This summer, the MERIT Scholars all successfully completed paid internships across Baltimore City. The rising juniors first spent three weeks learning basic laboratory skills at Johns Hopkins University. This part of the internship was in partnership with the Biophysics Research for Baltimore Teens (BRBT) program and was featured on the local news. The juniors then spent three weeks completing various clinical experiences at Johns Hopkins Bayview Medical Center. This latter half was the second part of the DIG Grant, where faculty members who spoke to our Scholars during the Leaders in Health Equity speaker series served as clinical preceptors for our Scholars in the hospital. The Scholars worked with faculty members and residents in various departments including internal medicine, surgery, anesthesiology, OBGYN, neurology, radiology, and psychiatry.

Based on a survey sent at the conclusion of the summer, the Scholars rated their overall summer experience as **4.1 on average** (1 = Very Dissatisfied and 5 = Very Satisfied). They also tended to agree with the statement “My summer internship will improve my school performance this year (average 4.5 with 1 = Strongly Disagree and 5 = Strongly Agree). In the survey, several Scholars pointed out highlights of their clinical experiences:

- “I got to do a home trip with the doctor to see how some patients’ living conditions were.”
- “The doctors I shadowed gave me insight on goals I should set and achieve.”
- “I was able to witness two surgeries and it was very interesting. I hope to pursue a career in surgery.”
- “This doctor was an honest and admirable man who gave me more motivation to become the medical professional I someday hope to be.”

We also collected evaluation data from the clinical supervisors. The Scholars’ collective overall performance on these evaluations was a **4.7 out of 5**. Supervisors had great things to say about the Scholars such as:

- This Scholar “was truly exceptional. She came prepared and really soaked in all the information that was given to her. I really believe that she is destined for success and I can’t wait to see where she ends up. Great job!”
- This Scholar “was enthusiastic in participating in clinical activities and she helped with gathering vital signs and assisted nursing staff with patient care.”
- This Scholar “asked many intelligent questions and showed maturity beyond his years.”
- “It was a great pleasure having [this Scholar] in geriatrics clinic! I hope she maintains her interest in medicine-- I think she would do great in med school and beyond.”

At the conclusion of the summer, the MERIT Scholars presented posters and oral presentations at the Johns Hopkins CARES (Career, Academic, and Research Experiences for Students) Symposium. The juniors presented on a healthcare disparity that is important to them, including an analysis of a local or national organization working to eliminate that disparity. Hopkins faculty members, staff, community leaders, students, and guests attended the Symposium. The MERIT Scholars will all get a short break before the school year begins, and then restart their weekly Saturday sessions on September 6. If this summer is any indication, this school year will be great for MERIT!