



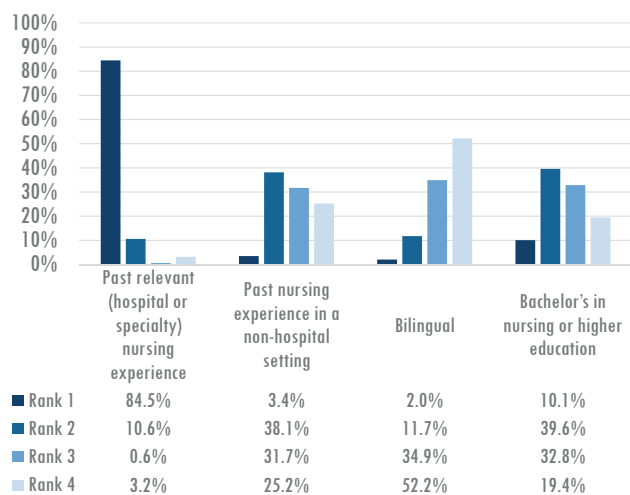
The Hospital Nurse Staffing Survey (HNSS) assesses the size and effects of the nursing shortage in hospitals, Texas’ largest employer of nurses. During the summer of 2019, the Texas Center for Nursing Workforce Studies (TCNWS) administered the HNSS to the Chief Nursing Officers/Directors of Nursing of 715 Texas hospitals. These included for-profit, nonprofit, public, and Texas Department of State Health Services-operated hospitals, as well as hospitals linked to academic institutions; military hospitals were not surveyed. The facilities surveyed were general acute care, psychiatric, special, and rehabilitation hospitals; outpatient or community-based clinics were not included. Respondents provided data for 404 hospitals for a response rate of 56.5%.

This report addresses attributes hospitals consider when hiring RNs and recruitment and retention strategies used by hospitals. Additionally, this report provides important data on the length (in days) that hospitals’ RN positions remained unfilled.

Recruitment and Hiring Practices

Hospitals were asked to rank the importance of four different attributes they would consider when hiring RNs: past relevant nursing experience, past non-relevant nursing experience, bilingual, and bachelor’s in nursing or higher education (1=most important, 4=least important) (Figure 1).

Figure 1. Importance of attributes when hiring RNs



- Past relevant nursing experience was the most important attribute overall, followed by a bachelor’s in nursing or higher education, past non-relevant nursing experience, and bilingual.

Table 1 shows the number and percent of hospitals that use various strategies to recruit employees.

- Strategies varied by geographic designation. Hospitals in non-metropolitan counties were

Table 1. Recruitment strategies used by hospitals

Strategy	# of Hospitals	% of Hospitals
Paid vacation days	332	92.0%
Shift differential	330	91.4%
Health insurance	326	90.3%
Retirement plan	305	84.5%
Employee recognition programs (employee of the month, staff dinners/luncheons, etc.)	280	77.6%
Tuition (reimbursement or direct payment for employees/new hires)	272	75.3%
Reimbursement for workshops/conferences	226	62.6%
Bonus for recruiting nursing staff to the organization	214	59.3%
Financial assistance in receiving certifications or further education	214	59.3%
Flexible scheduling or job sharing	211	58.4%
Merit bonus	184	51.0%
Sign-on bonus	180	49.9%
Payback for unused sick/vacation time	166	46.0%
Career ladder positions for RNs/LVNs/APRNs	152	42.1%
Career ladder positions for nurse aides	59	16.3%
Other	39	10.8%
Sabbatical	14	3.9%
None	3	0.8%

less likely to offer tuition assistance (62.1%), reimbursement for workshops/conferences (67.4%), bonus for recruiting nursing staff (38.9%), merit bonuses (32.6%), or career ladder positions for RNs/LVNs/APRNs (24.2%).

- Other strategies included child care and relocation assistance.

Hospitals were asked to rank the impact of four different interventions on retention of nurses and other direct care staff: pay increase, employee recognition, adequate staffing, and effective leadership/management. (1=most important, 4=least important) (Figure 2).

- Adequate staffing was the most impactful intervention overall, followed by effective management/leadership, pay increase, and employee recognition.

Figure 3 shows the average length of time it takes responding hospitals to fill different types of RN positions.

- For all position types, hospitals most commonly filled positions in between 31 and 60 days.

Figure 2. Impact of interventions of recruitment and retention

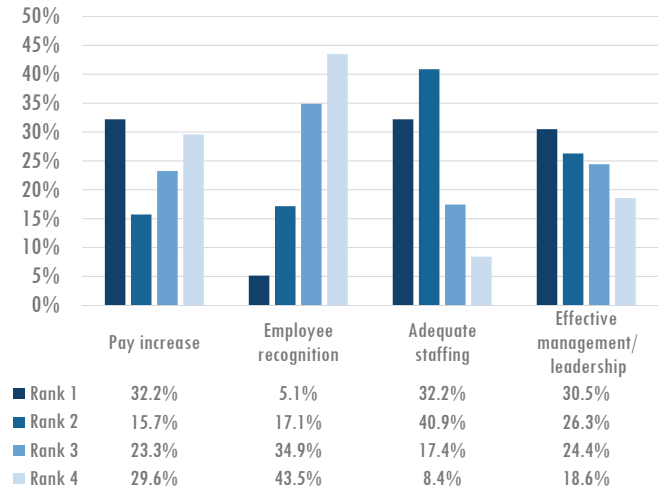
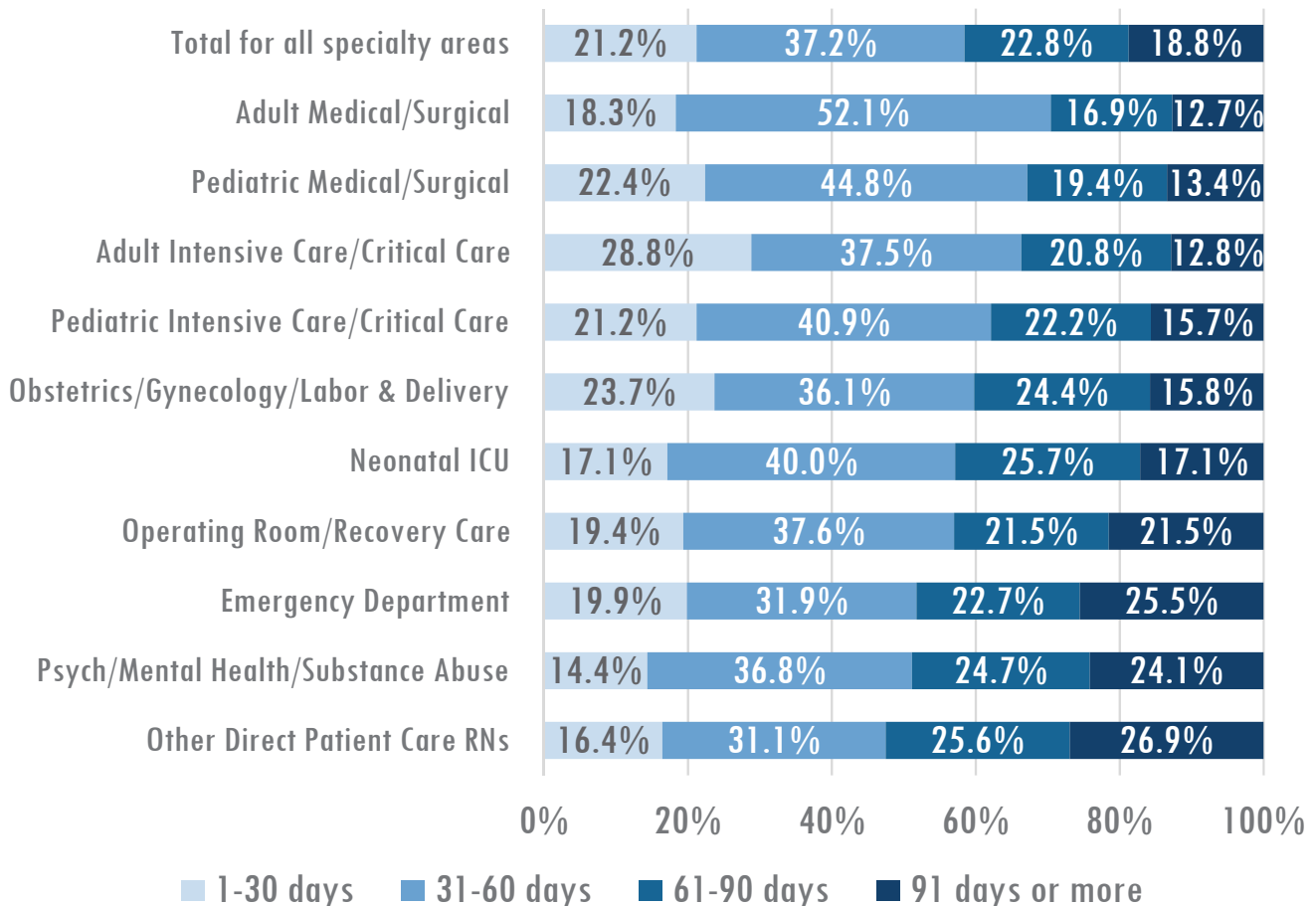


Figure 3. Number of days to fill RN positions by specialty area

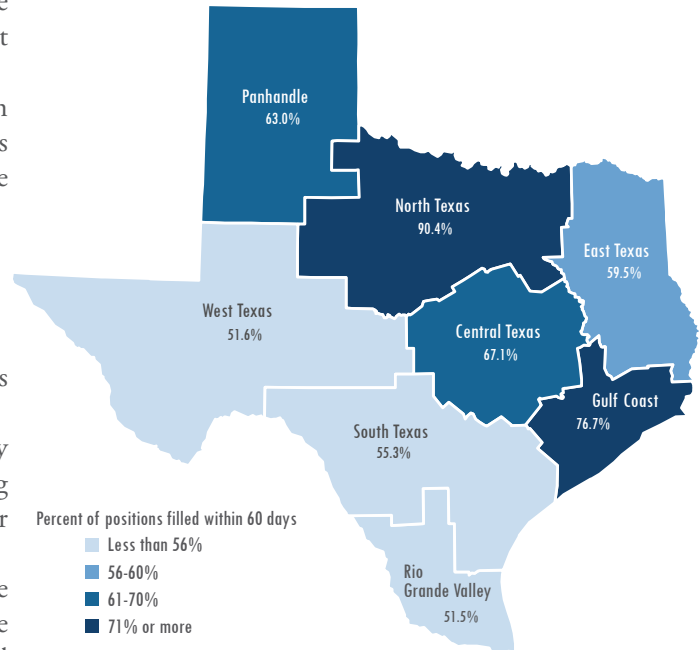


- Adult Medical/Surgical had the highest percentage of positions filled within 60 days (70.4%), while other direct patient care RNs had the lowest (47.5%).
- Regionally, Figure 4 shows that hospitals in North Texas had the highest percentage of positions filled within 60 days (90.4%), while those in the Rio Grande Valley had the lowest (51.5%).

Hospitals were asked to describe their experience hiring and retaining first-year RNs.

- 29 hospitals (8.0%) responded that they do not hire first-year RNs. 25 of these hospitals had less than 50 beds.
- 68 hospitals (18.8%) described having difficulty retaining first-year RNs, mainly due to RNs leaving to go to bigger hospitals or more urban areas for higher pay.
- 99 hospitals (27.4%) responded that they were successful at retaining first-year RNs, mainly due to implementation of robust orientations and transition to practice programs.

Figure 4. Percent of vacant RN positions filled within 60 days



Conclusion

The top three recruitment strategies used by hospitals were paid vacation days (92.0%), shift differentials (91.4%), and health insurance (90.3%). For all position types, hospitals most commonly filled positions in between 31 and 60 days.

Past relevant nursing experience was the most important attribute hospitals considered when hiring RNs, followed by a bachelor's in nursing or higher education, past non-relevant nursing experience, and bilingual.

TCNWS Advisory Committee Recommendations

Employers of nurses should invite practicing nurses' input to promote recruitment and retention of nurses in the workplace. Some of these strategies could include the following:

- Continue to investigate mechanisms for recognition for the work and contributions that nurses provide. Employee recognition programs were the fifth most popular recruitment and retention strategy for employees, used by 77.6% of hospitals.
- Utilize recruitment and retention strategies outlined in the Magnet Recognition and Pathways to Excellence programs from the American Nurses Credentialing Center.¹
- Utilize resources provided by the National Academy of Medicine's Action Collaborative on Clinician Well-Being and Resilience.²

- Support investigation and research in the retention of new graduates and experienced nurses in the work setting.
- Establish a forum for hospitals to share recruitment and retention best practices. Nursing stakeholder organizations should establish forums through which hospitals can share best practices for recruitment and retention of nurses, in order to more fully implement the strategies identified through recommendation two. Several nursing organizations in Texas have regional workgroups:
 - Texas Nurses Association (TNA) Districts
 - Texas Organization for Nursing Leadership (TONL) Regional Chapters
 - Texas Team Regional Teams

¹ American Nurses Credentialing Center: <http://www.nursecredentialing.org/Magnet/ProgramOverview.aspx>.

² National Academy of Medicine: <https://nam.edu/initiatives/clinician-resilience-and-well-being/>.