This summer I had the opportunity to intern at Presbyterian/St. Luke’s Medical Center in Denver, CO. I worked with the Infection Prevention Department, but was able to help in other departments as well (such as EVS and Hazardous Waste). The Infection Prevention Department oversees many different areas including construction site compliance, policies, patients, and other possible areas of contamination. I was able to understand what is necessary to keep a hospital under compliance, safe, and operational.

Presbyterian/St. Luke’s Medical Center is a large hospital, so I was able to help with and observe many different aspects. Some of these include, attending conference calls about the latest “superbug” and attending many meetings (about construction site compliance, the latest EPA-certified cleaning materials, etc.). I also helped with the clean-up of sewage back-up, took legionella water samples, used a machine to check ATP amount in hospital rooms, checked sharps containers in the Pharmacy Department, and was able to visit the Hazardous Waste sites and learn how all of it worked! I had the opportunity to walk the construction sites and utilized a check sheet that I made to ensure compliance had been met.

Overall, I had an amazing experience. I learned about hospitals and how Environmental Health is important to the safety of the patients, as well as the employees. It was very interesting to attend meetings throughout the hospital, go to rounds in the PICU (Pediatric Intensive Care Unit), check the OR, and be involved in many areas of the hospital. I also came to realize that Infection Prevention/Environmental Health has a direct impact on the health and safety of patients.