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Years of Service in I.H.S: 6



Why I chose to pursue Pharmacy as my major...

I initially studied Psychology but realized it wasn't the right fit. One of my regular customers when I worked at Starbucks introduced me to Pharmacy, and I was drawn to the opportunity to empower patients through medication education. Medications can be confusing and intimidating, and I wanted to help people understand what they take, why, and how to advocate for themselves when they are unsure and have questions. Becoming a pharmacist equipped me with the knowledge to support not just my patients but also my family and friends in making informed healthcare decisions.

My I.H.S and previous job assignments...

I started with IHS as a JRCOSTEP at the Phoenix Area IHS Office, where I gained insight into area-level functions. As part of this experience, I also worked at Phoenix Indian Medical Center, where I was exposed to daily, patient-facing operations at the facility level. I later completed a SRCOSTEP at the Chinle Comprehensive Healthcare Facility, where I still serve today. Starting as a Staff Pharmacist just before the COVID-19 pandemic presented unique opportunities such as co-leading our monoclonal antibody infusion clinic, helping hundreds of patients recover at home with their families. Currently, I am our Acting Inpatient Pharmacy Supervisor, I oversee Inpatient operations and have been excited by our ability to expand services, including hiring Emergency Department pharmacists, establishing a labor and delivery epidural service, and constructing a new sterile compounding cleanroom. The challenges have been significant, but the growth and impact have been incredibly rewarding.

Why I chose to work at I.H.S.....

IHS offered a unique opportunity to serve, live among, and learn about Native American communities. Conversations with IHS pharmacy officers inspired me—they weren't just dispensing medications but creating new clinics, services, and stepping into leadership roles. I wanted to work in an environment where my ideas could directly improve patient care, particularly in underserved communities. Beyond that, I saw this as an important learning experience, one that wasn't covered in my education. Living and working on the reservation is an honor, and I'm deeply grateful for this experience.

My most rewarding experience in I.H.S has been...

My greatest rewards come from two things: patient gratitude when I help them better understand and more seamlessly access their medications, and supporting fellow officers and staff. Whether mentoring new pharmacists, advocating for resources, or recognizing colleagues' hard work, I believe in paying it forward. We can't provide excellent patient care if we don't take care of each other. Though IHS can be challenging, it remains a deeply fulfilling place to serve—even if just for a season.

What is an interesting fact about yourself to share with your I.H.S family...

I love to travel—it's what replenishes my spirit. My passion started when I studied abroad in Singapore, opening my eyes to new cultures and perspectives. Inspired by my travels, I began learning Spanish last year to better connect with others. My ultimate goal is to visit all seven continents—I'm at six so far, so stay tuned!