



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 summarizes the various measures reported in the HNSS reports as they pertain to state hospitals in Texas. The salient findings presented here highlight points of concern and differences between state hospital nurse staffing measures and those of non-state hospitals.

### State Mental Health Facility Characteristics

State hospitals are inpatient mental health facilities (with the exception of the Texas Center for Infectious Disease) operated using public funds from the State of Texas and controlled by an agency of state government. There are 12 state hospitals which are located in 6 of the 8 HNSS regions (see Figure 1).

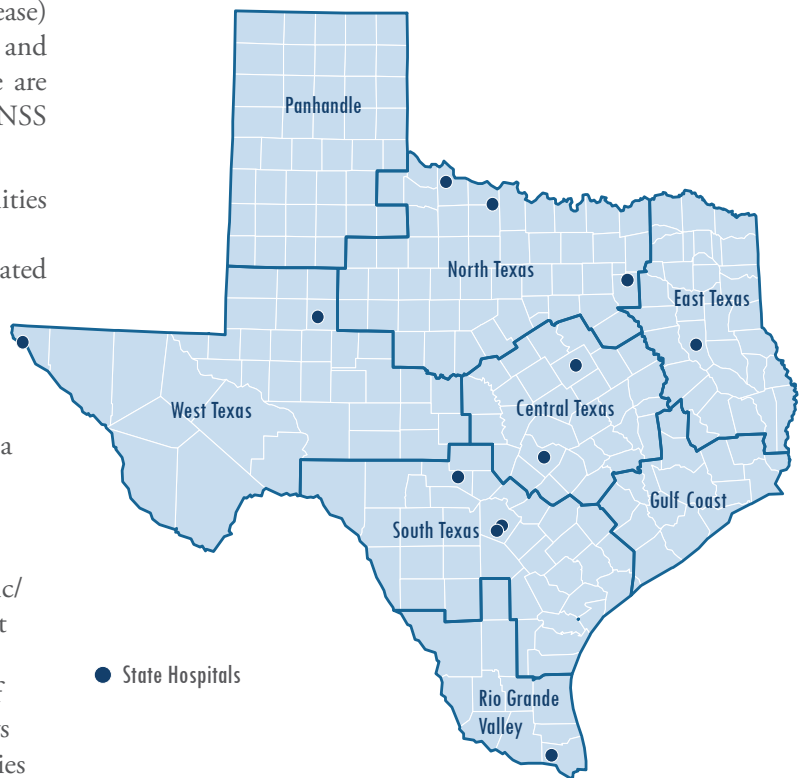
- 10 out of 12 (83.3%) state hospital facilities responded to the 2019 HNSS.
- Six of the responding state hospitals were located in metropolitan, non-border counties. Two hospitals were in metropolitan, border counties and two were in non-metropolitan, non-border counties.
- Among responding state hospitals, there were a total of 1,933 staffed beds.

#### Staffing

- The hospitals reported recruiting only psychiatric/mental health/substance abuse and other direct patient care registered nurse (RN) positions.
- Two hospitals reported the average length of RN position vacancy to be 60 or fewer days while 8 reported the average length of vacancies to be greater than 60 days.
- Two hospitals reported an increase in the number of budgeted direct patient care RN FTEs on staff and 8 hospitals reported no change.

The state hospitals that responded to the 2019 HNSS reported the use of 4 methods of interim staffing: 6 used

Figure 1. State hospitals in Texas



voluntary overtime, 3 used managerial staff to cover duties of absent RNs or vacant positions, 3 used contract/traveling nurses, and 1 used temporary staffing agencies.

Table 1 includes the hours and costs\* associated with the use of interim staffing methods.

- State hospitals reported spending less money overall per hour on interim staffing than non-state hospitals, but more for contract/travelling nurses and temporary staffing agencies.

**Table 1. Hours and cost\* of interim staffing in state hospitals**

	n	State Hospitals Hours	State Hospitals Cost*	State Hospitals Cost/Hr	Non-State Hospitals Cost/Hr
Voluntary Overtime	3	17,901	\$381,810.00	\$21.33	\$44.33
In-house Staffing Pool	0	-	-	-	\$35.38
Contract/Traveling Nurses	2	2,660	\$151,480.00	\$56.95	\$37.35
Per Diem Nurses	0	-	-	-	\$23.36
Temporary Staffing Agencies	1	1,216	\$81,095.63	\$66.67	\$64.76
Use of Managerial Staff	1	1,250	\$37,000.00	\$29.60	\$43.13
Total	-	23,027	\$651,385.63	\$28.29	\$35.47

\*The analysis on cost of interim staffing is to demonstrate the cost differential between staffing methods, and is not intended for use in estimating nurse wages. Note: n=number of responding hospitals that reported hours and cost of interim staffing methods

## Vacancy and Turnover

Table 2 compares position vacancy rates in responding state hospitals to those in non-state hospitals.

- The position vacancy rates in state hospitals are higher for all nurse types except NAs.

**Table 2. Vacancy rates in state hospitals and non-state hospitals**

	State Hospitals		Non-State Hospitals	
	n	Position Vacancy Rate	n	Position Vacancy Rate
RNs	10	9.8%	344	5.9%
APRNs	8	14.0%	145	7.6%
LVNs	10	8.5%	260	5.1%
NAs	7	10.2%	304	10.4%

n=number of hospitals that reported each nursing staff type

Figure 2 shows that the position vacancy rates for RNs, LVNs, and NAs in responding state hospitals have remained relatively stable since 2010. The rates for RNs and APRNs decreased from 2017 to 2019.

**Figure 2. Position vacancy rates in state hospitals, 2010-2019**

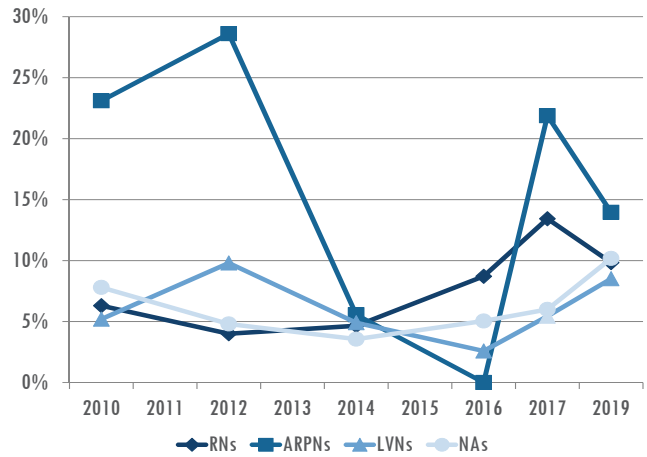


Table 3 shows turnover rates by nurse type in responding state and non-state hospitals.

- Turnover was higher at state hospitals among RNs, LVNs, and NAs.

**Table 3. Turnover rates in state hospitals and non-state hospitals**

	State Hospitals		Non-State Hospitals	
	n	Median Facility Turnover Rate	n	Median Facility Turnover Rate
RNs	8	31.4%	307	18.5%
APRNs	7	0.0%	114	0.0%
LVNs	8	21.2%	229	18.9%
NAs	5	48.5%	266	30.3%

n=number of hospitals that reported each nursing staff type

## Conclusion

10 out of 12 (83.3%) state hospital facilities responded to the 2019 HNSS. The hospitals reported recruiting only psychiatric/mental health/substance abuse and other direct patient care RN positions. Two hospitals reported an increase in the number of budgeted direct patient care RN FTEs on staff and 8 hospitals reported no change. The state hospitals that responded to the 2019 HNSS reported spending less money per hour on interim staffing than non-state hospitals.

Overall, the position vacancy rate for RNs in responding state hospitals was 9.8%, for LVNs was 8.5%, for NAs was 10.2%, and for APRNs was 14.0%. The median facility turnover rate for RNs in responding state hospitals was 1.4%, for LVNs was 21.2%, for NAs was 48.5%, and for APRNs was 0%.