2026-2027 Adolescent Inpatient Psychiatry Externship

Denver Health Medical Center, Adolescent Inpatient Psychiatry & Behavioral Health Services

Location: 723 Delaware Street ; Pavilion M, 4th floor, Denver, CO 80204
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Agency Description and Services Provided
Acute inpatient psychiatry unit embedded in an urban safety-net hospital campus. The locked unit is comprised of 21 beds, with adolescent patients ranging from age 11 to 17. Many patients have complex presenting problems, with multiple psychiatric comorbidities as well as substance use.

Our services include: short-term psychotherapeutic care and medically monitored intensive inpatient services (for severe substance use disorders). This includes individual therapy, group therapy, milieu therapy, family therapy, and psychological evaluation in consultation and collaboration with other members of the interdisciplinary team. Focus of treatment is on rapid stabilization of psychiatric illness and symptoms and appropriate referral to outpatient services. A percentage of our population requires medical withdrawal management and receiving psychiatric treatment while also receiving substance use specific services.

Positions: One
Suitability: Advanced Students
Special Notes on Suitability
Due to the severity of impairment of the patients served, externs starting in Fall 2026 should be entering their third or fourth year of graduate training. Applicants entering their second year with a previously earned Master's degree may be considered. We ask that students be willing to complete an approximately 11-month externship (August to July), with flexibility allowed for internship start dates. We also ask that one of the two practicum days be Wednesday.

Application, Interview Requirements & On-boarding Requirements
Apply as early as possible in winter selection process in order to be considered. Typically January to early February, but may change as winter selection process dates change on a yearly basis.
Please submit CV, cover letter, and 2 letters of reference. References should be familiar with your work (at least 1 of which are familiar with clinical work) by email to emi.caprio@dhha.org

August start date. Criminal background checks required for all externs. Other onboarding requirements include TB test and Covid vaccine, and later, flu shot is required (and provided on site for free, although specific exemptions are allowed with documentation).

Type of Clients Served
Adolescents with psychiatric and/or substance abuse problems requiring inpatient assessment and treatment. Diagnoses include but are not limited to mood disorders, anxiety and trauma related disorders, first break psychotic disorders, neurodevelopmental disorders, and substance use disorders. Many patients are involuntary (72 hour holds, short-term certifications).

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Diverse Populations Served
(Based off of 2022 census data)
33% Hispanic, Latinx, or Spanish origin
9% African American
1% Asian
1% Native American

*Underserved/Health equity challenged, LGBTQ+, Patients with disabilities

Duties of Psychology Trainee
The extern will be able to observe and participate in provision of psychological services to an inpatient unit serving severely impaired adolescents. Externs participate in interdisciplinary treatment planning and working with psychology residents and the staff psychologists to provide daily group psychotherapy. There are opportunities for brief individual psychotherapy and consultation. Psychological testing (personality testing, intellectual assessment, and neuropsychological screening) is used as an aid in differential diagnosis, treatment planning, and to establish strengths and deficits in individuals with possible neurodevelopmental impairments.

As the externship progresses, the extern will function as an essential member of the psychology staff on the unit (two psychologists, doctoral psychology intern/resident, and externs), with increasing levels of autonomy, including leading groups and providing therapy in an autonomous manner. In addition to extern's duties, the extern may have opportunities to participate in multidisciplinary training and continuing education opportunities (e.g., Journal Club, hosted by Psychiatry faculty). Denver Health also frequently hosts educational lecture series focusing on access and different populations (e.g., LGBT treatment experience/access, disability issues, Health Equity).

Supervised By: Psychology residents and psychology faculty members. Supervision will occur every week with a licensed provider; supplemental group supervision and supervision by Psychology Doctoral Interns/Residents can also be provided.
Theoretical Orientation: Cognitive-behavioral (including ACT, DBT), behavioral, family systems are useful in this setting.
Supervision Format: Individual (and Small Group if there are enough students)
Number of Hours per Week Trainee Works: 16-18
Pay: None