



Community Pulse Newsletter Highlight

Interview with Adriana Alvarez, MMMP Graduate

For September's edition of *Community Pulse*, our Marketing and Development Associate, Matti Kaufheil, spoke with Adriana Alvarez, a graduate of the [MAHEC Medical Mentoring Program \(MMMP\)](#). Adriana completed the MMMP in the spring of 2017 to pursue her lifelong career dreams. She said, "Ever since I can remember I've always wanted to be in the medical field." When talking about some of her takeaways from MMMP, she described making friends, making great connections, and getting to interact with a multitude of healthcare professionals and experiencing their work through shadowing.



Adriana recounted the extensive range of healthcare professionals that she shadowed, which included: medical ethicists, medical lawyers, RNs and NPs, providers in the psychiatric ward, trauma surgeons, and rotations through numerous medical specialties. She remarked, "If you're interested in the medical field but don't know exactly what you want to do, this is a great program to get introduced to the whole field." Additionally, Adriana shared how the individuals she shadowed were incredibly kind and spoke about their personal journeys toward their current medical positions. They also discussed the choices they made and the ones they regretted when starting their careers. When reflecting on her shadowing experience, Adriana commented that it was "such a privilege" to get to learn from these professionals who were "taking the time to help educate the community and future people in the healthcare field."

Adriana said, "The biggest thing that came from the program was [learning about] public health...I had never heard really heard of the public health field." When sharing what drew her to public health, she remarked that the field of public health "sees the medical field through a different lens," citing the public health field's focus on prevention as opposed to the medical field's treatment-oriented lens. When Adriana went to college, she took an introductory public health course and "really fell in love with it." Following her undergraduate public health degree, Adriana has just started her Master of Public Health program and wants to incorporate her public health training in the future, as a practicing physician. She emphasized the importance of incorporating public health practices into the medical field, saying, "There is so much that goes into a person's health."

Adriana described the program as "really special," and highlighted Ms. Jacquelyn Hallum's support of her pursuing a health education and career in healthcare. "If it wasn't for Ms. Hallum's encouragement and tenaciousness, to make us feel like we could go and do what we



wanted to do and go talk to people and make a difference...” The impacts of MMMP are long-lasting for Adriana, who said, “This program was so great for motivating minority students. In the Asheville area, you don’t really come across people in the healthcare field that are not white. It was great to have that push.”

Regarding her future in the medical field, Adriana said that she is “stuck between family medicine and OB/GYN” but is open-minded to other possibilities. She said her big dream would be opening “a clinic that helps increase healthcare access to low-income immigrant communities in WNC.”

Learn more about **MMMP** here: <https://tinyurl.com/learnmore-MMMP>

Learn more about WCMS’ **Dr. Charles Blair Health Scholar Fund** that supports MMMP students: <https://tinyurl.com/charles-blair>