The first thing that I do when I enter the administrative offices of the Division of Adolescent/Young Adult Medicine at Boston Children’s Hospital is check in with my supervisor to find out about the tasks that need to be completed for the day. A typical day starts with working on the Population Health Management patient empanelment project. My role in this project is assigning patients to specific primary care providers. Using the hospital scheduling database, EPIC Hyperspace, I peruse the medical records of patients in the clinic who are not assigned to PCPs. Based on which doctors the patients have met with in the past, I will either assign these patients to a primary care provider or make a note for my supervisor to call them to find out who they would like to see as their primary care provider. I will also mark patients who come to the clinic for specialty care only and those who have not been to the clinic in the last three years, the latter being important because they are not current primary care patients and likely do not need to be empaneled.

Following patient empanelments, I assist in patient outreach regarding preventative care visits. For example, I will call patients who are due for their annual physicals. Furthermore, if a patient has not visited in the last three years, I will call to see if they have transferred care. Patient outreach is a population management measure that is taken to ensure that patients return to the clinic for annual appointments in order for their healthcare to be continuously monitored. Speaking to patients is one of the more interesting aspects of my job because every call is different. Accordingly, I need to be prepared and informed when calling patients so I will not be caught off guard by a patient’s questions or statements. Helpful and knowledgeable responses to
questions that a patient may have result in patient satisfaction and contribute to the overall efficiency of the call. Except for recent calls to asthma patients, most of my patient calls have been to set up appointments and have not dealt with specific ailments.

Other duties that I perform differ from day to day. For example, one doctor was leaving the clinic so I typed and mailed letters to patients informing them who their new provider would be. Also, I have been working on updating a mental health resource list that the division uses to refer patients to providers outside the hospital. My work for this project includes calling mental health providers in the greater Boston area, Cape Cod, New Hampshire, and Rhode Island. Subsequently, I verify the provider’s practice location, insurance information, specialties, contact information, client age range, and confirm that they are willing to accept patients from the Division of Adolescent/Young Adult Medicine at Boston Children’s Hospital.

During the initial phase of my internship, I worked closely with my supervisor who prepped me on the tasks that I would be performing. In a short period of time, I have become more comfortable with carrying out patient outreach calls on my own and, as a result, my supervisor has allowed me to call and schedule patients for appointments independently. The trust that my supervisor has placed in me to perform tasks without his supervision is one of my initial personal accomplishments in this internship. This is important to me because it means that my supervisor believes that I am competent and able to successfully perform my duties. Also, I feel I have achieved the respect of my fellow workers by helping them handle the heavy workload. Assisting in efforts, including finding medical record numbers to match insurance information on spreadsheets or observing the process of how new outreach advertisements are going to be implemented for the clinic, have made me feel that I am contributing to the team’s efforts.
In terms of the expectations I have for this internship, the first was to learn how the administrative team at Boston Children’s Hospital works month-to-month to achieve the goals they have set for themselves. I initially observed this teamwork by attending a Depression Care Management meeting. The meeting was structured by an organized agenda stating the topics that would be discussed. Furthermore, it was clear that everyone at the meeting had a specific role and knew what they had to do in order to ensure the depression management team is providing the best possible care for patients.

My second expectation was to get a better understanding of the inner workings of a hospital. I have been impressed with the constant communication between providers and administrators regarding scheduling and when the provider plans to return patient calls. This ensures that administrators are well informed about a provider’s availability, which enables the administrators to successfully guide patients down the right path to getting the best care from their provider. For example, when a patient calls an administrator and asks to speak with a clinical provider, the administrator is able to correctly notify the patient when the provider will contact them. I have also learned that certain providers require different length appointments and there is a clinic policy that new patient appointments are scheduled for sixty minutes as opposed to thirty minutes for return annual physical exams.

My third expectation was the goal of fine-tuning my communication skills. I am certain that my constant communication with patients, providers, and the administrative team has helped me to progress in this area and will continue to do so.

One of the more notable skills I have acquired during my internship is learning how to use the hospital computer system. At the beginning of my internship, I spent almost fourteen hours over a four-day span taking a Hyperspace Scheduling Workflow training course. This
training course provided me with the knowledge of how to use the hospital’s computer program for scheduling appointments, creating new patient accounts, updating patient information, and updating and adding insurance coverages. As a result, I am able to speak with patients on the phone while utilizing a computer program at the same time to check provider availability to schedule appointments. The ability to easily navigate and use the hospital’s computer system should help me utilize similar systems in other hospital opportunities that I may pursue. Also, reading and learning about all the policies and procedures necessary to be in compliance with HIPAA has been an eye opener. HIPAA (the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act) is a federal law that protects patients’ privacy. The recognition and understanding of this rule will be extremely vital for any positions that I may take in the healthcare field in the future.

I am looking forward to upcoming meetings within the Division of Adolescent/Young Adult Medicine at Boston Children’s Hospital. These meetings should allow me to gain a better understanding of everyone’s role and contribution to the division and how problems are handled.