

Why I chose this externship

As a medical student, I took a year off to work on clinical trials at the UCSF Department of Dermatology. It was in this role that I saw the complex relationship of clinical medicine and pharmaceutical development. Despite the fact that we use these medications every day, most practitioners have limited knowledge of the ideas and development behind some of our greatest weapons of combating disease. With this in mind, the externship allowed me an unprecedented experience understanding the people and process involved in medication development.

My experience at Allergan

Allergan welcomed the idea of an extern and could not have made it a better experience. Rather than filling a specific role, I explained that I was curious about the multitude of decisions that went into medication development. Understanding this specific interest, I was scheduled daily meetings with different teams involved with bringing a medication to market. This included people with a variety of business and scientific backgrounds as well as a litany of expertise involved in research and discovery, medical strategy, regulatory affairs, as well as market access and public affairs. This breadth of discussion, of course, cannot adequately convey the effort and thought behind these medications, but helped me to understand the multitude of considerations and experts behind our everyday medications. This is an understanding that continues to help me in my daily clinical, research and educational roles.

Final Thoughts

The externship exceeded my expectations and helped to develop a truer understanding of the complex healthcare ecosystem. This is an ecosystem that can feel quite siloed, but, in just 4 weeks, the people, expertise and ideas at Allergan helped me break down those silos and create an improved schema.

Daniel Butler, MD