



U W

H C A S B

University of Washington Healthcare
Alternative Spring Break 2022 Trip
Reflections

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Letter to the Clinic

Dear HCASB 2022 Clinics,

We write this letter in great appreciation of your willingness to collaborate with the Healthcare Alternative Spring Break program to provide University of Washington undergraduates an opportunity to learn about and experience rural healthcare. After a two-year hiatus due to the ongoing pandemic, we were grateful to bring the program back and it would not have been possible without your help. As our program's nineteenth year draws to a close, please know that we are incredibly grateful for your involvement in assuring our program's longevity and success.

With your support in 2022, over 50 students shadowed at over 10 different clinics and hospitals in 23 different sites across the state of Washington. For many, their experience in your clinic was an unprecedented glimpse of what it means to be a healthcare professional in a rural or underserved community. The days spent in your clinics and hospitals provided valuable insight and experience for students eager to expand their knowledge of healthcare.

Returning from the trip, our students expressed effusive gratitude for your warm welcome into your communities and clinics. We felt it was only fitting to pass their messages on to you in the form of this Reflection Book. In reading the student reflections, you will find that your gracious support of our students has served not only to recapitulate their commitment to healthcare but also to expose an interest in working in rural or underserved communities. As you can see, the time invested in sharing your experience with these students will undoubtedly have a lasting influence on their future educational and professional endeavors.

We hope that you enjoy reading the student reflections from our HCASB sites. Thank you once again for partnering with our organization to provide a positive, life-altering experience for our students. We hope to work with you again next year.

With gratitude,

The 2019 HCASB Steering Committee

About HCASB

Mission Statement:

Healthcare Alternative Spring Break is designed to expose the next generation of healthcare professionals to the specific healthcare needs of rural and underserved communities in Washington. By immersing the students in an interactive experience, we hope to inspire them to further their commitment to healthcare.

About:

HCASB was founded by a group of University of Washington (UW) students in the fall of 2003 due to a common interest in learning about rural and underserved clinics in Washington state. Completely student-run, the program offers UW pre-health students the opportunity to experience healthcare in these communities during their spring break. Prior to departure, students chosen to participate in the project learn about their particular site and the health issues relevant to that community. At each site, a team of four to sixteen participants spends time observing in clinics, shadowing healthcare professionals, and interacting with community leaders in scheduled talks pertaining to specific health issues. Each team also dedicates one day of their week to community service, usually involving volunteering in a local classroom to give presentations about college preparation to middle and high school students. In 2003, HCASB began with 20 pre-medical UW students traveling to six sites in Okanogan County. This year, HCASB selected over 50 participants and team leaders from a pool of over 250 UW students, representing interests in not only medicine, but also dentistry, pharmacy, nursing, optometry, and physical therapy. The exciting and enlightening experiences that these students have brought back from their spring break are documented in the reflections which follow.

Brewster

Brewster is not only a beautiful city, but it is also a community filled with some of the most wonderful, hardworking, and welcoming people I have ever met. Getting to talk with community members, hospital staff, physicians, and patients has given me a clearer glimpse of what rural medicine is like.

One of my most memorable experiences was shadowing Dr. Ellingston. Her ability to demonstrate compassion and her strong connection to her patients allowed her to provide better, more informed care. She has been seeing many of her patients continuously for the past 15-20 years. In addition to fostering trust, this relationship has enabled her to get to know the patient beyond just their medical condition. Dr. Ellingston taught me the importance of listening to your patients and always trying to understand what their concerns are, what they think caused them, and what they believe would help them. She says that oftentimes, physicians might be too focused on the clinical side that they are often blind-sided to simple resolutions for a patient's worries.

My experience in Brewster has also shown me some of the healthcare challenges that occur in rural settings and what their solutions are. Talking with Three Rivers Hospital's HR, I was able to learn that collaboration with nearby partners is crucial given the limited resources that are available. The more narrow scope offered at the clinic also meant that patients may sometimes be transferred to other hospitals that can provide the level of critical care that is needed. There is a lot of interfacility communication as a result. Other challenges that I was not aware of included staff retention, the rarity of internal medicine physicians, and the reliance on telehealth to communicate with remote physicians from urban areas. Furthermore, in a small tight-knit community like Brewster, I saw how important patient confidentiality is. If compromised, this can result in a patient being more hesitant to seek out certain care due to the worry of being discovered.

Apart from the clinical aspect of this trip, I also really enjoyed my stay with our host. The hospitality that we received was beyond my expectation. Our host Shirley introduced us to games like Mexican Train and Skip-Bo. We also had a relaxing time enjoying the sunshine while we sat looking out at the Columbia River!

It is not until you get to experience something firsthand that you can truly understand it. Getting to listen and learn from the members of the Brewster community has shifted my attitude towards rural healthcare. While there are areas of deficiencies compared to healthcare in a populated urban setting, I was able to see the ingenuity and collaboration that is brought forth in order to overcome difficult times and situations.

– Nhi Nguyen, Brewster Team Leader 2022

My experience shadowing in Brewster Washington is something I will not forget. From the moment we pulled into the driveway of Shirley and Roger, we were welcomed with open

arms. Our host family was wonderful and more than anything I could have expected. I felt connected with my roots as Roger shared stories about working with my great grandfather on his apple farm in eastern Washington as we ate a chili prepared by Shirley. I greatly appreciate them opening their home to us as they cultivated a wonderful experience for us.

My first day at the rural hospital was eye-opening. I shadowed a family medicine doctor on the first day who I greatly respected. Immediately I began to notice trends in the patients coming through the door with many comorbidities such as high blood pressure, diabetes, and obesity, and many with underlying mental health conditions such as depression and anxiety. The physician explained how it could be frustrating at times because she wanted to address all of these health issues, but many of them were caused by upstream factors such as lack of support, lack of exercise, and inability to live healthy lifestyles. Especially with the area being what she considered a “mental health desert”, with the nearest mental health clinic 1.5 hours away, it was extremely difficult to even get people connected with the resources they needed. Considering she was often the only healthcare provider that patients saw she said it sometimes seemed they were drowning and she was just trying to keep their head above water. After shadowing and speaking with the physician I had so much respect for what she, and the rest of the staff, was doing. It was eye-opening to see how systemic factors related to reduced income or lack of resources influenced the community’s health. While she said it was easy to get discouraged by the challenges of her job, she felt she had a large ability to make tangible change in people's lives, by reaching those who might not have sought out help otherwise. She also spoke about her research grant to investigate what barriers there were to HPV screening since there was lower coverage in this region and hoped to then address these barriers. As someone who is interested in public health and preventative medicine, I was inspired by the work she was doing in and outside of the clinic to improve the mental and physical health of people in Brewster.

After shadowing the family doctor, I shadowed the general surgeon who had just finished her residency at the Mayo clinic. It was interesting to gain her perspective on rural medicine since she had trained at one of the top institutions in the US. She explained the many struggles she endured such as a lack of advanced technologies that she was used to, and a limited team to consult with. It struck me that many of the physicians in rural medicine had even more autonomy and responsibility because they didn’t have many doctors working alongside them. Similarly, when I spoke with the ER doctor he explained the struggles of his job. As the singular doctor in the ER on staff for weeks at a time, it was ultimately up to him to make the decisions on care and how he had to use his knowledge, test results, and collaboration from the nursing team to decide what to do.

While I saw many challenges that rural healthcare providers faced, I also witnessed the wonderful sense of community provided by rural healthcare. One thing that the health care providers did that stood out to me was individually signing a get-well card for a patient after surgery to be mailed to them. While this seems like a minor thing to do, something so small can go a long way in boosting spirits to help someone recover sooner. It is a personal touch that I have not seen done at any major hospitals in Seattle, simply because there is not enough time for personalization at these hospitals. I spoke with several of the nurses about why they choose to work in rural medicine and discovered they love what they do because of the personal connections they form with staff and patients. They explained that instead of the urban hospitals

which are almost machine or conveyor belt lines trying to get people in and out of the hospital as fast as possible, they have the luxury to spend quality time with patients. While rural healthcare has its challenges, it also has its benefits, similar to urban healthcare. I greatly appreciate the whole staff at Three Rivers Hospital for being so open to sharing their experiences, perspectives, and life stories. Besides the staff, I appreciate the community members for being so open to allowing us to shadow and observe especially when it came to personal matters.

Overall I thank the Brewster community for such a wonderful, eye-opening, and profound trip.

– Brooke Auvil

Observing doctors at Brewster was a great experience because it was an opportunity to cement my interest in healthcare. Seeing doctors and nurses gracefully tackle challenges at Three Rivers hospital was humbling. Patients were marked by a language barrier and a mild distrust of authority. The hospital had scarcer resources, with about half of its staff being contracted by third parties. The other half had worked for 20 years in the same location. Radiology analysis was outsourced, and employees would sometime have to commute multiple hours to get to work. The nurses were unionized but knew the hospital could shut down if they went on strike which would deprive the community of treatment.

Despite some patient suspicion, Brewster's population seemed to know what everyone else was up to. The majority of adults either worked in agriculture or at the hospital, while the local schools were close-knit. These familiar relations were a double-edged sword; urban anonymity was removed so that there was some feeling of warmth wherever one went, but doctors could easily run into patients outside of work because they interacted with everybody. The rural friendliness extended to the host family as well. I was surprised to see that the hosts left the door unlocked at night, with the security system off. Leaving the door open would have been blasphemous in the city due to a rising crime wave and an increase in theft.

I am glad I went on the trip. I feel that the staff helped me make an informed decision about going into medicine, and am excited to pursue that career path. Overlooking the grumblings pertaining to charting, medicine is an intellectually challenging field that rewards practitioners with positive patient interactions. There is never a dull moment, and most cases are different enough to pique curiosity.

– Dennis Godin

Overall, the trip was great. I was going into this having no clue what to expect since I have never shadowed before, and didn't know where I was going to be staying. I literally thought that I would be staying in a cabin in the middle of the woods with no service and hours away from civilization, fortunately, that was not the case. Let me start from the beginning. After submitting the application, I have to say that I was anxious about the admission results since I knew this trip is competitive to get involved in, so I was very much relieved when I got my email

of admission. After some issues with my original site, I was relocated to Brewster, Washington. I am not from Washington so I don't know anything past Seattle and Bellevue, but even my friends that were born and raised in Washington had no clue where the heck Brewster was. That really puts into perspective how rural and small these towns are. I go through orientation and meet the rest of my team. I didn't really get to know them from that one short breakout room interaction, but I knew I had all the time in the world to get closer to them during the trip. The final weeks of school come and go and it is time to go on this trip. My team and I coordinate the pickup location and soon enough we are on the road to Brewster, WA. My team and I get to know each other in the car naturally and talk for almost the entirety of the 4-hour drive. When we arrived at our hospitality, Shirley's cabin, oh my goodness! It was nothing like what I was expecting. The cabin lodge was beautiful on the inside and out and the location was absolutely magnificent. The peace from the lack of construction noise and the hustle and bustle of the city life was something I didn't know I so desperately needed. Shirley and Roger were absolutely amazing. They were so hospitable and kind-hearted, that I felt like I was adopted straight into their family. They were kind enough to cook us dinner for the night we arrived and so that concluded our night and we were off to begin shadowing the following day.

I was assigned to Eagle Rock Physical Therapy for the first two days of the trip. We arrive at my location, my team leader (TL) sends me off like a child on his first day of school and I meet Shawn Isenhardt and his team. Hands down, Shawn has got to be the nicest, most laid-back person I have ever met. He expressed to me that he understood the position I was in and related to the feeling of just feeling stuck in the corner watching what the medical professional is doing. We bonded over our love for sports, our crazy workout regimen, and our experience in wrestling. After getting introduced to him and his team, we had our first patients. Before the trip, I really didn't know how many patients I was gonna see, I thought maybe ten for the entire day. My thought process was in such a small town like Brewster, who was gonna need physical therapy? Wow, was I wrong? It genuinely surprised me how Eagle Rock Physical Therapy had patients coming in and out of the clinic the entire day. There was consistently at least one patient in the clinic the entire day. I observed that the majority of his patients fell into three categories. The first category was agricultural workers. This was because Brewster is filled with farming land and apple orchards. Since agricultural workers repeat the same backbreaking labor every day, we will for sure start to see wear and tear on their bodies. That is where physical therapy comes in, to help the patient recover from chronic wear and tear on their bodies from intensive labor so that they could get back out there to continue providing for their family. While I am on the topic of agricultural workers, that is where I saw the biggest challenge for rural settings, and that is the language barrier. Many of the agricultural workers only spoke Spanish and the physical therapist and the physical therapist aide can't speak Spanish, making it difficult for them to communicate with each other. Of course, the physical therapy team could still communicate with their bodies about what they wanted their patients to do, but then they lost the opportunity to connect as I saw them do with the rest of the patients that were able to speak English. Fortunately, the receptionist and the physical therapy assistant were fluent Spanish speakers, so it all worked out in the end, but that is a challenge I didn't think about. So not only do you have to find a person willing to work in a small town like Brewster, but then you also need them to be able to converse in Spanish, which narrows down the application pool. The second category was retired folk that needed help moving their body around like they were younger and the third category was athletes. What really stood out to me about Eagle Rock Physical Therapy was the type of rapport

the physical therapy team had with their patients. While I was observing Shawn and Julie working with their respective patients, they were talking with each other like they have known each other their entire lives. Shawn was telling me about how some of his current patients knew him as a child. I think that has to do in part because, in a rural setting, it is common for everyone to know everyone, but I think the familial aspect comes from Julie and Shawn's personalities and their ability to talk and listen to their patients. Even with me, after only shadowing there for two days, I felt like I was part of their little family and I would walk into their clinic after finishing my shadowing at the hospital like it was home. I also appreciate Shawn for attempting to have me involved in the physical therapy whether that be making me do the exercise alongside the patient so I had an idea of what it is like, providing band resistance for a patient, or having me try electrical stimulation. I appreciate the fact that he had me write down three things I wanted to get out of shadowing him and he actually followed through with it even though I thought he wouldn't since he was constantly busy.

After my two days of shadowing at Eagle Rock Physical Therapy, I joined the rest of my team at Three Rivers Hospital to shadow a multitude of healthcare professionals for the final two days. On my first day, I was fortunate to shadow in the emergency room. I was originally told that I would be shadowing an ER nurse, which I was already excited to do even though I never really thought about being a nurse in the future. Then the day got better when I realized that I could shadow the ER nurse and doctor that day. A two in one! I have never been in an emergency room before so my only preconception of it was only what was presented in TV shows. I was also expecting to see a trauma case that I couldn't handle, but there was nothing that day that I couldn't handle. My first case was a patient that had a longitudinal cut down the middle of his fingertip. That was honestly the one type of injury that I didn't want to see but I surprised myself that I stayed on my feet when I saw the patient's finger and while I watched the doctor put stitches through the fingernail. After a few more cases we had a stroke victim and it was really cool to observe how the nurses, CNAs, and doctors all work together in a medical emergency. It was also interesting to see their priorities while working and the way they transported the patient to the CT machine. After all of that, it quieted down in the ER and I was fortunate enough to have a real talk with Dr. Huffman. I really want to thank him for answering every single question I threw at him ranging from what medical school was like to what a week in life was like for him. I am going to be honest that his stories scared me because I don't want to live a life where 99% of my time is spent in the hospital, but I realized that he may be an exception to that rule with the 120-hour workweeks. Nevertheless, I learned a lot from him and I am glad that he took the time to talk to me. On the second day of shadowing at the hospital, I was all over the place. I started my day off with an orthopedic physician's assistant. It was really nice to be able to talk to him because he was also able to answer my questions about what exactly a physician assistant is and what they do. We spent the majority of our time looking at X-rays and analyzing them for fractures. Then the second half of the day was spent with the family medicine doctor and again it was nice to be able to ask her questions about family medicine and be able to compare her lifestyle to the ER doctor. With the family medicine doctor, I really saw the care she had for her patients. It was surprising to me that she knew almost everything that is wrong with the patient before even looking at the charts. That concluded our final day of shadowing. My team and I packed our things, said goodbye to our hosts, and hit the road, grabbing Local Myth in Chalen before driving for hours on end.

My final remarks about this trip. I am confident that I still don't know what I want to do in the future. I was able to shadow all of the fields I was interested in, and while I don't know which I liked the most, I can confidently say that I learned a lot about what each field of healthcare is like. With physical therapy and family medicine, I really enjoyed the aspect of fostering a relationship with the patient. Something that deterred me a little from physical therapy is that it seemed very repetitive. I saw many different patients do the same exercise over and over again, and that repetitive aspect is something I am not fond of. On the other extreme was the ER doctor. My day spent in the ER was the most fun one and the one I think went by the fastest and the one that was most memorable. While it is exciting because you never know what to expect, I feel like I may not be cut out for intense hours like the ER doc and the possible trauma that could be seen. As I mentioned earlier, I enjoyed the relational aspect of family medicine, but I did think bouncing from appointment to appointment was a bit boring because there really wasn't anything urgent, but at the same time, listening to the patients and figuring out what is wrong and what is the best treatment does sound nice to me. Finally, the most I learned was about physician assistants. I did not know that they were given so much autonomy, they had the same amount of knowledge as a doctor with less schooling, and they were always overseen by a physician, covering their malpractice. At the same time, while it is a pro, I can see a possibility where I could become frustrated with constantly being overseen by a physician. Those are the thoughts running through my head after this trip. While I still do not feel ready to make any big life decisions quite yet, I must say this trip was plenty informative. I want to thank all of the healthcare professionals that answered my questions and thank the host family for being so hospitable and taking good care of us and thank my team for making the trip enjoyable.

– Matthew Deinitchenko

Centralia

Over Spring Break, I had the privilege to shadow 3 different clinics in the Centralia/Chehalis area. Looking back, I'm very happy to have experienced things this way (shadowing multiple clinics), as each experience opened my eyes to an area of healthcare I had never seen in practice before.

As far as shadowing goes, I started my week off at the Cascade Evaluation and Treatment Center. I was able to shadow Dr. Luke Greene, an ARNP who specialized in psychiatry. The experience was very insightful, as I was able to see him treat a wide array of psychiatric cases. As it was my first day ever shadowing, he went out of his way to explain the roles of different healthcare providers in a hospital setting, which I really appreciated. The following day, I was able to shadow Teresa Ekdahl-Johnson, a MAT certified ARNP at the Cascade Chehalis branch. What stood out to me during my time with her was how thorough she was in her explanations of her profession and associated responsibilities. I felt like I was receiving so much clinical and experiential information that I left with a bit of regret that I didn't take notes. By the completion of the day, I left the clinic having learned a ton about various drug treatments for opioid-related addiction, and why what she was doing was so important to the local Centralia/Chehalis area.

On Wednesday, I was able to shadow Ashley Taylor, an NP specializing in neurological illnesses. Throughout her shift, I was able to see her conduct autism testing in children, along with mental health treatment for some teens. For the entirety of the experience, I was able to be a bystander as she interacted with children/teens and tried to provide encouragement for family members. As I'm personally interested in the field of neurology, I found myself to be heavily engaged throughout the day. I was asking her questions nonstop, and she was enthusiastic to answer all of them.

On Friday, I was able to shadow the pharmacy staff, which included Alma, Jon, and Dr. Amir. The three of them walked me through three distinct pharmaceutical roles. Jon, who was managing the pharmacy for the day, was very detailed when talking about his role; he also gave me plenty of life advice that I still remember verbatim. Alma was responsible for the remote orders and was very friendly and willing to answer all my questions. Dr. Amir conducted the more clinical role of the three (for the day), contacting patients, and giving them advice on how to use their prescriptions depending on their lifestyle choices. All three were amazing and helped to really show me the hidden complexities of the job.

Overall, I had a very memorable week shadowing the various clinics. One thing that stood out to me from all the physicians I shadowed was the commitment to the community. All the providers I talked to had the option to work in a more urban setting for higher pay, but were willing to stay in the rural setting because they realized how much their community needed them. Their altruistic choice really highlights some of the best characteristics of the healthcare experience. I definitely was positively impacted by this experience and am motivated to give back to the community that I will one day serve in the same way that all these individuals are currently doing.

I never thought the first domestic medical shadowing experience of my life would be a rural one, but now that I am on the other side of Spring Break 2022, I am so, so happy that it was.

Having only shadowed and volunteered in pop-up clinics in rural Guatemala, I still had no idea what a shadowing experience in the USA would be like going into HCASB. Even though I knew about the general flow of patients through an intake-vitals-provider-pharmacy system, I was curious about the different forms that it could take in different environments. Being able to shadow practitioners, providers, and pharmacists making this process work was truly special, and I really left those clinics knowing so much more than I ever would have known before entering.

The teams were so welcoming. I was touched by the willingness of everyone to teach and explain even the most complicated topics and diagnoses when I asked; I had lots of questions, and even though my questions often slowed the team's workflow, every member of the healthcare team enthusiastically responded with patience and detail. I understand that the clinics I visited were doing me a massive favor by letting me shadow, and I appreciated that I felt less like a nuisance and more like a special visitor that the team was eager to take good care of. I know that's definitely a rare experience (per the testimonials of my friends who have shadowed at other clinics).

Right off the bat, I saw lots of challenging roadblocks to both healthcare providers and to carrying out good health-promoting practices in Centralia. At even the largest community health center I visited, the ratio of patients needing care to the providers available to give that care was much larger than ideal. Food, transportation, and housing insecurity often made it almost impossibly difficult for patients to get to and from appointments, and to effectively follow the medication and diet regimen the provider recommended at their appointments. Many patients attempting to get clean or heal from mental illnesses had only abusive and enabling homes to go back to once they left the clinic, and drug users often relapsed from constant exposure to other users or from the intense stress they experienced from broken relationships and poverty. Charting and paperwork itself often took up the majority of the precious time that patients had with their providers to talk about their health concerns, and providers commonly found themselves sandwiched between different stakeholders, having to balance the goals and roles of various care contributors while still ultimately prioritizing the wellness of the patient right in front of them. It took lots of wrestling to get insurance companies to cover the costs of necessary treatments for many of the patients. The rich community of Spanish-speaking residents in Centralia sometimes had language barrier troubles when attempting to communicate with some members of the care team, and distrust of medical professionals ran deep in these communities.

I knew about these difficulties of practicing medicine in a rural setting before experiencing HCASB, and I know we still have a dizzyingly long way to go - but I encountered many more victories for the rural healthcare teams and the communities they served during my time at the clinics than I was expecting to find. The 340B pharmacy at Valley View provided life-sustaining yet usually exorbitantly priced medications for pennies on the dollar to the rural community, and even though this required frequent compliance audits and complete reinvestment of any and all profit made through the pharmacy right back into the clinic's facilities and

resources, everyone I met in the clinic was selfless and thrilled to be a part of something so awesome. I broadened my perspective regarding the role of a pharmacist in the healthcare setting as I sat in on the clinical pharmacy appointments held by practicing pharmacists to offer intensive care and follow-up to patients with poorly managed diabetes in tandem with their primary care provider. I even heard about the exciting future direction of pharmacists joining ARNPs and PAs as effective primary care providers to offer more personal, tailored care for chronic conditions! I learned so much about different ways that providers managed the load they carried from their work and interactions, from carefully curating the physical distance between work and home to paragliding at Tiger Mountain and going shooting at the range to keep a healthy separation between work (which can often be psychologically heavy) and home. All of this hopeful news makes me look forward to seeing what more the rural healthcare team can do to work around the unique challenges of a rural setting and bring community members the good health they deserve once I move back post-graduation to serve the community further.

To Annalee, Dr. Little, Warren, Anastasia, Sarah, Amir, Alma, Gary, Teresa, Luke, and the rest of the care team members I had the immense fortune to meet - thank you. It's people like you that inspire and build the next generation of healthcare workers, and I can't wait to be back someday.

– Jeessoo Yoon

I was one of four who were fortunate enough to travel to Centralia, Washington this spring break! As a group, we had the opportunity of rotating through 3 different healthcare facilities in a span of 4 days. This allowed us to shadow a wide array of healthcare professionals including nurse practitioners, physicians, and pharmacists. On the first day, I had the pleasure of shadowing Teresa Ekdahl-Johnson who is an ARNP working at a substance abuse rehabilitation clinic. Her work with patients dealing with opioid and alcohol addiction was nothing short of admirable and has helped individuals regain control of their lives. The clinic focused on the holistic treatment of rehabilitation by providing not only medication but also group therapy sessions, counseling, transportation, and employment. Thank you Teresa for spending your valuable time teaching me about the life of a nurse practitioner.

I also had the pleasure of shadowing three pharmacists, Amir, Jon, and Alma who all showed me the in and outs of pharmacy in a more clinical setting, where they worked alongside primary care providers to determine the best medication for their patients. Finally, I had a fantastic time shadowing Luke Greene an ARNP who specializes in psychiatric care and was able to witness the process of diagnosing patients with mental disorders such as schizophrenia, bipolar disorder, and catatonia.

One thing I found in common with everyone I shadowed was that they were all able to form personal connections with their patients and had the flexibility to allocate more time towards a patient if needed without intruding on another patient's care. This allowed them to build trust and honest communication which are both fundamental in order for the patient to receive the best care possible. This trip has been life-changing and allowed me to see the

incredible work healthcare workers in Centralia are doing and has unquestionably reaffirmed my passion for healthcare and medicine.

On the final day of our trip, we volunteered at the local Salvation Army Foodbank and I want to thank the staff for being so inviting and for the awesome work they do for the community of Centralia. We appreciate you! It was a great ending to an unforgettable week.

– Renelle Christensen

This was definitely a whirlwind of an experience; there's no better way to really describe it.

Centralia, while generally quieter than the bustling tempo of Seattle (aside from the ever-present train whistles sounding in the backdrop), is a beautiful area. The sunsets were really gorgeous and our short hike as a group was a welcome reprieve from the busy city campus setting that's our everyday. Centralia was also so much closer to home than I realized, highlighting how rural healthcare is not necessarily far-flung and detached--but can rather be close by and overlooked.

The time with HCASB was a keen-eyed look into the realities of medicine when there are fewer resources to go around, fewer professionals to render care, and a population with a wide breadth of health needs. I'm deeply grateful to have peered into the day-to-day operations of such a variety of health services: primary care, 340(b) pharmacy, psychiatric evaluation and treatment, and medication-assisted addiction treatment. It really gave me a greater idea of the different scopes of the medical field and how these seasoned professionals push to improve the well-being of the people around them. We also helped out at a local food bank on our last day. While the time felt all too brief, I really loved getting a chance to see what on-the-ground efforts to meet community needs looked like and chatting with those using the food bank's services, be it individuals who have fallen on hard times or those putting food on the table for their families.

If I were to sum it up succinctly, I would say that everyone is trying their best on the behalf of their community. These providers build relationships with their patients and offer care and guidance on pressing issues outside of merely physical health. Both doctors and nurse practitioners, along with the supporting medical staff and adjacent health services, do so much for the patient population. Furthermore, hearing patients' stories drove home the opportunity gap that exists between the more privileged backgrounds that many of us are accustomed to.

I really loved getting to know the providers and professionals we got to work with; they were wonderful, happy to include us, and teach us interesting tidbits here and there. I feel like this experience humanized the medical profession so much; while becoming a physician feels so far down the road, it sometimes feels like something so far out of reach, like they're abstracted superhumans up on a pedestal. It was nice to get a chance to chat and see them for the people they are, rather than the idealized conceptualizations rattling around in my brain. I will forever remember the two psych NPs who mercilessly (and amicably!) ribbed each other while I died laughing on the sidelines--it was the absolute best kind of chaotic good and made it feel all the

more possible to break into the field. It's comforting to know that, ultimately, they're just normal people--as silly as that feels to say.

At the end of the day, I'm so incredibly thankful for this experience; I loved my time with my group and the people I got to work with. There's no real good replacement for an experience like this--it was truly something special.

– Salina Zhang

Colville

There aren't enough words to describe how amazing my experience in Colville was. Every day was filled with new learning opportunities and valuable lessons-- all thanks to the incredible people who hosted us, allowed us to shadow and welcomed us into their homes and their towns. Our stay with Dr. Waters was perfect in every way-- I could not have asked for a more kind and generous family to spend my spring break with and I am forever grateful.

Every person I shadowed in Colville and Chewelah went above and beyond to answer my endless questions about healthcare in general and rural health specifically. I learned more than I could have hoped for about different careers within healthcare and about different specialties that sparked my interest and that I hope to learn more about in the near future. The interactions I saw between healthcare providers and patients will stay with me for a long time, and I hope that I can carry the patience, kindness, and passion that I saw in Colville with me throughout my future career. Once again, I am beyond grateful for everyone who volunteered their time to teach us about rural healthcare.

– Jana Zahlan, Colville Team Leader 2022

It's amazing being on the trip to Colville after 5 months of planning. I have heard of so many cases where sites got canceled due to COVID concerns, but Heather, Shannon, and Cally were willing to work with us to figure out a plan where we get the shadowing opportunity, and the safety of the community is not sacrificed. I am extremely grateful to Dr. Waters for providing us with housing during this week and hosting a barbecue with Dr. Holtzer's family for us. The most amazing part of this trip is seeing how each aspect of the trip is better than I expected. The healthcare workers at Colville are all so warm and welcoming. They were curious about our backgrounds, offered snacks, and cracked jokes. The patients are extremely kind to let us observe their appointments, and every resident in the town is so kind to us, which is something you rarely see in the urban community. The connection I have with the locals is something that I look forward to building as a rural healthcare provider in the future.

I observed great patient-provider interaction, interesting conversations, and heart-touching connections between people in the community. I learned so many tips for my future career, not just in medical school, but also when I'm actually working in the healthcare field.

Last but not least, I would also like to thank my amazing team members for being such great comrades during this journey. The way that we each share our own experiences at the end of the day made our trips much more valuable, and the fun we had made this trip a memorable adventure that I will cherish for a long time :D

– Vicky Shih, Colville Team Leader 2022

My trip to Colville for HCASB was, without a doubt, my most memorable spring break. The drive to Colville had many breathtaking sights, and the town had a breathtaking landscape filled with mountains and hills, and stars that speckled the night sky. The hosts and the healthcare providers we worked with were incredibly kind. Dr. Waters, our host, held us a barbeque in which we got to talk with her and some of her colleagues and getting to hear their stories was inspirational.

My first and third day of shadowing was with the hospitalist, Dr. Rattray. He taught me about what it was like to be a doctor, and what the challenges of working in a rural environment were. My second day of shadowing was in the emergency department with Dr. Deckert, and it was an enlightening experience. I saw a variety of different cases and witnessed what it was like for patients close to death. Shadowing in the ED taught me well, and it showed me that when working with patients, you see them as other humans, regardless of their views and your own preconceived notions. My last day consisted of shadowing a nurse practitioner, and I saw and connected with a variety of patients, and their family members, with tragic cases. Lastly, volunteering at the food bank was a great experience, as I got to see how much good an establishment such as a food bank can do for a community.

Overall, HCASB was a great experience, and I am thankful for having this opportunity.

-Arman Khan

I had an amazing time shadowing in Colville! This was my first time experiencing life in a rural setting and I was amazed by how welcoming and kind the people are. All of the healthcare professionals that I shadowed were passionate about teaching and made time to answer all of my questions despite having incredibly busy schedules. I want to thank Dr. Waters for hosting us in her charming bungalow and for throwing us a wonderful barbecue, it made for some unforgettable memories. I also want to thank Jana and Vicky for being wonderful team leaders and organizing this experience!

I had the opportunity to shadow a family medicine physician, Dr. Neiman, and multiple physical therapists, including Jenny Dunlap and Tess Wilson. It was amazing to observe how the different providers interacted with their patients. I was incredibly inspired by the relationships that Mrs. Dunlap had with her patients, and how many smiles she brought to their faces. I learned so much from shadowing these healthcare professionals, ranging from how to make patients comfortable to learn more about the unique challenges of working in rural healthcare. Thank you to all of the healthcare providers for allowing us to shadow you and for sharing their wisdom!

- Jennifer Rueda Verduzco

I cannot thank the community of Colville enough for our experiences this spring break. The medical professionals, hosts, and community members were beyond kind to us – thank you! An extra special thank you to Dr. Waters for letting us stay with her and providing us with an

unforgettable barbecue. It was so fun to sit around the fire, talk to one another, and take a moment to relax.

In the clinic/hospital, I had a blast shadowing Jeff and Dr. Comstock. They showed me the benefits of rural healthcare and the importance of relations within a small community. The kindness they expressed to their patients was of the utmost patient care I have witnessed. It was easy to see their pride, love, and support for their community. I cannot wait to share my knowledge and experiences of this opportunity. Thank you for volunteering your time and expertise.

– Marissa Shumaker

Health Care Alternative Spring Break will be an experience I will cherish long past graduation. As a senior who was able to experience this trip post-pandemic and nearing the end of my college career, I felt especially fortunate to be involved in this organization. I would like to shout out to Team Leaders Vicky Shih and Jana Zahlan for organizing and detailing this amazing trip and Dr. Waters for being an above and beyond host for our group.

I had a wonderful time shadowing at the local hospital and clinic in Colville! From providers to the patients, everyone was nice and welcoming to my presence in the healthcare setting. Something that stood out for me in rural healthcare was the communication between doctor and patient. Being in a small town, everybody knows everybody else. I got to observe the delicate balance of professional care and personal life. It was fascinating observing the provider's navigation of these conversations making them equally as meaningful and intimate for the patient while providing competent healthcare services. While things may be different in an urban setting, I hope to incorporate some degree of these meaningful interactions if/when I become a provider myself.

Overall, I had an amazing experience and could not recommend it enough to other pre-health students. It is an experience that when taken with an intention of reflection and self-evaluation, can truly grow you as a provider and more importantly, as a person.

– Vincent Tran

Davenport

My experience this spring break was amazing. I've only briefly seen parts of rural America when driving down I-90 to Spokane. As someone who has lived his whole life in Tacoma, I've never truly experienced what it's like to live in a smaller community like Davenport. I'll always remember the sense of community I felt here at Davenport. Everyone was extremely friendly and I will especially remember the close relationships between providers and patients. It's something that I've almost never seen before. I especially enjoyed watching Larry Carpenter see patients in the Reardan clinic. He showed me the impact of a good provider goes beyond medicine.

This trip has also made me realize how much more of an impact rural providers can make in people's lives. This trip has definitely made me curious about the possibility of working in a rural setting. I'd be able to know many patients individually and outside of the health care setting, the views are incredible, and it would fulfill a lifelong yearning to do something meaningful. It's still something I'm discerning, but this trip has opened the door to something I never even considered.

I really want to thank everyone who made this trip possible. Huge thank you to Carey, the communications director of Lincoln hospital, as you were super willing to help us coordinate this trip. I also really want to thank the Panke's and the Van Pevenage's for letting us stay at their home and cooking for us. And a huge shout out to all the providers that let us follow them.

– Gabriel Lau, Davenport Team Leader 2022

Being able to participate in HCASB was an amazing experience that has taught me so much. I was able to shadow physicians in a rural setting, which not only broadened my view of healthcare but also showed me what a rural lifestyle was like. I was able to see the unique aspects of rural healthcare by shadowing a variety of specialties. What I found really interesting was how versatile the providers were, being able to practice in various fields depending on what was required within the hospital. Seeing a family medicine physician practice in the ER was a really cool experience as I hadn't seen providers move between specialties previously. Being able to shadow four different providers from physicians to CRNAs, I was able to witness how each part of the healthcare delivery team operated and worked together, helping me understand the overall process much better.

Within the shadowing experience, I saw a wide variety of cases. One thing that stood out to me most of all was the connectedness within the hospital, from the providers to the patients as well. Seeing how patients were able to connect with their providers on a much deeper level showed me how much of an impact longitudinal care has on patient outcomes. Patients were able to fully confide their concerns with their providers because of that level of trust built-in long-lasting relationships. This was very different from what I had seen in urban healthcare settings where patients often saw a different provider each visit, which severely prevented the formation of those relationships that I saw in Davenport. Overall, HCASB was an incredibly

eye-opening experience that confirmed my motivation to pursue rural family medicine and broadened my perspective on healthcare by providing me with lifelong lessons.

– Bill Young

They say that first impressions are crucial, and over the course of the week, I came to find that this was true of my experience at Davenport. As an international student who has only lived in megacities with populations of up to 20 million, I wasn't sure what to expect arriving at Davenport, with a population of just over 1000. With that being said, in my first few interactions with our host family, as well as with the staff and providers at Lincoln Hospital, we were welcomed with open arms and were so well taken care of! The warmth and welcome we experienced as a first impression went on to set the tone for the rest trip, and I am so grateful for everyone who went out of their way to make our short stay as educational and interesting as possible.

One memorable highlight was getting the opportunity to shadow Steven Beckstrom and Paul Travis, experienced CRNAs who play pivotal roles in the pain clinic at Lincoln Hospital. Getting to observe and learn more about pain management procedures such as nerve blocks and ablations, epidural blood patches, and steroid injections, I've come to realize the prevalence of chronic pain, as well as appreciate the importance of pain clinics in improving the quality of life as well as reducing opioid usage. One thing that stood out to me while observing their interactions was the level of care and thoroughness they showed their patients. Each visit was a patient was at least 45 minutes long, and they really took their time to get to know the patient. I could see how much of a difference this quality of care meant to the patients, as you could always tell how grateful they were when the appointment was over, taking their time to voice their trust and respect for the providers as they knew they were in good hands.

Another highlight of the week was getting to shadow Dr. Dunlap, the orthopedic surgeon at Lincoln Hospital. One thing that was memorable for me while watching him perform an MTPJ fusion was his attention to detail, thoroughness, and precision in his work. He put in extra time and effort, using the X-ray at multiple different angles to determine the proper placement of the plate that would ensure the best result in terms of the positioning of the toe, later explaining to me how he wanted to get it just right, with the right space for the toe to bend down as it would eventually make a subtle, but important difference in the patient's gait. I also admired his rapport with his patients and staff, which really highlighted the tight-knit community and family-like aspect of rural medicine.

My experience was made so much more meaningful by not just the providers I shadowed, but also the incredible staff, nurses, and providers at the hospital - Dr. Ruperal, Tina, Michelle, Diane, Diana, Melissa and so many more. They went out of their way to check up on me, answer all my questions, and made sure I was well taken care of and was getting the full experience.

This whole trip would not have been as incredible of an experience as it was without the hospitality, kindness, and generosity of our hosts, the Van Pevnages. Mike, Taunya, and Peyton opened up their home to us and gave us a glimpse of what living in a rural community was like. From giving us rides to and from the hospital every day, planning meals and activities for us,

showing us the stars and constellations from their back porch, watching the Great British Baking Show together, sharing about their backpacking and travel experiences, and giving us a tour of the city, as well as sharing and educating us about the local community, we were able to experience and learn so much in such a short amount of time in large, thanks to them.

I cannot emphasize how grateful I am for this experience, and how profoundly this has impacted my perspective on rural healthcare and communities. In all, what stood out to me the most from this week was the strong sense of community I felt here, the people I've met, and the stories they have to tell; ultimately getting to see firsthand that it is the people here that made this experience unforgettable.

– Chelsea Ng

This is my first time participating in HCASB and experiencing what it is like to shadow a medical practitioner. I am so glad I turned in my application to be able to spend my spring break in Davenport. Being able to witness relationships between patients and hospital/clinic staff in a rural area has shown me the different levels of personalized care when compared to an urban hospital/clinic. This experience has left me to consider a career in rural medicine and further my understanding of physical therapy.

When I first showed up, I did not know what to expect so I had set my expectations low. My only previous experience in a rural setting was in rural China, which proved to be very different from Davenport. However, focusing on the hospital/clinic I shadowed at, the level of communication, patient care, and relationships were next level and so much more personal than I had expected. The physical therapists I shadowed under would have long conversations with patients while administering patient care and therapy. It would ease the patient and created a stronger relationship between patient and therapist. Furthermore, with the built trust, the patients were also well-disciplined when it came to communicating with and following the physical therapist. I was even given the opportunity to talk to patients and learn about their perspectives of the staff. Clearly, the patients enjoyed the work and efforts of the physical therapists I shadowed under, stating, "This guy knows his stuff," and other similar sentences.

I am very thankful to the Davenport community and UWHCASB for providing me the valuable experience in such a welcoming environment. I was able to see the environment of a clinic and hospital from more of a staff point of view rather than a patient point of view. I will be taking this lesson with more in the future to further motivate and inspire my passion for physical therapy. I would like to especially thank Taunya and Michael Van Pevenage for the warm homestay experience and aid for the journey we took together. I would further like to thank Michael Van Pevenage, RPT, Shane Nielson, DPT, Erinn Browning, PT, and Alyson Williams, PTA, for allowing me to shadow, follow, and ask questions while I was there. Their answers, experience, insight, work ethic, and advice have been eye-opening and extremely helpful. Thank you for serving as role models and providing me with an amazing week! Lastly, thank you Lincoln Hospital and Clinic for providing the opportunity to shadow and all the work done. I hope everyone that helped with coordinating and working with this program all the best.

– Richelle Chen

Elma

This spring break I had the opportunity to shadow the wonderful physicians at Summit Pacific Medical Center in Elma, WA. Prior to this experience, I had limited knowledge of the factors that characterized rural medicine and how drastically different it was from a typical urban setting. Summit Pacific felt like a tightly-knit family that emanated compassion, which was further emphasized by their unusually small roster of staff. I got to see the interworkings of a hospital strained by a lack of resources and specialists and how such constraints led to the development of the staff's versatility in the treatment of their patients. Summit Pacific emphasized a holistic approach to healthcare, which greatly contrasted with the more utilitarian feel of urban hospitals.

Within independent centers such as urgent care, acute care, GI, and the emergency department, I got to shadow various physicians who all provided important advice with respect to conduct during bedside manner, flexibility in inpatient care, and working relationships established with patients. Their dedication to preventative care and the importance they place on their patient's well-being and satisfaction is what I personally believe will motivate others my age to work in rural hospitals. My rounds through these respective departments helped me reevaluate my preferred medicinal specialties and have motivated me to potentially return (or go to another rural hospital) for my residency. A huge thank you to Dr. Syed, Dr. Snell, Dr. Cheema, Dr. Abdullah, Michael (CRNA), Tim (PA), Ryan (PA), and all the nurses, techs, and administrators for accommodating us in their hospital. I'm also especially thankful for Becky Blackhawk, who is (and always will be) the GOAT for housing us during our stay and helping make this trip possible. Take care ☺

– Anthony Haddad, Elma Team Leader 2022

Looking back at my time spent shadowing at Summit Pacific Medical Center in Elma, I am so thankful and appreciative for all that I was able to learn and experience. Having shadowed previously in Tonasket and Omak and having grown up in more rural areas of the Midwest, I have been strongly interested in pursuing a medical career in a rural community since starting college. Summit Pacific absolutely blew me away; I enjoyed learning about the hospital's new GI department, beautiful wellness center amenities, and plans to encourage preventative care visits in the community and increase access to care.

Throughout our trip, my group got the chance to rotate through the ED, acute care unit, urgent care, diagnostic imaging, GI, medical social work, and observe Becky Blackhawk in her nurse educator role. Thanks to the amazing family medicine providers at Summit Pacific, I fell in love with the versatility and wide range of practices associated with the specialty. I observed my first morning "rounds" discussions led by Dr. Snell and Dr. Cheema and appreciated how close the entire healthcare team worked to include and consider perspectives from nurses, PTs, dietitians, RTs, and more. Further, I really liked how rounds were held in a separate room from patients to allow for uninhibited discussion. Looking toward my future in the medical field, I hope to return to a rural community like Elma and work as a family medicine provider. Shadowing at Summit Pacific gave me a greater appreciation for rural medicine, and helped

highlight the needs present in these communities.

I want to thank a few of the individuals that made my time at Summit Pacific so impactful— first, Dr. Snell and Dr. Cheema from the Acute Care Unit for showing me the versatility of family medicine, talking with me about the ups and downs of medical school and residency, and showing me how important it is to spend time talking with patients about their treatment goals and personal experiences. Tori, for welcoming us over to her home for a delicious dinner, milkshakes, and VR video games. Dr. Dietrich, for sharing his thoughts regarding the way he sees interconnectedness between the world of medicine and religion, thoughts regarding finding the right field of medicine for each person individually, and his motivations behind working in rural medicine. Ryan Pederson, ARNP from the ED for taking the time to explain lab results and show us how to decipher chest Xrays, ultrasounds of cellulitis, and much more. Additionally, I appreciated getting the chance to observe how compassionately and kindly he approaches patients in difficult situations. Dr. Syed, for teaching me about how emergency medicine doctors are trained to assess patients and determine the acuity of their illness, how the ED functions, and for telling us interesting stories from her residency in Chicago. Dr. Abdullah and Michael (CRNA) from GI taught us all about anesthesia, GI anatomy, GI procedures, and anatomy in real-time. Finally, an extra special thanks and shoutout to Becky Blackhawk who helped coordinate our shadowing trip! Becky went above and beyond talking to so many different departments and administrative leaders to give us the chance to shadow, and I am so grateful for all of her time and help. Becky also gave our group the chance to get our BLS certification while at Summit Pacific. I was feeling pretty nervous going into the in-person skills portion of the BLS training, but Becky took the time to walk me through what to expect so that my experience could go as smoothly as possible. Finally, hearing more about Becky's background and experience in rural healthcare was one of the most integral and impactful parts of my trip to Elma, and I am so thankful I had the chance to learn so much from her. Thank you so much for everything, Becky!

Finally, a huge shoutout and thanks to the nurses, medical assistants, GI team, administrative team, ED techs, and more that welcomed us and made space for us in your busy departments. You all are so talented and kind, and it was so much fun learning from all of you! Hope to see you all soon! :)

– Autumn Capper

My time spent shadowing and knowing other pre-health students from UW was a great experience that I would recommend to any students interested in the medical field. The opportunity to shadow rural healthcare was an amazing experience that helped shape my perspective on the difficulties healthcare workers in rural settings faced, and how they overcame those challenges. Through the program, I was able to shadow a range of positions and fields in medicine which helped me develop an understanding of the commitment and collaborative skills involved to help the community thrive. A huge takeaway from this trip was seeing the dedication and compassion each worker made to their team and the patients. Although there were staff shortages and budget constraints, patients were prioritized and everyone was involved to ensure their community was receiving the best care possible.

The entire team at Summit Pacific Medical Center was welcoming and made the stay in Elma Washington insightful and fun. A huge thank you to the nurse educator, Becky, for helping us set up shadowing opportunities for every single one of us and making our stay in Elma wonderful. I specifically enjoyed getting to spend time in the urgent care department, where I was able to shadow both PAs Tim and Brianna. They both were delightful and were willing to answer any questions I had regarding the cases they were seeing, as well as answer questions about their journey to becoming a PA. I appreciated getting the chance to hear about life and receive their advice, while also learning some medical terminology and diagnoses.

Overall, I'm beyond thankful for everyone involved, from the UW students involved in the HCASB program, to the students I got to meet and get to know during the week, and lastly each individual at Summit Pacific Medical Center. I was unsure what to expect in the beginning, but am happy with the new perspective and knowledge I get to take with me through my journey in healthcare.

– Erna Krnjic

This spring break I was truly honored to have the opportunity to shadow at the Summit Pacific Medical Center in Elma. It was my first exposure to rural medicine, and from day one it was immediately apparent how strong the sense of community was within such a small hospital. It genuinely felt like a family. Everyone knew each other, both on a professional level and a personal level. This dynamic shaped the whole environment of the hospital, and they immediately welcomed us into the Summit Pacific family.

Over the course of the week, we had the chance to shadow just about every department in the hospital– Urgent Care, Acute Care, the Emergency Department, radiology, social work, and more. Each department displayed an incredible level of humility, compassion, and competence when delivering care. It was eye-opening to see the effect this had on patients, making them comfortable and trusting in their providers.

Perhaps the most enlightening aspect of shadowing was gaining a behind-the-scenes look at the diagnosis process. From the patients' point of view, symptoms are often scary and mysterious without having any explanation for them. They simply trust their providers to interpret them and identify the cause, creating somewhat of a black box between symptoms and diagnosis. Seeing this process from the provider's point of view demystified diagnosis and showed me exactly what resources and procedures they use to draw conclusions. I got to see exactly how they utilized literature, collaboration, and their own knowledge to rule out differential diagnoses and come to a definitive verdict. This boosted my excitement to work in healthcare, glimpsing into the reality of a physician's day-to-day operations.

Looking forward, my experience with HCASB will remain a truly formative experience along my healthcare journey. The team of Summit Pacific granted us such an informative and insightful look into rural healthcare, which was a completely new experience for me. Growing up in a very urbanized area, I never would've had the chance to explore this side of healthcare

without HCASB. I couldn't be more grateful to both Summit and HCASB for my experiences this spring break, and I look forward to continuing my involvement in the future!

– Natalie Ada

The one week spent in Elma had been a memorable time for me. This is my first time experiencing rural healthcare and I was really excited. Upon reaching Elma, our host was super enthusiastic and she went through some background information about the hospital that we will be shadowing at. We were given 4 different departments to choose from, the emergency department, urgent care, acute care, and GI.

On the first day of our shadowing, I shadowed a nurse practitioner at the Urgent Care unit while she saw her patients. Everyone in the urgent care was very friendly and pleasant to speak to. They would tell me a little bit more about their patients before seeing them so that I am able to follow what they were doing. One of the PAs even taught me how to look at an X-ray even though I know nothing about it. The work environment was super positive and it felt as if everyone's got each other's back.

Throughout the week, I had the chance to shadow multiple physicians and experience their different work styles. Each department had its own pace and working environment. My personal favorite working environment was the emergency department. At the same time, I do realize the difficulties that rural healthcare centers face from the lack of financial resources and state funding such as the limited number of beds in each department where patients had to be sent out to bigger hospitals through a helicopter in order to receive the corresponding treatments. However, the community at the hospital has been the most welcoming team that I have experienced. I am super grateful to each and one of them for giving us the opportunity to experience rural health.

– Romee Wu

My four days of shadowing experience at Summit Pacific have exposed me to the physical and natural space of rural medicine. I was able to witness the significant health disparities that come with rural hospitals, including the lack of resources and staff that inhibits the quality of patient care. However, despite those limitations, I saw how well the hospital was able to function through the investment of extra hours from staff, hiring of travel nurses, and strong driving power for improvement of patient experience and well-being within each unit regardless of the missing supporting pieces that an urban hospital may have. Whether a patient's visit consisted of a 15 minutes consult to a couple of days in hospitalization, this remained true. There, I came to a realization that this allows the scope of medical practice in rural communities to be more diverse than in urban areas, witnessing physicians perform wound care and nurses draw blood for lab testing, something that there are specific professions for in the city. With this, it enlightened me on how rural physicians retain more clinical independence in their practice.

In addition, the environment of Summit Pacific has shown me how tight the staff is

beyond the size of the hospital, workers are able to form close bonds like family. An important aspect for me as someone going into medicine has always been to work in a comfortable environment where I can share my views and this was something I was able to do during my short stay with Summit Pacific. Besides my exposure to rural medicine, I have grown fond of the staff in the hospital from their friendliness to their burning passion for teaching. I couldn't have asked for a better place to shadow and grow a bond with.

With that said, I thank this wonderful experience to the staff of Summit Pacific and the wonderful community of Elma, WA that were so accepting and welcoming of my team's presence over our spring break. I look forward to possibly seeing everyone again in the near future!

– Thuan Bui

Forks

My experience with our HCASB trip to Forks was informative, eye-opening, and fun. I was fortunate enough to lead the trip as a TL. I believed that this allowed me to build and develop relationships with not just providers but the whole community of Forks. From the administrative staff to primary care providers everyone was lovely to be around. There really is nothing like small-town charm and hospitality! The location was also beautiful. We spent our late afternoons and evenings exploring the dramatic coastline of Washington state. We sat and watched the sunset and walked along the water every day we were in Forks. I really enjoyed getting this peaceful time outdoors during our spring break as well!

At Forks Community Hospital our team was given the ability to shadow people from all different departments. I was able to visit labs, radiology, family medicine doctors, nurses, ARNP, and ER team members. This gave me the opportunity to truly understand all the parts that make a hospital run. It has given my perspective on how healthcare is a team effort that requires many moving parts and people functioning together. Before going on this trip I knew that I wanted to be a nurse, and shadowing them in a rural setting has helped me gain a better understanding of the job. It also has given me more confidence and assurance in my decision to go to nursing school.

Shadowing in a rural healthcare setting gave me a new appreciation for the dedication the providers have to their community. It has also shown me how difficult it is to work with little resources in an understaffed environment. The doctors and nurses worked tirelessly and had to face many challenges, such as staff shortages as people moved to cities, a large elderly population, and financial instability. Many of the family medicine providers were not only doctors but worked in public health programs. The populations of the town and hospital are so small that everyone needed to have a variety of skills and training. For example, nurses need to know how to work in an ER, acute care, and OB center.

I primarily want to thank the hospital and all its employees for making this trip possible. I would also like to thank Diane Edwards for opening up her home to us for the week. We had an amazing time with an amazing community!

– Emily Duque Gallagher, Forks Team Leader 2022

During spring break of 2022, I was able to shadow various physicians, nurses, technicians, and more at Forks Community Hospital and Bogachiel Clinic. The experience as a whole was eye-opening and allowed me to learn so much—not just about the medical field, but also about the tight-knit and kind community at Forks itself.

One of the first departments I got to shadow was radiology at Forks Community Hospital. Following the technicians doing their work and seeing how the X-ray and CT machines operated was fascinating and was the first time I got to see a CT scan work as it occurred as well. The best part about it though was seeing how the technicians interacted with the people as they conducted scans, casually chatting and connecting with them while simultaneously providing them care. It was admirable to see this openness and bonding between medical staff and patients, and from

this, I began to greatly appreciate the deeper connections that everyone shared compared to what I've seen in larger hospitals in more urban areas.

On the third day, I shadowed in the ER and a surprising event occurred. A patient came in and collapsed, and I got to see the patient get put under and intubated. During this, I got to meet the anesthesia nurse on call at the time, and I learned a lot about anesthesia and the meticulous work that has to be done to keep the patient under and alive while she got transported. This experience was not only interesting but gave me a unique insight into how anesthesia nurses work and the immense amount of care that has to go into a critical patient at the ER. I couldn't help but admire the dedication and time that the nurses and doctors at the ER gave to the patient during such a critical moment.

I want to thank everyone at Forks Community Hospital and Bogachiel Clinic for their kindness and for teaching us so much as we shadowed here. I also want to thank the owners of the cabin we stayed in and the high schoolers we presented to for being so welcoming. I know that because of it, I will carry the experiences I've made in Forks for the rest of my life.

– Rohini Kilaru

Grand Coulee

Spending a week in Eastern Washington to experience rural healthcare was one of the most rewarding and informational experiences of my life. Growing up in such an urban community, healthcare always felt so distant and exclusive to only those who worked in the field. However, this trip allowed me to gain a better sense of what healthcare is like in areas where there aren't many resources or people for that matter. Apart from the usual medical knowledge that I gain from shadowing, I was also able to learn some of the benefits of being a healthcare worker in such a setting.

After asking each physician I met why they chose rural medicine, every single one of them said virtually identically things, "autonomy." Being able to work in a rural setting gave these providers the autonomy they deserve without a large corporate healthcare board constantly breathing down their necks, something that's more often seen in urban settings. They were able to provide the care that they saw fit for their patients, and in turn, were able to drive up patient happiness. This in turn fostered better care and it essentially becomes a perpetual cycle. Coming into this trip, I had thought rural medicine was far worse because of the lack of resources. I had thought that there would be no use because of how limited the scope of my practice would be. Thankfully, I was completely wrong. Being in a rural setting also allowed each provider to practice to their full potential. A general surgeon was truly a general surgeon, not just one who performs appendectomies and gall bladder resections. A family practice doctor would occasionally scrub in for a C-section, and an ER doc would sometimes help with delivery. The breadth of skills that these providers have to keep up with is likely greater than that of an urban physician and allows them to demonstrate their true potential. Finally, I was able to observe such a tight-knit community in which the providers and patients all knew each other. I specifically remember one of the obstetricians telling us how he would deliver babies and would continue to oversee their treatment and care as they grew up. That kind of connection between patient and provider is far harder to come by in an urban setting, where providers are constantly under a clock or quota. These are all things that I, personally, find extremely appealing as I venture into a career in medicine.

To close, I'd like to thank all the physicians, nurses, PAs, and other providers for allowing us to have this wonderful opportunity. This trip wouldn't have been the same without you and we are extremely grateful. The entire staff was so receptive to students (something that I, personally, was afraid of) and we appreciate you for accommodating us into your daily routines. We hope to reconnect with you again in the future, one day perhaps as colleagues!

– Abi Chandru

Shadowing at Grand Coulee Medical Center was an eye-opening experience like no other. It gave me a better understanding and glimpse of what it is like to practice in a rural healthcare setting. Although I have gone on an HCASB trip before, this place at Grand Coulee felt particularly special to me due to the tight-knit community and of course, the people. From the moment we entered the city, I immediately felt welcomed by the hotel office managers to the

hospital staff. Everyone was extremely kind, humble, and excited to show us around and teach us what they knew.

I really enjoyed the diversity of healthcare professionals we were able to shadow including doctors, nurse practitioners, nurses, and physician assistants. It reinforced to me that everyone in the hospital has an important task to carry out and teamwork is essential to success. In my observation, each health worker at Coulee Medical Center seemed to have the common goal of providing the best quality and comprehensive patient care experience.

One of my favorite parts of the trip was getting to see a Cesarean section on the last day. Learning how closely connected the doctors were to their patients is heartwarming. For instance, I heard stories like the doctors who helped to deliver the babies, also watched them grow up over time, and afterward would help those same adult patients who were once kids deliver the next generation of babies. This was one of the many reasons why I hope to work someday in a small city like Grand Coulee because it offers me the chance to establish effective rapport and relationships with my patients and gain trust.

Overall, I have learned great importance about the role rural health providers face, many of whom are so knowledgeable in a wide variety of specialties from pediatrics, and emergency medicine, to surgery. For example, when shadowing Dr. Hsieh, I was in awe to learn the scope of surgeries he was capable of performing. This is a bit different from the more urban areas where general surgeons typically perform a single and more limited range of procedures. Shadowing with HCASB has been an invaluable experience, connecting me with talented and dedicated healthcare professionals, while inspiring me to practice rural medicine in the near future.

I am incredibly grateful to all the CMC staff. Thank you for letting me witness the extraordinary work you do on a daily basis. I leave Grand Coulee feeling more motivated and determined than ever before to serve in rural communities like yours.

– Gabriela Claravall

Having grown up in busy cities, spending a week in Grand Coulee and experiencing rural medicine for the first time was a life changing experience. Not only did it provide valuable learning opportunities, but it also changed my perspectives on rural medicine. This was my first HCASB trip and my first shadowing experience, and I really appreciate the healthcare providers I shadowed for being patient with me and explaining everything to me. Everyone in the hospital is so enthusiastic about what they do and super friendly, which is part of why this trip is so special to me.

I got the opportunity to shadow different specialties, like physical therapy, emergency medicine, family practice, and general surgery. Even though each specialty is different, all of the medical providers I shadowed have a relationship with their patient and they want that connection to go beyond just doctor-patient, which is something possible in smaller towns. I remember the day when I shadowed Rick over at the physical therapy clinic, and he was joking about how all of his patients on that day are from his neighborhood. When he's treating his

patients, he asks about their symptoms, but also about their families and their lives because he knows them too. This close-knit community and bond between doctor and patient are what I would want for myself someday as well, and experiencing it over the week solidified my goal of serving patients in rural communities. Seeing a C-section on the last day before we left was very eye-opening as well. Observing Dr. Knox and Dr. Castrodale perform the C-section got me thinking about pursuing OB, and it's an unique experience to deliver patients that could be friends or neighbors.

I'd like to thank everyone at Coulee Medical Center for giving us an opportunity to shadow you. Thank you to Laketha, who coordinated with all the providers we shadowed, and to everyone who made us feel extremely welcomed. Thank you to all the healthcare providers I shadowed throughout the week: Dr. Knox, Dr. Castrodale, Cassandra, Dr. Chaffee, Karen, Rick, Anna, Dr. Hsieh, Samantha, Brian, Wheatie, and Vicky! Thank you for sharing your knowledge and perspectives with me and for letting me shadow you. And of course, thank you to all the patients that gave consent for me to be in the room with them, I would not be able to learn as much as I did without their consents.

– Vivian Chien

Omak

Although I've been on many trips across the country for spring break, this was the most rewarding spring break trip I've ever been on. I had never lived in a rural area before and it was a great experience seeing the similarities and differences between lifestyles. I got to see the natural beauty of Omak and the previously unseen advantages of living in a rural setting. Everyone I met was detailed in their own unique perspective and honest with greats and not-as-greats about their own experiences. All the hospital staff gave detailed opinions and viewpoints on living and working in rural healthcare. Before the trip, I honestly was not sure about working in a rural setting as I've always been in urban areas. I was able to reflect and now am considering a future career in rural healthcare. I was able to see how much of a difference each of the healthcare staff was making as well as the prominent role they played in the community. The diversity in the community was and in the work was something unexpected to me but seemed like a common thread in everyone I talked to.

More specifically to my goal of applying to medical school, I was able to see excellent patient care. I saw sacrifices from all those working there and the incredible knowledge that is needed every day at the hospital. One radiology tech showed me how he told x-rays and I saw the precision needed to take a crisp image but what stuck with me more was his above and beyond attitude to the well-being of his patients. He took extra time and care to limit his radiation dose to as minimum as possible even when it inconvenienced him. Another doctor took time to do an extra few tests to explain things to the patient and made sure they knew exactly what was going on. His bright demeanor and patience, even after countless years of hearing similar compliments of a minor medical annoyance, were truly inspiring for me to see.

I would like to thank the HR department for getting us into the hospital and being so flexible with our schedule. I would like to thank those in the radiology department for letting me see how doctors get an inside eye into the complicated mess that is human bodies and what they might do with that knowledge. I would like to thank the laboratory department for showing me all the tests they run on a daily basis to provide detailed information to providers and the precise work it takes to get there. I would like to thank those in the pharmacy department for giving me a chance to observe all the amazing work they do double-checking medications and keeping drugs stocked up and ready for use. I would like to thank the emergency department for letting me see how they keep order within the chaos and serve on the frontline in stabilizing patients. I would like to thank the general surgery department for showing me the diversity in the work they do and the valuable role they play in filling gaps and their dedicated work in following up with patients after intensive surgery. I would like to thank everyone for their kindness. I felt so welcomed and comfortable which greatly contributed to my learning and experience.

– Mike Shide Zhang, Omak Team Leader 2022

Looking back on my experience at Mid-Valley clinic, I can honestly say that this has been one of the most significant experiences so far on my premedical journey. It is almost too difficult to convey in words and I am having trouble finding a solid place to begin. My experience with HCASB and at Mid-Valley has solidified my want in pursuing medicine. I would strongly

encourage anyone that is even remotely interested in any form of medicine, dental, or veterinary to attend an HCASB experience.

Coming into HCASB, I already had substantial experience as a former EMT, current emergency department scribe, and HIV research intern. I was honestly not expecting to come across anything majorly new or something that I have not seen in some form. I could not have been more wrong about this. Being able to see how a rural hospital runs from the administration down to the medical assistants was an in-depth and eye-opening experience that I was not expecting.

From start to finish, I was able to see minute by minute what happens to someone as they enter the hospital and when they leave, whether it was by helicopter or discharged home. I was able to see literally from when a patient came into reception, initial evaluation by a provider, how their lab work and imaging were conducted, analysis of results, emergency interventions, and provider decision making. This experience literally covered everything from administrative policies to janitor work.

I could not believe I was meeting patients that had no running water or electricity in the United States, circa 2022. Every provider or employee had a background story that led them to Omak, some being born and raised, and others were transients from England. Each brought a certain skill set or expertise that messed together and allowed the hospital to operate.

I had a chance to not only follow medical providers but also spend a significant amount of time in departments that I probably would not have thought about shadowing. I spoke with an emergency doctor during one of my shifts after coming back from Omak and they were so surprised that I was able to spend a day in radiology, laboratory, and pharmacy. Although I understand that we all have certain interests, I am so thankful that I had the opportunity to spend time in departments that I was not initially interested in. It really allowed me to piece together how a hospital functions on an intimate level, how it seems to operate in one cohesive unit, and how every single person plays a part.

I wanted to mention something that I was not entirely expecting regarding HCASB themselves and the other participants that I had a chance to share this experience with. I walked away from the trip feeling rejuvenated and happy that I found other students who were as interested and passionate about the medical field as I was. It was very rewarding to listen and hear everyone's experiences when we reconvened at the end of the day.

In closing, I would like to say again that if anyone is remotely interested in medicine or dental in any sort of capacity, I would strongly and highly recommend applying to HCASB. This experience is something that you will not find volunteering, researching, and certainly not in a classroom. Most importantly, if you have any interest in rural medicine, I am confident in saying that you will leave this experience knowing if rural medicine is something that is for your out not. Thank you HCASB and my teammates, this trip has been significant.

– William Blakey, Omak Team Leader 2022

I didn't really know what to expect when I signed up for the HCASB trip. It was my first time shadowing and I was with seniors who had already done their MCAT and applied to medical schools around the world. I was absorbing all this information while I was heading to Omak, a place I'd never even heard of.

As I walked into the clinic I was assigned to, I was greeted by busy workers and a dentist. At the time, the person I was supposed to meet with was in a meeting. I didn't know who to follow or when the appropriate time was to ask questions, so I just hovered around for the first couple of hours. As I got used to the setting, Angela, the dental assistant that I was awkwardly following around, was very welcoming of me. She showed me around the clinic and the practices she does before a patient enters. I learned that a lot of sanitization goes into each appointment, before, after, and during. It was enlightening to see a clinic in a rural area much more equipped than a clinic in the city. This was not what I envisioned but provides a different view of access to healthcare.

I'd like to thank the staff that hosted me in the clinic. I appreciated the transparency and honesty. While trying to understand the techniques and style of each individual, I learned a lot of life lessons and guidance that will eventually help me gauge how I should approach my own dental journey. Throughout this trip, I was able to see various patients, each coming from different backgrounds. I learned a lot, even from within the group that I went on the trip with. They were all experienced in schooling and undergrad and I learned a lot from them.

– Jenny Kwan

Over the last two years while HCASB took its hiatus from planning trips due to Covid-19, I experienced a level of disillusionment with my plans to pursue medicine. But this experience resolidified my passion and pursuits – I felt great solace in this shadowing experience as it refueled the fire pushing me towards a career in rural medical practices. I am extremely grateful for the care and dedication of the healthcare workers at Mid-Valley Hospital and the Mid-Valley Clinic. Thank you so much for accommodating our excitement as students and I know that our paths as physicians will inevitably cause paths to cross again.

I'd say that the ability to shadow a different department every day should be an experience every future physician should have. It was extremely enlightening to see every aspect of patient care and how each department interacts with each others. Shadowing pharmacy showed me the intricacies of drug-drug interactions and how the physician's relationship with the pharmacists ensures proper pharmaceutical care. Working alongside radiology technicians allowed me to observe how physicians and radiologists problem-solve cases and bring light to the otherwise obscured. Running labs in the laboratory gave me insight into the time and effort required to acquire accurate diagnoses and how those function when a physician requests a test. Altogether, only shadowing one specific aspect neglects the bigger picture, and taking the time to see each department truly made this HCASB trip an unforgettable and informative experience. Again, thank you all so much for your kindness and for taking us in!!!

– Zachariah Fincher

Quincy

I spent my spring break in April within the town of Quincy where I had the unique opportunity to shadow three different medical providers at the Quincy Valley Medical Center. This included spectating their activities, and visiting the ER and the wound care unit. Many of the cases I cannot talk about, as I would not want to speak about patients after they entrusted me to spectate their most vulnerable moments, but I will say that there was a wider variety than I expected. Patients coming in for the flu, physicals, and ER follow ups as well as the occasional walk-in patient who required a diagnosis. Those walk-in patients were the rarest but the most thrilling to spectate as much of the process was later broken down for me by the ARNP I was spectating, and I got to see the step-by-step process involved. That is not to say that the typical appointments for the family practice element were uninteresting or unmeaningful, far from it. Watching the provider switch on instant happiness radiating from them, despite how they themselves were feeling, just to make a little girl feel better about sticking a swab up her nose for a strep test was so enheartening. That's just one example of how those I shadowed strove to do more for those they served.

I also learned about the prickly underside of medicine. Insurance coverage bargaining and the lack of coverage many within the community suffer from leaves them entirely dependent on Industry and Labor (the main providers of insurance for farm workers) to dictate what degree of medical care they receive. I also learned about the various ways that insurance is billed and processed which was not necessarily good or bad but rather a bureaucratic component of the overall medical system.

Every day was vastly different, with different providers each day as well as different demographics of patients for each respective provider. Any slow moment of each day was filled with advice and questions from whoever was nearby as well as many questions of their own towards me. It was nice to have space to openly discuss the medical studies I am undergoing in class and in my work with people who practice medicine for their careers. It yielded many interesting conversations and gave space for advice not only for my work but for my life.

This experience went far beyond just spending time watching dozens of cases and patient interactions, as the clinic staff invited me into their lives beyond the clinic walls. I got to learn the motives and paths for how every employee ended up in Quincy, how they found their passion for helping others, and I even got to sit in on a baby shower. They were kind, generous people and reminded me strongly of why I want to go into rural medicine so keenly. I am incredibly grateful for the opportunity to shadow in a rural setting and for the hospitality I found waiting for me.

– Matthew Tucker, Quincy Team Leader 2022

My experience over the 2022 HCASB trip was one that I would not trade for any other spring break experience. Our group's destination was Quincy Washington and I spent my days at Desert Sun Dentistry. We spent our evenings at the house of Lisa Carstetter who very graciously allowed the group and I to stay in her unused condo which allowed us tons of space and a very

comfortable living environment. On our first evening, she took us all to dinner and talked to us about the city of Quincy. She was very clearly well connected and had a passion for the city which seemed to be shared with many other residents.

I shadowed Dr. Klingel and the other hygienists who were all incredibly knowledgeable and seemed enthusiastic to explain their work to me. I was offered very informative advice and insight into what a career in dentistry would look like and what I would expect over the next 8 years if I were to pursue that path. Desert Sun Dentistry had close personal connections with all their patients and were vital players in Quincy's tight-knit community. I would strongly recommend the Quincy location for all future HCASB trips.

– Joshua Staker

I had the privilege to visit Quincy Valley Medical Physical Therapy. When I first knew that I was going to shadow physical therapy, I was nervous because I don't have any knowledge or experience in the area. I've always been interested in medicine, but never really explored all of the options that are covered under medical practice, so this was a wonderful opportunity. I was warmly greeted by all of the staff there and was able to shadow two of the physical therapists, Amy and Amanda. Both therapists were incredibly knowledgeable and supportive of my questions and curiosities about the field. Likewise, the patients were always willing to accommodate me and allow me to observe their sessions, which I felt honored by. In fact, everyone I came across was extremely generous with their time, patience, and respect.

Throughout the week, I was able to see a variety of causes and conditions. Within the first day or so, it really did register to me that the body has so many connections that run throughout: there are muscles that start in the back and extend to the knees, as well as muscles leading from the shoulder into the neck. As a result, a muscle strain or tear in one part of the body can very easily lead to consequences in another. It took a little getting used to, this idea that the 'obvious' problem wasn't necessarily the root of it all. Because of this, an aspect of physical therapy that I have realized I would really enjoy is the idea of it all being a puzzle. The therapists had to work out what the real problem was from the symptoms expressed, and then find appropriate treatments; it was a kind of problem-solving that yielded very observable progress and results that are rewarding for everyone involved. While I only visited for a short period of time, I was told of the patient's initial condition and there really was a monumental improvement in every single one.

There were a few slow moments throughout the day, and in that time, both physical therapists never hesitated to show me some of the techniques that they employ on real patients. I got to experience ultrasound stimulation, muscle taping, and other exercises. It was incredibly kind, and I was able to both logically understand what the treatment was intended to do and feel it for myself and recognize the potential for healing. I have come away from this experience with the utmost respect for physical therapy and an appreciation for how beneficial it really can be; It is widely applicable, from surgery recovery to chronic pain.

Another huge takeaway I gained was a better understanding of medicine in rural areas. There were a lot of patients who were there on worker's compensation, or those who had to keep working while injured. In addition, insurance is a tricky force that has to be accommodated for the treatment to be affordable. It was surreal (in the worst way) to realize that, while healing a patient is paramount, there are financial factors and regulations that must be accounted for. The medical providers in these areas are extremely hard-working and passionate about a person's right to medical aid, and I have an increased desire to work in a rural area in my future.

Everyone at the Physical Therapy Center and our gracious host had nothing but generosity to give, and I was even included in team meals and other food perks! After the last day, every single person was eager to find out where my future will lead me and open to me visiting Quincy, Washington again. This experience was truly one of the most rewarding times I've had. Every single day gave me something new to learn and develop, and I am incredibly grateful for the opportunity.

– Michelle Chou

Tonasket

This trip is definitely a great experience for me. As a team leader, before the trip started, contacting the clinic, host, and school help me strengthen my skills in communication and organization.

Throughout the trip, I have a new perspective on healthcare in rural areas. I enjoy the small community in Tonasket. There is a moment when I found myself starting loving Tonasket. After the school presentation, we walked on the street and met some high school students. They waved to us excitedly and everyone there is just so nice. People are always smiling at us and an old lady even makes us a huge chocolate cake to welcome us.

I learned a lot about medical knowledge during shadowing, but more importantly, am the awareness of the insufficient resource in the rural area. I found out that lots of the patients are suffered from diabetes, hypertension, and obesity. This may be due to the lack of awareness of healthy diet and exercise in their community. Moreover, the lack of some resources makes them need to drive 1-2 hours off the town to get the treatment or screening. Not everyone has the time and ability to travel that long which delays some necessary treatment in some patients. Another common issue I found out is the instability of primary physicians. Since lots of physicians coming and leaving in a short time, patients are hard to find a consistent primary doctor to help them keep track of everything.

I've learned a lot throughout this trip and have a general understanding of how rural healthcare works. Overall, I have a great experience during the week and this trip definitely enhances my enthusiasm to work in the rural area in the future.

– Evy Wu, Tonasket Team Leader 2022

My HCASB trip to Tonasket was incredibly memorable. My team and I were hosted by an extremely generous resident of Tonasket, Donna, who took care of all our basic needs, which allowed us to carry out our daily routine with ease. We started our trip with a visit to the local high school where we talked about post-secondary education options with the students. This experience was very enriching because it exposed me to the culture and mindset that students in rural areas adopt. The next couple of days were spent shadowing various doctors and community health workers at the Family Health Centers clinic. All the members of the clinic were extremely hospitable and welcomed us with open arms. They were so enthusiastic about teaching us about the complexities and approaches to running a rural health clinic. The physicians and patients too were greatly accommodating of our shadowing requests, with all the physicians spending extra time to explain medical processes and terminologies to us. I learned so much about working in the field of healthcare - from how to interact with patients to the methods of patient data logging - and I am extremely grateful to each and every person who contributed to making this trip so informative and successful.

While I was initially skeptical of spending a week in rural Washington with people I never met before, the trip turned out to be uniquely enjoyable. My team members are all on

different parts of the pre-medical journey and this trip allowed me to bond with them and receive valuable insights on applying to medical school. All in all, my experience in Tonasket was wonderful and has taught me so much about life beyond the urban concrete jungle.

– Ananya Achanta

Spending spring break in Tonasket, shadowing Dr. Nau and his team, was an invaluable experience for me as I begin my journey in college and pre-health. I saw many dental procedures that I hadn't seen, or even heard of, before. Over the course of the week, I witnessed fillings, crown molds, extractions, and partial dentures. I learned a lot about the precision and patience some of these procedures require as I watched how Dr. Nau repeatedly modified the implants and dentures to make sure they were perfect and that the patients were comfortable. Through speaking with Dr. Nau, I also learned about the unique challenges of rural healthcare, such as the fact that many patients don't have insurance and don't regularly go to the dentist, as well as the importance of ensuring that dental care is affordable for the patient. Dr. Nau's clinic is also one of the few dental care facilities in the area and he had been working there for many years; his dedication to his profession and care for his patients was incredibly inspiring.

I enjoyed living and working with everyone on my team; even though we didn't know each other prior to the trip, we had a lot of fun together and made some great memories. I was also incredibly thankful for our gracious host, Donna, who opened her home to us for the week and was extremely welcoming and kind throughout our stay there.

I want to thank everyone who made this trip possible, including my wonderful team members, our host Donna, and the dental clinic's staff who welcomed us and showed us the ins and outs of their practice. This trip was my first shadowing opportunity, and it really solidified my goal of pursuing a career in healthcare. I was thoroughly inspired by the dedication of Dr. Nau and his team, and I hope to reflect that passion and diligence as I continue my journey in healthcare.

– Kyvalya Reddy

Twisp

Receiving the opportunity to attend HCASB at Twisp WA was amazing. My perspective on medicine, especially rural medicine, has drastically changed. As well as family medicine. On top of that, being a TL and doing the behind the scene work was also a challenge that allowed me to grow. The physicians and staff I shadowed alongside Dave Young were some of the most amazing people I have ever met. This was my first HCASB trip, shadowing rural healthcare, and it was wild to observe the remarkable differences that are present between rural and urban healthcare. I am very thankful to the Twisp Community Health Center's nurses, medical assistants, receptionists, and physicians for the effort they put in to help us learn about rural medicine. From the first day, the nurses and medical assistants have always been welcoming and willing to explain whatever they're doing. They work incredibly long hours, in remote-dated offices, however, the care they provide, especially considering their resources, is some of the best I have ever seen. Due to their close nature with the community and patients, they are able to layer a whole other level to their care. While it can sometimes be awkward if their close relationship is getting in the way, that is a rare occurrence and is handled very well by the physicians. The providers were patient with us and asked us questions which allowed us to form our own miniature prognosis that got our minds in the right form to practice medicine or at least begin to one day.

Our housing situation was very cool, as we were staying in a guest house of a traveling dentist. Her name is Dr. Jill Calvert and I could not be more thankful. The location was so beautiful and we went on several hikes and even got to hang out with her dog when at the house. We made sure to leave the place cleaner than when we arrived and I assured Jill that was the case. We had a lot of fun exploring the area and everyone from the medical staff to the people in the street was extremely nice. I truly hope I receive the opportunity to come back to Twisp and shadow the same physicians.

– Ron Vered, Twisp Team Leader 2022

When I applied to the Healthcare Alternative Spring Break (HCASB) program this year, I did not expect to make it into the cohort. As a current University of Washington (UW) Senior, it was a decision that I made shortly after talking to my Academic Advisor about different medical programs that were available to current UW students. With the COVID-19 pandemic, it has been incredibly hard to find any programs or internships that would allow me to stand out from other medical school applicants. Through HCASB, I was granted a unique experience that I will never forget.

As someone who grew up wanting to become a Pediatrician, I never thought Dentistry would catch my eye. The people of Twisp and the staff at Sawtooth Dental changed my perspective entirely. Each staff member made sure that we all felt welcomed by including us as part of their own routine. I was able to meet patients, and discuss matters related to tooth crown preparation and installment, retainers, Invisalign, and even cavities. Through it all, Dr. O'Keffe would explain everything involved in each procedure, how to evaluate teeth, the cost of running his own practice, and the overall dedication he has to his craft. I would like to extend my thanks

to everyone in the Sawtooth Dental Clinic for allowing us to witness how a personable approach to dentistry can change a patient's life. This trip has inspired me to investigate the field of Dentistry as a possible option seeing as how I can fix people's problems almost instantly either through a crown, an extraction, or a root canal.

Thank you to the HCASB organizers as well as my Twisp Trip team members for adding to the overall experience. I would like to take the time to thank Dr. Jill for allowing the whole group to stay at her guest house. It allowed me the opportunity to shadow Dentistry and take the time to reflect on what the next steps in my education may be. Out of everything I learned on this trip, I come out of it with a better understanding of Dentistry and a newfound respect for health professionals who work in more rural areas of our state. Dr. O'Keffe and his staff are constantly going above and beyond for each of their patients, providing the best care possible while still educating and being flexible with their patients. It is this exact kind of care that places patients in the highest regard and keeps them loyal to the Sawtooth Dental practice. I know that as a future healthcare professional, I can only hope to provide the excellent care and consideration that Dr. O'Keffe models to my future patients. Overall, this has been a wonderful experience and a great way for me to gain some more perspective about some of the fields that are available to me after graduation.

– Aolanis Perez

The HCASB trip to Twisp has had an immense impact on me as a student and hopefully, a future physician. I am especially grateful to the Calvert family for providing incredibly generous living accommodations and their detailed instructions on how to manage the guest house. We would not have been able to come on this trip without your help, and I hope we left the house cleaner than when we arrived. My team also appreciated the pointers on activities to do in Twisp and enjoyed playing football in the spacious yard!

This was my first time going on an HCASB trip and shadowing rural healthcare, and it was amazing to see the striking similarities and differences between rural and urban healthcare. I am so thankful to the Twisp Community Health Center's nurses, medical assistants, receptionists, and physicians for the effort they put in to help us learn about rural medicine. From the first day, the nurses and medical assistants have always been welcoming and willing to explain whatever they're doing. The receptionists showed us the check-in process and income eligibility process. It was especially interesting to learn about the Sliding Scale program and its unique cost reduction program. Shadowing the providers was an incredible experience, and I enjoyed asking questions to the providers in between appointments and during lunchtime. The providers made sure to answer all my questions and explain case details in-depth after each visit. I'm especially grateful to the head nurse and providers for giving us patient cases to examine at the clinic. One thing I found inspiring to hear about was the clinic's goal of never turning a patient away and how this stems from the unique barriers rural residents face in obtaining specialty care.

I am extremely grateful for this opportunity and am very thankful to the host family and clinic for enabling us to shadow this spring break! This experience has definitely reinforced my interest in pursuing rural family medicine!

– Dave Young

The Health Care Alternative Spring Break program allowed me to view dental work done from a different perspective. Spending a week in Twisp, made me visualize the necessity of health care professionals in rural communities. Dr. O'Keefe mentioned how he has had to decline the acceptance of many new patients because he can only see so many as the only dentist at his clinic. I learned that other individuals in the community must commute a long way to see the dentist which can be difficult as the nearest city is around 2 hours round-trip. In addition, with many people from Twisp having to commute a long way, it can become difficult for people to take preventative measures for their teeth. For example, having dental cleaning done on their teeth to prevent irreversible damage. Furthermore, I was able to take part in the wonderful team dynamic Sawtooth Dental Care creates.

At Sawtooth Dental Care, they have a wonderful team dynamic. Through my public health classes, we viewed how important it is to integrate interprofessional communication to further improve the patient's health, which I saw at Dr. O'Keefe's clinic. At Sawtooth Dental, every worker's opinion mattered and was reflected in the way the patients spoke about everyone working at the clinic. This made me desire to work in a similar environment as in Twisp. In addition, even though I was not the one directly working with the patient's teeth, it was very rewarding being able to view the work Dr. O'Keefe, and his staff, do to create satisfaction in the patient's results.

Through this experience, I was able to view the dentist's perspective versus a patient's. I learned the importance of using the rubber dam while working with teeth, especially towards the back of the mouth. In addition, the importance of using the orange lens while working on a filling to delay the cure of the composite resin. Overall, it was amazing to view how the smallest detail in dentistry has its reason to be used in a certain way, at a certain time. All in all, thank you, Dr. O'Keefe, for taking the time in explaining the reasoning behind the tools in which you used through each procedure.

Having the opportunity of staying at Dr. Jill's house during our stay, made me truly feel part of the community and how it felt to live in Twisp, for a week. I did not have the chance to appreciate and thank Dr. Jill in person. However, I am deeply thankful for her trust and kindness in letting us stay at her guest house. Thank you for the unforgettable experience in Twisp.

– Jacquelyne Ayala-Cerna

2022 HCASB Team

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