

National Youth Safety Essay Scholarship Contest Winner

Alex DuVall

Marquette Senior High School

My name is Alex DuVall. I am currently a senior at Marquette Senior High School, and next year I will be attending Lawrence University in Appleton, Wisconsin. I will major in something biology-related, with a focus on pre-medicine. I will also be playing football and basketball for the university, and plan on joining several clubs, so my life will be quite busy during the upcoming four years. For this reason, I enrolled in the OSHA 10-Hour Healthcare specific safety course in a class I took.

I plan on becoming a doctor in the future, and as a doctor, you are in charge of your patient's information and making sure that information stays confidential. That's where the section on the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act really becomes important. This section helped me understand certain provisions about what information can be shared and what can't. Also, who that information is being shared with is very important. Violating this law could not only cause a heavy financial burden such as fines or loss of a job, but you could also embarrass your patient and damage their reputation and your own. Knowing the specifics of the law, and following them, could potentially save your career. Another segment of the ten-hour training course was the one on Personal Protective Equipment. Imagine that you have a patient who is immunocompromised, and you're performing a procedure on them, but you do not have the proper equipment on. This is a big problem, and you could potentially kill the patient. While this is a somewhat extreme example, knowing the proper PPE to wear remains important at all levels of healthcare and at all times. Overall, knowing regulations and rules regarding PPE will make anybody a better, more efficient healthcare worker.

I work at a restaurant, so we have several chemicals used for ensuring that the place is as clean as possible. I was wiping off tables, and I wondered if we had an MSDS for the chemical I was using. I looked around, and could not find one. I brought this to the owner's attention, as we do not have a manager, and he said he would check into that. Sure enough, next time I worked, there was an MSDS for the chemical. If someone new was hired, they would not know how to use the chemical safely without this sheet. They also could have mixed another chemical with the one they were using and produced a very dangerous reaction. Without an MSDS, the owner was putting people at risk. However, once he was aware of the issue he acted very quickly. The OSHA course helped to maintain a safe workplace for me and my co-workers.

The OSHA course gives me a great head start to my career. Most careers in the healthcare field require you to complete this course, and I will have it done. It also applies to the jobs I am holding now, as you can see.