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Institute for Diversity Summer Enrichment Program

Tai Parks, BS*

* Temple University

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Institute for Diversity Summer Enrichment Program

This summer I received the opportunity to intern at Thomas Jefferson University Hospital (TJUH) through the Institute for Diversity in Health Management (IFD). The IFD Summer Enrichment Program is an internship open to under-represented minority undergraduate rising seniors, recent college graduates, and first- and second-year health management graduate students. This 12-week internship program takes place in metropolitan areas throughout the United States and provides participants with an introduction to working in the health care management field. TJUH has been sponsoring IFD summer internships since the program began in 1994. IFD partner organizations include the American College of Healthcare Executives (ACHE), the National Association of Health Services Executives (NAHSE) and the Association of Hispanic Healthcare Executives.

As an undergraduate student at Georgetown University, I was able to take advantage of internships in the numerous health care entities in Washington, DC, including semesters at Georgetown University Hospital, the District of Columbia Department of Health, and Planned Parenthood of Metropolitan Washington. My time at TJUH, however, has provided me with more practical experience than any of my previous internships. Under the direction of TJUH administrators, I was afforded the chance to examine management issues facing health care executives, such as new JCAHO standards, HIPAA compliance, and increasing patient satisfaction.

In order to transform health care, the leadership of our hospitals must be transformed as well to become more representative of the communities they are serving. A 1992 survey by ACHE and NAHSE documented that although blacks and whites had similar educational backgrounds and years of experience in the field, blacks held fewer top management level positions, less often worked in hospitals, earned 13 percent less and were less satisfied in their jobs.¹ In 1997 the survey was re-conducted and broadened to include Hispanic and Asian health care executives, and although the results differed for men and women, it remained true that minorities were less likely to be seen in hospital management roles.¹

The IFD Summer Enrichment Program is one mechanism that attempts to remedy the lack of diversity in health care management. The program recruits minority students for health professional training, creating a larger, more competitive applicant pool. Thus, there is a mutual benefit to the participant and the institution hosting the intern, as well as other hospitals and health care entities.

It is important to remember that an increasingly diverse workforce, serving a diverse population, requires an understanding of diversity to meet varying patient and employee needs. The Summer Enrichment Program, as well as other programs that promote diversity in health care management positions, are imperative to achieving a more diversified health care environment.

For more information on the Institute for Diversity Summer Enrichment Program at Thomas Jefferson University Hospital, contact Alan L. Brechbill, Executive Vice President and Chief Operating Officer, TJUH, 2210 Gibbon Building, 111 South 11th Street, Philadelphia, PA 19107, 215-955-4164.

References

1. American College of Healthcare Executives, Association of Hispanic Healthcare Executives, Institute for Diversity in Health Management, National Association of Health Services Executives. A race/ethnic comparison of career attainment in healthcare management: 1998. Available at: www.ache.org/PUBS/Research/rstudy/Racestu.cfm. Accessed on August 20, 2003.

About the Author

Tai Parks, BS, is a Masters Candidate in the Department of Public Health at Temple University.