAA compliance

Appendix 3: Positionality Statements

We are including positionality statements from the Apex team members who contributed to this report as a way to challenge traditional notions of objectivity in evaluation. Positionality acknowledges how our identities, experiences, and perspectives influence our approach to evaluation—shaping how we interpret data, engage with clients, and frame conclusions. By making these assumptions and biases visible, we aim to strengthen the integrity of our work and demonstrate our commitment to equity, inclusivity, transparency and shared learning.

Lenka Berkowitz

I am a White, cisgender, heterosexual woman who does not live with a disability. I grew up in Prague, Czech Republic, as an only child in a lower-middle-class family. Being a first-generation college graduate, I was drawn to education and had the privilege of studying in the Czech Republic, Sweden, and the Netherlands. Twelve years ago, I immigrated to the United States and now hold dual Czech and American citizenship.

As a lifelong learner and constructivist thinker, I believe in regular reflection to uncover and challenge my biases, values, and privileges. My goal is to foster inclusive spaces where people feel comfortable bringing their whole selves to the work. I see mistakes as opportunities for growth and learning, and I'm always striving to do better.

In my work as an evaluator, I'm passionate about participatory approaches that shift power to communities, honoring their expertise and embracing diverse ways of knowing. To me, meaningful evaluation must be context-specific and grounded in the lived experiences of those most impacted. I also love using systems mapping to reveal hidden patterns and connections, making data more meaningful and actionable.

Rissa Lane

As an evaluator, I approach my work with a deep commitment to equity, inclusion, and transparency. My background in population health sciences, global health, and biology informs my understanding of the systems and structures that impact the programs I evaluate. I acknowledge that my identity as a White, cisgender, heterosexual woman with an advanced education and professional role shapes my perspective. I was born in Minneapolis, Minnesota and I have lived in Minnesota, Wisconsin, and New Mexico on unceded Dakota, Ojibwe, Ho-Chunk, Tiwa, and Pueblo territory. I recognize that this may limit my understanding of experiences different from my own, underscoring the importance of listening deeply, seeking diverse perspectives, and continually reflecting on my assumptions.

Rissa Lane (continued)

I strive to approach evaluation with cultural humility, centering the voices of stakeholders, particularly those from historically marginalized communities. I prioritize participatory and community-based methods to ensure evaluations reflect participants' lived realities. Recognizing that all evaluations are influenced by the evaluator's positionality, I actively engage in reflexive practices, seek diverse input, and remain transparent about my methods and assumptions. I view evaluation as a tool for accountability and transformation, one that amplifies strengths, illuminates disparities, and supports systemic change.

Dominique Pierre

I am a Black Latina, cisgender, able-bodied woman born and raised in New Jersey. As a first-generation American, I was raised by Haitian and Dominican immigrant parents, both of whom hold higher education degrees. I grew up with economic privilege and access to higher education, which have shaped my opportunities.

With a background in sociology and public health, I approach evaluation with a commitment to contextualizing data and centering those most impacted by the work. I believe it is essential that our findings and lessons learned contribute to systemic change and improve the lives of those most marginalized by society.

I view my role as an evaluator as one of facilitation rather than expertise. My work is to assist communities and participants in telling their stories on their own terms, ensuring that their voices are at the forefront of the process. Through this approach, I aim to help produce meaningful insights that drive equity and transformation.

Erin Rose

I am a White, cisgender, able-bodied, queer woman, the descendant of European settlers on Tiwa/Pueblo land (Albuquerque, New Mexico). I received significant financial aid to access both college prep secondary education and pursue my bachelor's degree, which shaped my opportunities. I still have permanent residency in and ties to Colombia, where I lived in Bogotá on unceded Muisca land for almost a decade.

I hope to facilitate human-centered processes and tools that can adapt to varied cultural contexts and languages, allowing each person to best tell their own story. I seek to listen to and amplify the lived experiences of those most affected by any given policy or issue, while questioning my own privileges, assumptions or biases that impede change towards more equitable systems.

Endnotes

1. Fernandez-Repollet, E., Locatis, C., De Jesus-Monge, W.E. *et al.* Effects of summer internship and follow-up distance mentoring programs on middle and high school student perceptions and interest in health careers. *BMC Med Educ* 18, 84 (2018). <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12909-018-1205-3>
2. Danner, O.K., Lokko, C., Mobley, F., et al. Hospital-based, Multidisciplinary, youth mentoring and medical exposure program positively influences and reinforces health care career choice: “The Reach One Each One Program early Experience”. *AM J Surg* 213, 4: 611-616 (2017). <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.amjsurg.2016.12.002>
3. <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/27816962/>
4. <https://www.kff.org/state-category/providers-service-use/health-professional-shortage-areas/>
5. To note, our data is limited to internship placements from Summer of 2023 to Fall of 2024. It is possible a student is indicated as returning but their previous internships were before Summer of 2023. If they interned with UNMH before this time period, we are not able to identify that in this data.
6. This data was missing for 2 of the internship placements.
7. This question is written as “How do you identify your race/ethnicity? Check all that apply.” with options for: “African, African American or Black”, “Asian or Pacific Islander”, “Hispanic, Latinx, Chicano or Mexican”, “Middle Eastern”, “Native American or Indigenous”, “White”, “Other”, and “Prefer not to answer”. The “Middle Eastern” option was added in 2024. No interns selected options for “Other” or “Prefer not to answer”, so those categories are omitted from the data shown here.
8. The Fall 2024 session data is defined differently than the previous session for mentor status as new or returning. Some mentors may not be included as returning if they participated in a session before Summer 2023, but did not participate Summer 2023 to Summer 2024.
9. Survey data represents Fall of 2024 session participants only, and not all interns and mentors completed pre- and post-session surveys.
10. The Fall 2024 pre-session survey data did not include a personal identifier, so this data could not be linked with the post-session survey data to understand change at an individual level. An identifier has since been added to the pre-session survey and future analyses will include linked survey data. There were 17 pre-session surveys and 37 post-session surveys.
11. Only three mentors completed the post internship reflection survey in the Fall of 2024. These findings may not be representative of all mentors’ experiences.
12. This evaluation included learning plans from ten internships, which may not be representative of all 147 healthcare internships or 114 interns.