

# **SUMMER STUDENT INTERNSHIP PROGRAM**

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*2017 Evaluation*



**BC PATIENT SAFETY  
& QUALITY COUNCIL**  
Working Together. Accelerating Improvement.

## Background and Purpose

In 2012, the BC Patient Safety & Quality Council created a summer internship program to expand students' knowledge of quality and to provide opportunities to learn skills in quality improvement projects. Interns have been hosted in a variety of different health care organizations across the province (e.g., long-term care homes, health authorities). The goals of the internship program are to:

- provide students summer employment as a part of an interdisciplinary team, with the aim of expanding their knowledge of quality while gaining practical experience working on a specific quality improvement project; and
- provide organizations throughout the province with a short-term, fully-funded resource to contribute to their quality improvement projects.

A total of 56 students have interned with the Council since the inception of the program, with 10 of those working this past summer.

A call for project proposals was put out to health care organizations in April 2017, from which 10 projects were selected to host an intern for the summer. Job descriptions were created in conjunction with the project team, and interviews were jointly conducted by the project team and

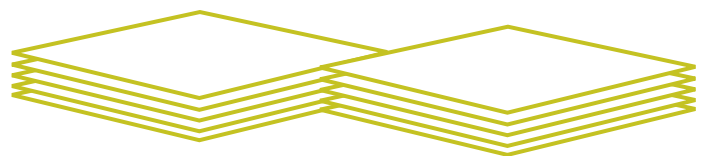
the Council. Successful applicants were hired by the Council to work on the project in the host organization for up to 225 hours between June and August 2017. Interns were also required to attend a full-day education session delivered by the Council to introduce the fundamentals of quality improvement.

Interns hired were also supported by the Council through regular emails and phone calls. Individual sites were asked to support their students by providing space and resources to complete the outlined project, allowing time away from the project to attend the student education day, and providing hands-on leadership and guidance to the students throughout the internship term. Every project lead and eight out of nine students who were interviewed stated that they felt the level of support and touch point frequency was appropriate and appreciated. A common theme expressed was that participants knew where to go to for support and that they would receive a quick response.

Students were also encouraged to submit their results for presentation at a conference or student-focused symposium. The Council made funding available to interns to support the dissemination of their projects, and six of the projects were accepted to present storyboards or rapid fire presentations at Quality Forum 2018.

**59 PROJECT PROPOSALS**

**140 APPLICANTS**



**10 SUCCESSFUL PROJECTS**

## 2017 Projects

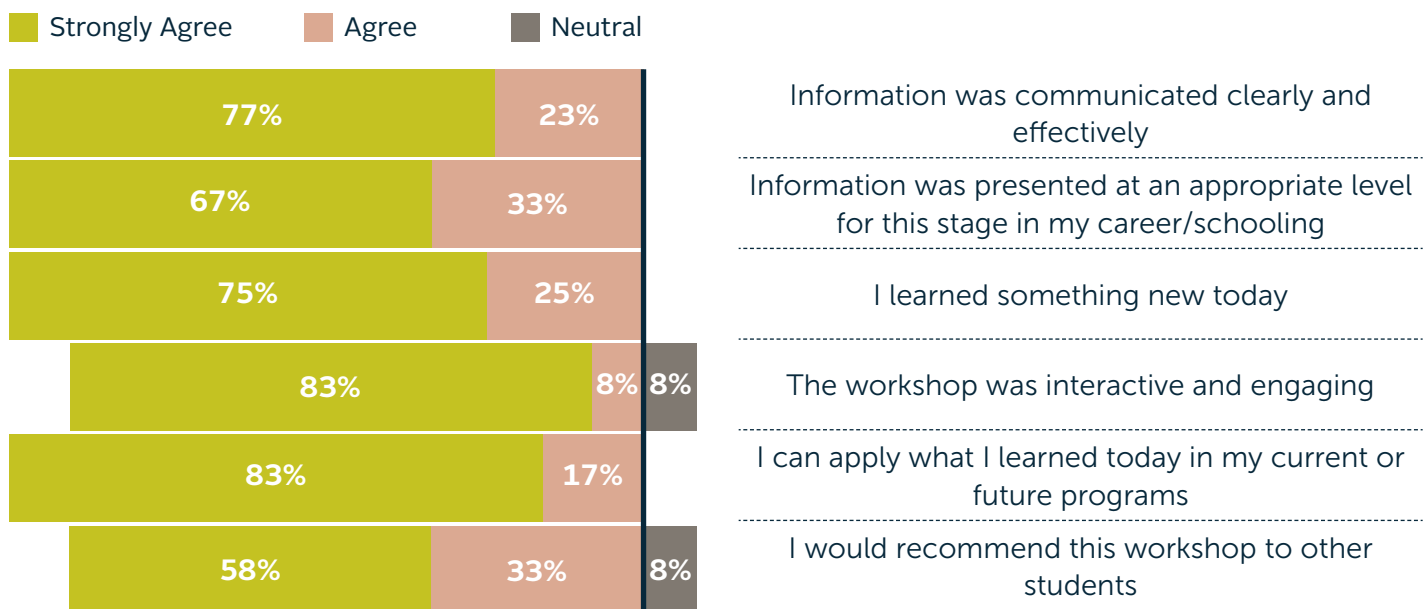
TITLE	ORGANIZATION	LOCATION
Improving Experience Of Care For Families With BCCH Mental Health Programs	BC Children's Hospital	Vancouver
Complete and Timely Screening for Children And Youth: Creating a Family-Centered Mental Health Intake Process	Youth & Family Mental Health and Substance Use Services, South Island	Victoria
Using Personalized Music to Improve The Quality Of Life Of Residents In Long Term Care By Decreasing Agitation And The Use Of Inappropriate Antipsychotics in Kelowna	inSite Housing, Hospitality, & Health Inc.	Kelowna
Using Gamification to Promote Dementia Education	Vancouver Coastal Health	Vancouver
Identifying Barriers And Facilitators To The Use Of Telehealth To Support Primary Care And Chronic Disease Management Programming In Rural And Remote First Nations Communities	First Nations Health Authority	Vancouver
Optimizing Selection Of Mental Health Treatment Options For Patients In The CBT Skills Group Program in Victoria, BC	Victoria Division of Family Practice	Victoria
Clinical Acuity Profiling in Critical Care	Fraser Health Authority	Burnaby
Improving Care Of Patients With COPD Through Collaboration Between Primary Care And Acute Care	Northern Health Authority	Fort St. John
Introducing Patient Reported Outcomes (PROs) in the National Surgical Quality Improvement Program (NSQIP) At Royal Inland Hospital (RIH)	Interior Health Authority	Kamloops
Program Evaluation with the BCPSQC Innovation and Engagement Team	BC Patient Safety & Quality Council	Vancouver

## Evaluation

### Intern Education Day

A one-day workshop on the fundamentals of quality improvement was held for all interns as well as a few other interested students. The workshop was based on the Council's Engaging People in Improving Quality (EPIQ) modules and covered the following topics: QI fundamentals for change; process for improvement; measuring and using data; ideas to implementation; and art of presenting and writing abstracts.

All students completed an anonymous paper evaluation after their education day. Below is a summary of the results:



Suggestions for improvement included:

- Have a resource booklet or materials available ahead of time to enable notetaking during the presentations;
- Increase number of interactive and group activities;
- Offer a deeper look at data collection, analysis and interpretation; and
- Reference examples from a wider variety of fields given that the students have diverse backgrounds.

Some of the particular strengths of the day included:

- Highly relevant material to my current project;
- All the speakers were very engaging and easy to understand;
- The material was easily digestible;
- Slides on presentation tips were very practical; and
- It was interesting and interactive.

*"This was one of the highlights of the program, I thought. The amount of useful, practical information that I was able to bring back to my project was huge."*

*"I loved it so much! I learned so many good ways of looking at data and especially the importance of looking at data from the lense of quality improvement rather than research (which is what I am used to). For the rest of the internship I tried to do everything with PDSA cycles and small changes."*



## Post-Internship Interview

Seven of 10 project leads and nine of 10 students participated in a semi-structured qualitative interview or completed a written questionnaire after the internship was complete. Challenges surrounding availability of both students and project leads impacted the ability to achieve a 100% response rate.

Eight out of nine interns who provided feedback were happy and thankful for the opportunity to work on the various projects and expressed that they found the experience pleasant and educational. A couple challenges in terms of support and project direction during the internship were experienced. These were addressed as best as possible, and overall both students cited that it was a nonetheless a positive educational experience.

**8/9** interns found the experience pleasant and educational

Project leads were satisfied with the work that their interns completed and some have expressed that the student contribution was a vital part of the project outcome. Six out of seven project leads who provided evaluation feedback also reported that they would keep the student in mind as a strong candidate if they were making future hiring decisions.

**6/7** project leads expressed that students played a vital role in the project outcome

*"There is an intimate link between patient-centred care and clinical outcomes. The impact around how they [patients] experienced care ultimately improved their quality of care."*

*"I found it very rewarding being able to see an area that could be improved on and spending the time (backed up with data and talking to patients) to come up with a change idea and having the team I was working for/with genuinely excited about the idea and fully on board with trying to implement a change. Being in a role where my input is appreciated and (hoping) that implementation of my suggested change will make a difference was an incredible opportunity, one that I don't think many other internships can offer."*

*"There was good learning both in terms of process (i.e., quality improvement) and in terms of the politics of hospital operations. I think I learned the most about the complexities of hospital administration and human resources management."*

*"I would highly recommend this program to others wanting to pursue QI work. Our summer intern "M" came into the project knowing very little about specific QI approaches or methodology, but with the support of the BCSPQC "QI Bootcamp" and my supervision he was able to engage the team in reviewing current workflow processes (including leading a process mapping exercise), theme and categorize workflow barriers, as well as summarize suggestions for change."*

*"Thank you to you and your team, we have now come up with a 15-point plan and I will be presenting. It [the internship] is about student learning but it really makes a difference to patient care."*

## Considerations for Future Years

While the summary above illustrates some of the overall benefits of the program to both students and the teams that employ them, there have been some recommendations and considerations for the program.

### *Timeline*

The internships could benefit from building in more time to promote the program, both in terms of partner organizations developing project proposals, and advertising job postings to engage students. The additional time to promote the job postings, in particular, may increase the quantity and quality of the applications received and better ensure smaller communities have wider pools from which to select. Consideration of any additional support in student recruitment to rural sites would have to be balanced with equity considerations and the impact on the total number of interns that could be supported.

### *Intern Education Day*

Those who began their internship in early June expressed how much more helpful the workshop day would have been if it was held earlier in their placement. This can be tricky to accommodate across all internships given how they can begin anytime from June to August. An alternative suggestion was made to provide introductory pre-readings at the onset of the internship program and prior to the education day. There may also be value in having a meeting with all students at the end of the summer once projects have been completed, either in person or virtual, to close the loop on learning.

### *Number of Internships & Work Hours*

The majority of project leads and students appreciated the flexibility of having the option to work part- or full-time up until they reached the 225 hours. There was a mixed response to whether the students should work a consistent, weekly shift pattern or have the flexibility of working varying hours/days/weeks throughout the summer. There is an increased administrative workload due to allowing this flexibility which should also be considered for next year. The majority of project leads and students preferred having more shorter internships available, as opposed to fewer longer ones (i.e., 10 internships for up to six weeks full-time versus five internships for 12 weeks). However, it may have been that this feedback came from those who applied for the program because of its flexible scheduling.

## Summary

Overall, the 2017 internship program was a success, meeting the two goals it set out to accomplish. Despite limited project challenges, all of the students and project leads who completed an interview or survey after the internship provided positive feedback surrounding the value of the program for facilitating students' involvement and education in quality improvement initiatives.

Additionally, eight of nine students and all seven project leads who provided evaluation feedback reported that the intern enabled significant progress that advanced their project. Finally,

**100% of interviewed students and project leads reported that they would recommend the program to colleagues and would participate in the program again if eligible.**

We will continue to take a balanced approach as we look for ways to improve the program in future years.



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