My Practicum Experience at the Toronto Grace Health Centre: What healthcare is like working in IT

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THE ORGANIZATION

The Salvation Army Toronto Grace Health Centre (TGHC) is a 119-bed hospital with a goal to provide patient-centered care. The organization exhibits Christian values incorporating a holistic approach when delivering health care. The organization provides a wide range of therapeutic and clinical services such as complex continuing care, acute care rehabilitation and palliative care to patients with multifaced chronic diseases.

IN MY ROLE AT TGHC

My role in the organization was working under the supervision of the Application and Decision Support Analyst in the IT department. I was involved in two projects:

1) Interprovincial Billing Project

The interprovincial billing web application is a project based upon the Ministry of Health's requirement of a health care organization, to bill a patient's provincial Ministry of Health on the health care costs incurred for an insured service. I created a web application submission form for the project.
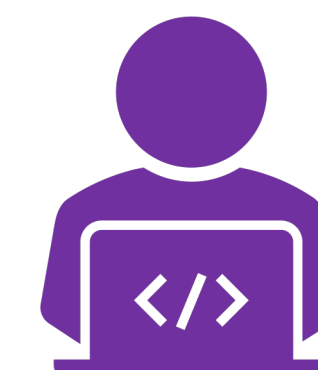
2) Bcare Electronic Health Record Project

The organization is preparing to go-live with their new electronic health record (EHR). It includes components such as pharmacy, patient documenting and nutrition options. I assisted with the testing in the staging area of the project and shadowed the Application and Decision Support Analyst.

These projects provided me with new knowledge of:
- information technology trends
- practical skills
- professional skills

PROJECTS

Interprovincial Billing Project

How I created the web application form:
- I created the front-end (submission-form) using HTML and CSS styling to enhance the UX (user experience). Enhancing the UX means to make the website visually appealing. The front-end is the part of the website a user interacts with.

- I created the middle-end and back-end using the programming language JavaScript and software NodeJS to store the information collected from the submission-form. The middle-end and back-end is where the website is maintained from the developer point of view.

Bcare Electronic Health Record Project

Testing in Staging Area:
- Used mock SQL queries to help enhance SQL skills and help with testing environment. This ensures that less error will occur in the go-live stage.

- Entered mock Data using SOAP format. it stands for subjective, objective, assessment and plan. It is used for health care professionals to create patient documentation when assessing a patient.

Job Shadowing:
- Attended Bcare vendor meetings with the Application and Decision Support Analyst and Health care professionals. Also observed how QR code wristbands are made to enhance patient safety.

IMPORTANCE OF PROJECTS

Interprovincial Billing Project:
- Fulfils Ontario Ministry of Health's requirement for an organization to send hospital bills on insured services. This will increase **efficiency** when hospital staff submit patient bills.

- The web-application is easy to use due to HTML and CSS styling (ex. created drop-down with options to choose, alerts for mandatory fields) and will **limit data entry errors.**

Bcare Electronic Health Record Project:
- Helping with testing in the staging area will ensure that the EHR will work as designed during the go-live phase.

- The EHR will help ensure the goal of the organization to provide patient-centered care is delivered .

- After spending time in the IT department and working on the two projects, my experience has given me more clarity with my decision to pursue a career in the IT side of health care. I will also continue to enhance my programming skills during my free time.

ADVICE TO MY FORMER SELF & FUTURE STUDENTS

- It is okay to feel like YOU do not have enough technical skills required to do certain tasks because you are there to learn and gain new skills.

- It will help you if you know what you want to be exposed to because your supervisor is there to help you with what you want to achieve.