Summer 2026 Internship Reflection: Quentin Monette

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The summer of 2026 marked an incredibly valuable experience in my academic and professional journey as a Public Health student at Xavier University of Louisiana. As I continue preparing for a career in healthcare, my internship with the National Council of Urban Indian Health (NCUIH) provided me with an opportunity to expand my understanding of public health, healthcare policy, research, and the unique challenges affecting American Indian and Alaska Native communities.

Throughout my internship, I had the opportunity to contribute to several projects that allowed me to apply what I have learned in the classroom to real-world public health work. One of my primary areas of work was supporting the Knowledge Resource Center (KRC), where I helped organize journals, fact sheets, and other resources and identify relevant keywords to improve the accessibility of public health information for Urban Indian Organizations (UIOs). This experience showed me the importance of making health information organized, accessible, and useful for both healthcare professionals and the communities they serve. I also worked on projects related to social determinants of health (SDOH), examining how factors such as housing, transportation, food access, and other conditions influence health outcomes. Through this work, I gained a better understanding of how public health extends beyond the healthcare system itself and how social and environmental conditions can create barriers to receiving quality care. I also contributed to research examining healthcare barriers affecting American Indian and Alaska Native populations, including insurance coverage and transportation-related challenges. Throughout the summer, I was also able to contribute to projects involving dental services among Urban Indian Organizations and help develop follow-up questions for organizations providing these services.

One of the most important things I gained from my time at NCUIH was a greater appreciation for the amount of collaboration and research that goes into improving healthcare outcomes. Working on projects that involved data, research, health policy, and community resources allowed me to see how different areas of public health come together to address real-world problems. It also strengthened skills that I will carry with me throughout my academic and professional career, including research, communication, organization, critical thinking, and working with public health data.

I am incredibly grateful to the NCUIH TARC team and staff for allowing me to be part of the organization this summer and for providing me with opportunities to learn and contribute. My internship experience gave me a deeper understanding of the importance of addressing health disparities and ensuring that healthcare systems and resources are accessible to the communities they serve. As I continue my journey in public health and pursue my long-term goals in healthcare, the knowledge, skills, and experiences I gained at NCUIH will continue to influence the way I understand and approach healthcare.

Overall, my time at NCUIH was more than just an internship. It was an opportunity to take the concepts I have learned as a Public Health student and see how they are applied to meaningful work outside of the classroom. I am thankful for the experiences, relationships, and lessons I gained throughout the summer, and I look forward to carrying them with me into my future career in healthcare.