

National Youth Safety Essay Scholarship Contest Winner

Kelby Been

Granbury High School

My name is Kelby Been and I am now a senior at Granbury High School. I recently completed the 10-Hour OSHA General Industry Healthcare course after my Health Science class underwent clinical rotations at Lake Granbury Medical Center (LGMCC). Before OSHA, I was unaware of the many miniscule yet largely important tasks and precautions that are enforced to ensure a safe workplace, both now and in the future.

During clinicals, I rotated stations every few weeks and each department introduced me to a different aspect of safety precautions that was needed for efficient care. At first, many of the personal protective equipment (PPE) seemed like common sense measures. However, when I completed the OSHA safety course, I realized these simple materials greatly impacted the sterile environments that are necessary to keep patients and workers healthy. When I entered the Cath Lab, I had to put on a hair net, a bunny suit, and a pair of gloves. The patients in that wing are extremely sick and susceptible to any germs, yet when I was in Orthopedics, it was only necessary for me to wear gloves in the patient's room in case I was able to assist the examination. Without the OSHA course, I would not have known how critical PPE is in infection control.

After completion of the course, I was able to recognize the strong and weak components of safety in our education system. Many students and teachers have poor ergonomic practices. Teachers bend from their back to pick up dropped items while students slouch and carry heavy backpacks. These unexpected emergency drills have prepared students and staff for disasters. This simple act of preparation will decrease chaos and casualties in times of emergencies. Another beneficial program schools have implemented is the HOSA (Health Occupation Students of America) Organization. This extracurricular activity allows students to be exposed to more medical experiences through competition and community service.

In the future, I plan to become a Pediatric Physician's Assistant. I know I still have much to learn, but the OSHA course introduced me to the aspects of workplace safety that I will be able to implement in any of my workplaces. One being the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA). HIPAA prohibits the communication of patient status, health information and any personal information to others without consent. An employee may discuss the care or accident of a patient but cannot give any identifying information. This privacy protects patients and gives employees a liability check. With the knowledge of HIPAA guidelines, I will be able to assist my coworkers in keeping a safe environment for all.

The OSHA Healthcare Safety course informed me on ways to be more efficient and productive care provider while recognizing safety hazards in the workplace. In addition to my AHA Heartsaver, BLS, CPR, and First Aid certifications, the OSHA safety course has extended my knowledge on how to keep patients, coworkers, and myself in good hands. At the end of the day, as Jeff Cooper says, "safety is not something you hold in your hands but what happens between your ears."