

INTERN PROJECT SPOTLIGHT

AVERY BRADFORD

Intern at Highpoint Health – Sumner



AGENDA 21
INTERNSHIP
PROGRAM

Since 1995, Tennessee Hospital Association's [Agenda 21 Internship Program](#) has operated with the mission of matching graduate students in healthcare administration with hospital executives for transformative summer internships. Avery Bradford, an intern in the 29th class of the program and a Master of Science in Health Administration student at the University of Alabama Birmingham, completed her internship at Sumner Regional Medical Center in Gallatin, TN.

Avery's project aimed to enhance the entire throughput process for inpatient admissions, addressing a significant issue: patients waiting in the ER for a room. "I saw the frustration from patients and their families and wanted to fix it," Avery explained. Her work involved mapping the hospital's throughput process from the ER registration desk, through triage and treatment, to the inpatient floors, and even encompassing the discharge process and room turnover.



The team at Highpoint Health – Sumner are all stellar leaders. They pointed me in the right direction for how to find the answer on my own. It gave me the opportunity and experience to solve problems on my own as an independent leader."

Mapping this complex process was an eye-opener for Avery. "I initially thought the issue was in the ER, but quickly found that the real bottleneck was in the discharge process," she noted. This realization led her to work closely with the case management team, despite her having no prior experience in that area.

The most challenging aspect of the project was the tight timeframe. Avery had just 7 weeks to map the process, gather and clean data, secure support, research, and develop a plan for a new expanded discharge lounge and surge communication plan. Effective time management was crucial to her success.

Avery is particularly proud of the tangible results achieved. At the beginning of July, the hospital averaged 12 admitted inpatients waiting for a room. By the end of the month, with the implementation of the discharge lounge as a core component of the process and a new communication plan, this number had dropped to 2-3 patients.



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