

Member of the Month

Arielle Gomes-Williams

Interviewed and written by Hillary Hei

Role: Infection Preventionist, Einstein Montgomery

Years of IP-related service: 2.5 years



Fun Facts

Hometown: New Bedford, MA (#1 whaling city in America!)

Pet: Reeses, a 8 year old beagle-lab mix

Favorite food: Any snack. Favorite chip—Doritos.

Go-to song: None. “I would break glass. I botch up Happy Birthday.”

First job: Lifeguard at YMCA

Can’t live without: Chapstick. “It’s a high priority. I have left classes if I forgot it.”

Next travel destination: 30th birthday celebration with Mom to Europe

Fun hobbies: Gym, hiking

Hidden talent: “I’ve played basketball inside Boston’s TD Garden twice.” Arielle played basketball (small forward) from kindergarten to college. During high school, she played in an amateur traveling league.



Background: After graduating from college, Arielle worked at Children’s Hospital of Philadelphia studying mice models in immunology. She became interested in public health after a medical missionary trip to Nicaragua one summer. She transitioned to working at the Montgomery County Health Department as a Disease Intervention Specialist (DIS) primarily working with long-term care facilities with viral outbreaks. After a few years, she then transitioned into becoming an Infection Preventionist at Einstein starting in February 2020.

As a new IP during the pandemic: Arielle distinctly remembers an emergency meeting at the end of January with all health departments and Dr. Fauci discussing a novel virus from Wuhan, China. As the DIS on call, she had the first suspected case of COVID-19 in Montgomery County.

Most memorable work encounter: In the beginning of the pandemic, one unit was having a massive influx of COVID-19 patients. Although wary of breaking a new policy prohibiting non-mandatory staff on the unit, Arielle decided to walk her units and went to a huddle. Once there, she was providing education and reviewing N95 donning/doffing. One nurse realized she had been donning incorrectly and started to get overwhelmed. “It made me realize the importance of showing up for people. Even if you don’t know [the answer], a lot of healthcare workers need someone to show up and say it will be okay, [that we will] figure it out together.”

What skill has helped: My epidemiology skills from my MPH education. As an IP, you need protocols that are data-driven, you need to understand data and research.



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