



# Preceptor Handbook



**Institute for Diversity  
and Health Equity**

*An affiliate of the American Hospital Association*



**American College of  
Healthcare Executives**  
*for leaders who care®*

## Summer Enrichment Program

Advance the Next Generation of Health Care Leaders

**Diversity | Inclusion | Health Equity**

*The Institute for Diversity and Health Equity an affiliate of the American Hospital Association owns and operates the Summer Enrichment Program. The Institute for Diversity and Health Equity and the American College of Healthcare Executives are in agreement to co-promote the Summer Enrichment Program.*

# Summer Enrichment Program Preceptor Handbook

**The Institute’s Summer Enrichment Program (SEP) provides graduate students with an opportunity to gain first-hand experience in healthcare administration, in addition to advancing their leadership skills by working alongside top healthcare administrators.**

**The Institute partners with host sites and preceptors to provide interns with the support necessary to leverage the SEP experience into a career-launching opportunity. The Institute relies on the preceptors at each host site to provide interns with the additional guidance and support needed to excel as a leader in today’s health care climate.**

**SEP interns are graduate students in the process of obtaining the academic background necessary to understand the business of health care. However, for many of them the on-site internship will be one of their first opportunities to work as part of the administrative team in a hospital, health care facility or health care system. As a preceptor, you can help these future health care executives make a successful transition from student to professional.**

## **The SEP Preceptor Helps Develop and Support the Next Generation Of Health Care Executives**

The Institute defines SEP preceptors as more than supervisors; they are mentors, coaches, advisors and role models for our interns. There are the five main objectives for SEP Preceptors:

- To be a positive role model for your SEP intern.
- To help your SEP intern grasp the “big picture” in health care.
- To share your story of becoming a health care executive.
- To introduce your SEP intern to other health care executives.
- To develop a lasting mentoring relationship with your SEP intern.

# Helping Interns to Think Like Leaders

The goal of preceptors in the SEP program is to help interns successfully bridge the gap from the classroom to the working environment. To do so, it is vital that interns understand what it really means to be an organizational leader. Interns must learn to navigate through an organization's culture and develop strategies to respond to market forces and changes, manage people and craft a strategic plan for a department or division. The skills and knowledge they will need to be successful are many and varied. With your help, SEP interns will begin to acquire them.

## □ **Highlight the unique aspects of your organization's culture.**

Entering a new organization can be exciting yet it can be challenging to navigate without someone to guide you through the process. Provide interns with the necessary history and background information about your organization to enable them to operate effectively.

- How are decisions made at your organization?
- Who are the formal and informal leaders?

## □ **Openly discuss the challenges facing your organization.**

In addition to completing projects it is critical for each intern to begin to understand how to identify and address complex issues in healthcare. Set aside time during your meetings to discuss some of the field's major topics and key issues facing your organization.

- What is the problem or issue? How does it present a challenge to your organization?
- What is the opportunity if the problem is resolved (e.g., revenue, cost savings)?
- What are the critical steps that need to be taken for sustainable change?
- Who are the key stakeholders that need to be involved in the decision-making process?
- What are the barriers to change?

## □ **Share the lessons you have learned from your work.**

There are always aspects to a job that are not outlined in any book or manual. You have had to think through several of these in order to perform your job successfully. Share some of your successes and failures with your intern.

- Translating organizational goals into tangible outcomes that improve patient care.
- Balancing technology enhancements with reimbursement structures.
- Making the shift from the inpatient to the outpatient market.
- Maintaining relationships with physicians, nurses and other clinical staff.
- Developing a new service.
- Planning for disease management strategies.

## **Do you want to connect with *your* intern?**

Invite your intern to a professional meeting or share insights during your next coffee break.

# Preceptor Guidelines

**As a preceptor, you will be providing overall coordination as well as guidance and support to your intern(s) during the on-site stay. The Institute also recommends that you also;**

1. Develop an orientation event to introduce your interns to your organizational cultural and management team.
2. Introduce the interns to all members of the leadership team, including fellows, managers, directors and the senior management team either at a management meeting or via e-mail.
3. Monitor the progress of your intern throughout the summer by meeting regularly. We recommend meetings bi-weekly. Request regular reports on project status. If possible, arrange one or more meetings for your interns with your CEO.
4. Schedule related activities (e.g., EMS rides, meetings with public health department or local community agencies, health care conferences, etc.) at you organization and facilitate site visits to other health care organizations the area to provide your interns with additional experiences.
5. Work collaboratively with the American Hospital Association, allied hospital associations and other health care organizations, where applicable, to schedule interns' participation in conferences, civic meetings and social functions in your city/region.
6. Consider asking a colleague to carry out certain responsibilities in your absence.
7. Implement a closing event to recognize your interns' accomplishments at your facility and to give them a chance to say farewell to other staff members.
8. Make plans for interns to give a final presentation about their Special Summer Project(s) for your organization.
9. Complete the online evaluation survey at the end of the internship, to evaluate your intern's performance and provide the Institute with feedback about the Summer Enrichment Program.