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Midterm Reflection

I was delighted to discover that I had been assigned to the Pediatric Intensive Care Unit (PICU) for my preceptorship. PICU was my top choice, and it lit a passion within me for pediatric nursing. While I had always aspired to work in an intensive care unit, I had never considered a pediatric unit. I completed the majority of my internship hours in the PICU and easily envisioned myself working there full-time after completing my education.

Although some situations were exceptionally challenging to witness, I found the diverse scenarios, patients, and outcomes to be invaluable. I am not drawn to routine, predictable patient outcomes. Instead, I thrive on higher-acuity patients who constantly engage my mind and require me to think critically about potential outcomes. One of the most impactful and emotionally taxing patients I cared for was a four week old female who had initially presented with pertussis, which subsequently led to compartment syndrome in her abdomen. The patient required ECMO, CRRT, numerous intravenous (IV) drips, and full blood exchanges through the ECMO machine. I found it rewarding to listen to the physician explain the patient's condition and the potential outcomes to the family. The physician's comprehensive explanation of each affected body system and the various treatment options available to save their daughter's life underscored the collaborative, even heroic, efforts of the physicians and nurses in attempting to save this baby's life.

Ultimately, the family made the difficult decision to withdraw care. I was honored to assist the family in creating handprints and footprints, bathing the baby, and dressing her in a cute outfit so the parents could hold their child during her passing. It felt like a privilege to be able to provide support during such a vulnerable time.

My preceptor has been an exceptional mentor. He is an excellent educator who takes the time to explain complex concepts. I wish I had had more prior knowledge of the ECMO machine. Despite the challenging circumstances under which we were operating, I demonstrated proficiency in understanding and respectfully participating in the care of my patient.