**Part Two: My Not-So-Typical Days at the Trinity Center**

Written by: Grace Polur

“Routine” is not a word that I would use to describe my day at the Trinity Center. One day I will be filing away invoices and creating meeting agendas and the next I will be observing procedures in the gastrointestinal (GI) suites. Although to some this may seem like a confusing and even hectic schedule, I love every minute of it.

Due to the ever-changing schedules of the nurses, medical assistants, and administrators I have been shadowing or assisting, I have a different start time each day. The only thing that remains constant about my schedule is that my day ends by 5 P.M. Surprisingly, I don’t mind the shifting nature of my internship. Being told that I have to come in at 11 A.M. allows for an extra hour of sleep for me, which I am definitely not opposed to. Not only does my work schedule sometimes allow for extra sleep, but its shifting nature also keeps my schedule from becoming too monotonous.

Once arriving at the Trinity Center, I make sure to clock in and head straight to my supervisor’s office. Sometimes I am told ahead of time who I am to report to, so I am able to leave my belongings in my supervisor’s room and head off. Other times, I meet with my supervisor so she can assign my tasks for the day, which vary greatly depending on what she has planned for me that week. For example, some weeks I work with clinicians and receive lessons regarding their work; other weeks I assist administrators.

Because I am an intern, there are some “typical” intern tasks that I am responsible for. For instance, I have organized invoices, filed away payroll sheets, and printed labels. I have read through and highlighted a contract and I have been asked to make over 1,200 photocopies in one sitting. I have even become an expert at hole-punching, a task that really comes in handy when
you’re required to file away hundreds of papers into various binders. These tasks do not take up a majority of my time; they are tasks that I complete between assignments and procedures when I find myself with free time.

The most exciting days at the office are the days in which I am allowed to shadow nurses and medical assistants. While shadowing a medical assistant, I was able to observe a number of endoscopies and colonoscopies. I find these procedures to be fascinating and am thrilled to be given the opportunity to sit in on them. Not only do I observe the procedures, but I also receive a lesson from the doctors who perform them as well as the anesthesiologists who administer the anesthesia and monitor the patient’s vitals. Essentially, the procedures that I have sat in on are real-life applications of the concepts that I have learned in my biology classes at Brandeis (e.g., the digestive system and its anatomy).

On top of observing procedures, I have been able to shadow a phlebotomist in one of the labs at the Trinity Center and a nurse in the vaccine room. While shadowing the nurse who administers vaccines, I was given a lesson on various types of syringes, vials, and other materials used in blood draws, which I found to be fascinating and only furthered my interest in the medical field. I was also explained the steps taken when administering a vaccine and was shown the information sheets that are handed to patients before they receive a vaccination (fun fact: one of the sheets listed a phone number to call to receive monetary compensation should a vaccine cause you harm). Lastly, I was given a lesson on how to properly use a stethoscope, how to properly check blood pressure, and even learned how to calibrate the device used to check blood glucose. Overall, it’s exciting to be able to learn about and even use the equipment that I read about in my textbooks.
I’ve had quite a few accomplishments to date, the first being learning how to navigate New York City. Although this may seem like a simple task to some, for a girl from suburban New Jersey with no sense of direction it’s a big deal. I have gone from depending on Google Maps for directions to finding a route that takes me from my subway stop to the Trinity Center within three minutes. Another accomplishment has been putting together peer review files for the doctors who perform procedures in the GI suites. The doctors are required to complete bi-annual peer reviews, which are then sent to the American Association for Accreditation of Ambulatory Surgery Facilities (AAAASF). The AAAASF is what accredits the Trinity Center and makes sure that the facility is up to standards. In order to assist the doctors with the peer review process, I was required to fill out a variety of sections of the peer review, such as sections on patient information and surgical protocols. In order to complete these sections of the review, I was required to review dozens of patient files and collaborate with nurses, medical assistants, and the office manager. This task took about a week to complete, but I was glad to be trusted with such an important task.

Overall, the skills and knowledge that I am gaining from this internship will help me in other settings. For instance, I have developed a sense of direction and now have a better handle on how to get around New York City. This skill is useful because it teaches me how to remain level-headed in a fast-paced environment. If I choose to pursue a career in the medical field, this skill will be important because clinicians must be quick on their feet and logical in the event of a crisis. By working on peer reviews, I learned the importance of thoroughness and collaboration. The AAAASF assesses all aspects of the procedures detailed in the peer reviews, so a great deal of thought goes into completing a peer review. If any section of a review is filled out incorrectly, it could mean the Trinity Center losing its accreditation, so reviews must be filled out thoroughly.
and with great attention to detail. The peer review process also taught me a great deal about collaboration, which is an important skill to possess in any office environment.

I have also made great headway on the three expectations I have for this internship. In my first blog, I mentioned that I would like to develop an understanding of Epic, the computer system used at the Trinity Center, and I am happy to say that I now understand how to schedule appointments, input insurance information, create a new patient file, and so much more. I look forward to using the system in the future and strengthening my Epic skills. Secondly, I hoped to sit on as many procedures as I could, which I have achieved. I sat in on countless GI procedures, and will soon sit in on more procedures, such as stress tests. My last expectation, understanding what steps are taken to create the best patient experience possible, is a work in progress. In the coming weeks, I will be taking on projects relating to patient satisfaction and will develop a better understanding of creating the best patient experience.

The Trinity Center always keeps me on my toes, and I have a number of new and exciting experiences every day. I’m proud of my accomplishments to date and I’m glad that I have already made progress in meeting my expectations for this internship. So far there have been many high points in my internship—observing procedures, learning about lab equipment, and even meeting a patient who is a recent Brandeis grad (!)—and I am eager to see what the final month of my internship will bring.