

### **Why I chose to participate in an externship**

Although I enjoy working with patients on an individual basis, I often find myself thinking about the broader context of healthcare—the policies, systems, devices, and medications that have the potential to generate large-scale, impactful changes within medicine. In my exploration of these innovative possibilities, I realized that despite being very well-trained and familiar with clinical and academic medicine, I had very little exposure to the business and pharmaceutical world. I chose to pursue this externship so I could test it out and see if I liked it, and to gain more business experience and skills.

### **My externship experience**

Castle Creek Pharmaceuticals is a biopharmaceutical company that targets orphan drug development for rare dermatologic diseases. During my externship, I worked directly with the Head of Business Development, John Pan, MD MPH, and the Chief Scientific Officer, Greg Licholai, MD. I helped determine unmet medical needs in atopic dermatitis (AD), developed a scientific rationale for topical cyclosporine for AD, evaluated current available treatments/standards of care, and created a presentation for the Executive Leadership Team to help determine which of two topical cyclosporine manufacturers to partner with. Dr. Licholai and I also created a database of existing clinical trials for rare diseases in dermatology, and we published an article in the JAAD which demonstrates the relative lack of industry-backed orphan drug trials within dermatology, compared to other specialties.

### **Final thoughts**

The team at AID was incredibly supportive in fostering my relationship with the company, and I am so grateful to have had this experience. The externship program has many strengths, one of which is the flexibility and customizability of the experience, which was crucial for me during residency. In addition, the network connections I made have continued to be beneficial and supportive beyond the externship. I would highly recommend this opportunity for anyone who is considering options beyond clinical practice within medicine.

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