

## Health Mentors Program Reflection Essays



**Cecilia Pivarunas**  
*Occupational Therapy  
Student*

From the first health mentor team meeting, team 99 generated a supportive working environment, fostering a culture of teamwork using collaboration and accountability. One medicine student on the team offered

encouragement to team members and invited participation by asking team members to share their input and suggestions. Another medicine student created and implemented an organizational outline with team goals, objectives, and outcomes, and the physical therapy student and I generated materials for the project according to the organizational outline. Establishing group roles in the first two mentor meetings promoted productivity, quality team meetings and collaborations.

Assigning roles and responsibilities for team 99 facilitated the decision-making process, effective communication between the client and the team leader, group participation, and task completion. I had a positive experience working with team 99, and I enjoyed collaborating with my teammates. Since no team member dominated the others, each person offered unique qualities and perspectives that fostered group cohesion. We quickly became aware of each other's needs, which prevented group conflict and supported deeper relationships. We supported each other through midterms and sent encouraging texts to mitigate stress. I am fortunate to have gained friendships from my experience, and I look forward to collaborating with my teammates in the future.

The Health Mentors Program is a unique team building experience that supports my ability to work with a multidisciplinary team. I was afforded opportunities to speak about my profession and advocate for the use of an occupational therapist in all health care

settings. When the roles of team 99 were clearly defined among team members, we were able to plan and deliver optimal patient care. Additionally, it was enjoyable to work in an environment where I felt I could participate while also counting on my group members to do the same. This has changed my perspective of working with a care team, which I used to perceive as a hierarchical framework. Not only did I see the satisfaction of my teammates improve, but also that of the client. Our client reported, "I like having everyone in one place where I feel that my needs are met, and I am not just handed another medication." The Health Mentors Program taught me that a flat hierarchal team structure supports teams in a harmonious way. I also learned that when roles are clearly defined in a healthcare group, care outcomes improve, enhancing the experiences of both care professionals and patients. I look forward to working with multi-disciplinary care teams in the future, and I will leverage my experiences to better assist the future healthcare experience.



**Karmanpreet Singh**  
*Physician Assistant  
Student*

One of the most memorable experiences during the Health Mentors Program was our first group visit to our health mentor's residence. We had previously met our health mentor on campus early in the spring semester and learned a great deal about her. The

visit to her residence was memorable due to the fact that she was very inviting and gracious to our entire group. She gave us a tour of

her room, informed us about her everyday life, and the struggles and obstacles that she has to deal with due to her comorbidities. I believe that seeing her living environment in person was much more impactful than hearing about it during our initial meeting because we were able to physically see what potential improvements or changes could be made to make her life easier as well as safer.

Our visit to our health mentor's residence was a truly eye-opening experience for many reasons. The most memorable aspect of the visit for me personally was when she showed us a picture of our entire group that she had placed on her wall. She stated that she often talked with her friends about

how proud she was of us and grateful for us visiting her residence. She stated that we were like her grandchildren and that it was very nice of us to ask her about her struggles and problems and potentially help her resolve them. This made me feel very inspired and grateful for the opportunity to make a difference in her life.

I believe that the Health Mentors Program is a very valuable tool for teaching students about the health mentors' lives. Often, when we see a patient, it is for a very short period of time and usually revolves around the pertinent complaint for the visit. We do not delve deeper in the patient's background, their living conditions, their struggles,

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their hopes and dreams. The Health Mentors Program provided me with a new perspective about learning about a patient. As a future healthcare professional, I will take what I have learned over the course of the past two years and be more cognizant about a patient's struggles. The group members that I have had the opportunity to work with were extremely kind and all brought their

unique perspectives and insights from their respective fields of study, which can be a learning experience for all involved. I have learned a lot from working with them and have also learned that communication is key in today's rapidly changing healthcare field. Effective communication and a multidisciplinary team-based approach are the biggest insights that I received over

the past two years. Communicating with fellow healthcare team members is vital to providing efficient and effective care for the patient. I am truly grateful for the opportunity to participate in the Health Mentors Program, to work with my team members, and for the insights that I have received and will take with me into the future.