

About my JRCOSTEP Experience
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IHS Headquarters, Rockville, MD
Summer 2008

Hello! My name is ENS Adriane N. Irwin and I am a third year student pharmacist at the University of New Mexico Health Sciences Center in Albuquerque, NM. During the summer of 2008, I had the pleasure to serve the Indian Health Service (IHS) through the JRCOSTEP program offered by the United States Public Health Service (USPHS). I worked for the IHS Division of Health Professions Support (DHPS) at their headquarters office in Rockville, Maryland under the supervision of Rear Admiral (RADM) Robert E. Pittman, Director of DHPS and Chief Pharmacy Officer for the Public Health Service.

During my JRCOSTEP Experience, I had the opportunity to work on a variety of programs managed by DHPS including scholarship, loan repayment, and recruitment and retention. One of the major projects I was tasked with was reviewing the existing literature to discover new methods of recruitment and retention. This project provided a great foundation to understand how the different programs managed by DHPS interrelated and help to accomplish the IHS mission. In addition to this project, I also had the opportunity to evaluate scholarship applications, explore the leadership training opportunities available to USPHS employees, and assist in writing the DHPS updates to the Indians into Medicine and Indians into Psychology Programs.



One of the highlights to my JRCOSTEP experience was attending the IHS Office of Public Health Support's annual retreat. The retreat brought all three divisions in OPHS together to discuss their role in supporting the mission of IHS. The day was filled with variety teambuilding exercises and presentations on the history of IHS, Native American culture, and number of other topics. The day was a wonderful experience because it provided exposure to the variety of opportunities existing within IHS. The picture above is from the retreat.



A USUHS faculty member is explaining scenario occurring in the background.

A second highlight of my experience was attending the Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences (USUHS) Operation Bushmaster and Operation Kerkesner. These operations are practical final examinations for medical and nursing students at USUHS to test their ability to provide care during adverse environments and situations. During our visit, we viewed a training session, toured the operations, and talked with members of the USUHS faculty. The experience provided a unique opportunity to be exposed to the challenges of providing patient care outside of a traditional hospital or clinic setting. The picture on the left is from Operation Bushmaster. A

My experience in the JRCOSTEP program was extremely positive. It provided exposure to opportunities within pharmacy that are completely different from the roles in community, hospital, or clinical practice. It also taught me about the role the USPHS and IHS have taken in advancing the practice of pharmacy in a hands-on environment. I would highly recommend this experience to any student pharmacist.