

As an intern I always thought that the program at the Minneapolis VA was the best - mostly because I was learning something new through hands-on experience, being taught by some of the most knowledgeable dietitians there are, and bonding with 5 other awesome dietitians-to-be all day long. Every day at work was so fun and I was learning so much valuable information. Now that I have begun my professional career outside of my internship, I have realized that our program really is the best. I felt completely prepared to start my new job and am totally comfortable jumping right into new situations and challenges that come up at work. I feel truly blessed to have been chosen to participate in this internship as I believe it has prepared me for the real world of dietetics far better than any other internship could have.

*-Emily Miller, Class of 2013*

“My Minneapolis VA Health Care System Dietetic Internship experience was such a rewarding year; talk about a learning curve! I was blown away by the kindness of the dietitians (our preceptors) and other clinical staff (nursing, speech pathologists, occupational therapist, physicians, food service staff) that I was able to work with; I always felt comfortable asking questions. My favorite part of the internship was being able to actually cover a registered dietitian during staff relief and really being able to grasp the “Big Picture” of what is going on with a particular veteran (medically and otherwise). I feel we got appropriate feedback from preceptors that allowed me to learn and work at my own pace, but pushed me to do my best every day. I did not realize what was important in finding the right internship until I was going through it. Some examples: 1) Variety of experiences 2) Knowledgeable preceptors able to cover high acuity, complex caseloads 3) Opportunity to actually perform the nutrition care process, chart, educate, etc. 4) Feel comfortable asking questions. All of which the VA can provide you with! ”

*-Andrea Rekdahl Class of 2013*

The wide variety of experiences the Minneapolis VA internship provides is certainly a unique and really great part of the internship. These experiences are super interesting opportunities that let you see not only what dietitians do, but also what other healthcare professionals do. These experiences really helped me to connect the dots on how dietitians fit into the health care team. For example, during my ICU/Nutrition Support rotation, I got to sit in on an exploratory surgery for a patient and then a few days later, I got to perform a nutrition assessment on that patient. Another strong point is the preceptors. I don't think enough can be said about how great the dietitians at the Minneapolis VA are. They really make the internship what it is. I was pretty nervous to start the internship, even after being a volunteer at the VA previously, but Heidi Hoover and the preceptors all did a great job of helping me feel more comfortable. They helped me learn a ton, and become more confident and comfortable as an intern and eventually as a dietitian.

*-Tim Baebenroth, Class of 2015*

If you are looking for a dietetic internship that challenges you, but supports your growth with outstanding and dedicated preceptors, then look no further than the Minneapolis VA Health Care System. Internship Director Heidi Hoover has filled the internship with integral MNT rotations and classes, as well as a wealth of other unique experiences. You will be challenged in rotations such as nutrition support, renal, and oncology at the Minneapolis VA. Additionally, each intern gets to view a speech pathology swallow evaluation, a nutrition-related surgery, and a shadow a wound care nurse in the spinal cord rotation. Outside the VA, you are able to shadow in an eating disorder clinic, attend a sports nutrition conference, amongst many other amazing experiences. While you are challenged, interns are treated with respect. Management and staff treat you just like part of the Nutrition and Food Services family. It is very apparent that they are invested in your success. On top of everything the internship itself provides, Minneapolis is an amazing city to live in and experience. At the end of my internship, I felt so fortunate to have been matched at the Minneapolis VA and ready to take on an any entry-level RD position with confidence, thanks to all of my amazing preceptors and internship director.

*-Brian Dugan, Class of 2015*

The Minneapolis VA has one of the best internships in the country! My internship year was an in-depth and hands-on learning experience guided by extremely dedicated preceptors. Our rotations were incredibly varied, and we got experience in several areas that other internships do not offer, such as dialysis, grocery store/retail dietetics, eating disorders, and more. The fact that all of the clinical and foodservice rotations are onsite at the VA is not only convenient but also makes for a cohesive and thorough learning experience. I felt very prepared for my the RD exam, so much so that I felt like I could have taken it sooner than I did, and was more than ready for my first job in outpatient. When I made the switch from clinical to self-employment, I also felt that the internship prepared me for seeing patients outside of the hospital and navigating the many areas of the growing field of nutrition. Finally, I am so grateful for the professional connections and friendships I made with the wonderful preceptors at the VA! They are dedicated to your success both as an intern and dietitian, and I know they will continue to be a great source of guidance and advice.

*- Lizzie Streit, class of 2017*

I couldn't have asked for a better dietetic internship experience! The Minneapolis VA Dietetic Internship is a fantastic program that gave me so much knowledge and experience to a wide variety of nutrition areas. I loved the clinical rotations they provided, especially the ones unique to the VA itself (spinal cord, polytrauma, MOVE), and the off-site rotations were a great insight to a lot of different types of settings that dietitians can work in. This program also allows interns to work more independently in order to really get a sense of what a dietitian's duties are like. I loved my staff relief rotations, as they gave me more confidence in being able to take on a dietitian's role in the healthcare system, which was very helpful for preparing me for my first job. Additionally, the preceptors and healthcare teams at the VA are the best! They encourage you to ask questions and step up to challenges in order to get the most out of the internship. They also do an excellent job to make sure you feel confident at the end of the year to be a great RD and pass the exam. I felt very fortunate to be able to work with such a great team for 10 months and would go back and do it all over again!

*- Ashlee Alberts, class of 2018*

As I reflect over the 10 months of the Minneapolis VA Medical Center Dietetic Internship, words do not do justice to explain how grateful I am to have had such an incredible and valuable learning experience, while serving those who have served us. The knowledge, mentorships and friendships that I gained throughout my time at the VA will be unforgettable as I continue my lifelong journey of promoting health through food and nutrition.

The preceptors (gently) pushed us outside of our comfort zones to help us reach our potential - their guidance, support, and expertise were indispensable throughout the duration of the internship! I feel well prepared to start my new career as an RD but most of all, I feel honored to say that I am a past Minneapolis VA Medical Center dietetic intern.

*- Kaitlin Mulcahy, class of 2018*

The Minneapolis VA dietetic internship provided a variety of rotations and experiences that prepared me to become more than confident as an entry level dietitian. The preceptors are committed to intentionally teaching and guiding you through their respective rotations to ensure that you are successful. I am forever grateful that I was a part of this rigorous, prestigious program!

*- Hilary Green, class of 2020*