



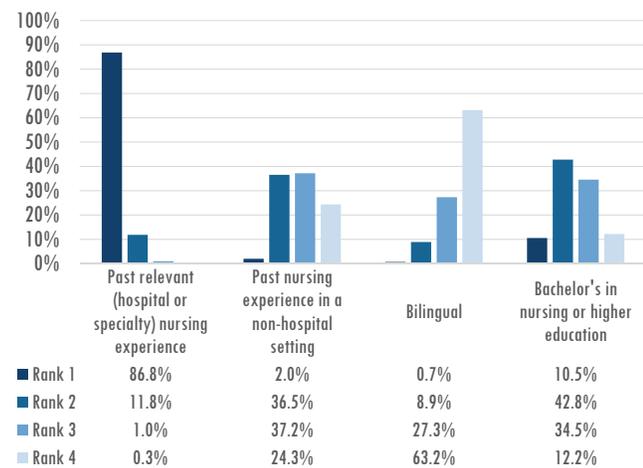
The Hospital Nurse Staffing Survey (HNSS) assesses the size and effects of the nursing shortage in hospitals, Texas' largest employer of nurses. During the spring of 2016, the TCNWS administered the HNSS to 666 Texas hospitals. These included for-profit, nonprofit, public, and Texas Department of State 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. 345 (51.8%) hospitals responded to the survey.

This report addresses where hospitals recruited to fill open registered nurse (RN) positions, whether within Texas, a state outside of Texas, or internationally. If hospitals recruited outside of Texas, they were asked their reasons for doing so. 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.

Hospitals were also asked to rate the importance of a Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN) for their staff (Figure 2).

- The highest percentage of hospitals statewide reported that the degree is very important (29.9%). This is an increase from 21.5% in 2014.

Figure 2. Importance of a BSN for RN staff

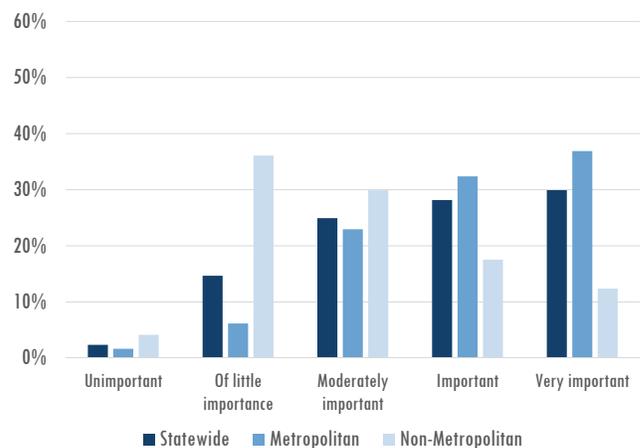


Table 1 shows the number and percent of hospitals that use various strategies to recruit employees.

- Strategies varied across the regions. Hospitals in the Gulf Coast were less likely to offer retirement plans to full-time employees (67.3%), while hospitals in West Texas were less likely to offer employee recognition programs (56.7%).
- Other strategies included child care and relocation assistance.

Table 2 shows the number and percent of hospitals that use various strategies to retain employees.

- Usage of retention strategies was very similar to usage of recruitment strategies.

Table 3 shows that the vast majority of hospitals in Texas and each region recruited RNs from Texas, followed by states outside of Texas and internationally.

Table 1. Recruitment strategies used by hospitals

Strategy	Full-Time		Part-Time	
	# of Hospitals	% of Hospitals	# of Hospitals	% of Hospitals
Shift differential	327	94.8%	249	72.2%
Paid vacation days	315	91.3%	192	55.7%
Health insurance	310	89.9%	159	46.1%
Retirement plan	282	81.7%	172	49.9%
Employee recognition programs (employee of the month, staff dinners/ luncheons, etc.)	260	75.4%	203	58.8%
Tuition (reimbursement or direct payment for employees/new hires)	249	72.2%	131	38.0%
Reimbursement for workshops/ conferences	236	68.4%	143	41.4%
Financial assistance in receiving certifications or further education	230	66.7%	143	41.4%
Bonus for recruiting nursing staff to the agency	217	62.9%	135	39.1%
Flexible scheduling or job sharing	202	58.6%	171	49.6%
Merit bonus	180	52.2%	124	35.9%
Payback for unused sick/vacation time	175	50.7%	108	31.3%
Sign-on bonus	169	49.0%	37	10.7%
Career ladder positions for RNs/LVNs/ APRNs	139	40.3%	90	26.1%
Career ladder positions for HHAs/NAs/ CNAs/CMAs	59	17.1%	45	13.0%
Sabbatical	16	4.6%	13	3.8%
Other	31	9.0%	25	7.2%
None	10	2.9%	18	5.2%

Table 2. Retention strategies used by hospitals

Strategy	Full-Time		Part-Time	
	# of Hospitals	% of Hospitals	# of Hospitals	% of Hospitals
Paid vacation days	304	88.1%	184	53.3%
Shift differential	303	87.8%	228	66.1%
Health insurance	290	84.1%	161	46.7%
Employee recognition programs (employee of the month, staff dinners/ luncheons, etc.)	281	81.4%	219	63.5%
Retirement plan	268	77.7%	169	49.0%
Reimbursement for workshops/ conferences	246	71.3%	153	44.3%
Tuition (reimbursement or direct payment for employees/new hires)	243	70.4%	131	38.0%
Financial assistance in receiving certifications or further education	228	66.1%	135	39.1%
Bonus for recruiting nursing staff to the agency	218	63.2%	143	41.4%
Merit bonus	197	57.1%	139	40.3%
Flexible scheduling or job sharing	196	56.8%	174	50.4%
Payback for unused sick/vacation time	160	46.4%	99	28.7%
Career ladder positions for RNs/LVNs/ APRNs	142	41.2%	90	26.1%
Career ladder positions for HHAs/NAs/ CNAs/CMAs	50	14.5%	36	10.4%
Sabbatical	14	4.1%	11	3.2%
Other	24	7.0%	20	5.8%
None	8	2.3%	11	3.2%

Table 3. Where hospitals recruit RN positions, by region

Place of Recruitment		Texas	Panhandle	Rio Grande Valley	North Texas	East Texas	Gulf Coast	Central Texas	South Texas	West Texas
		n	343	24	17	120	24	52	45	31
	%	99.4%	100%	94.4%	100%	96.0%	100%	100%	100%	100%
States Outside of Texas	n	120	6	6	53	6	15	17	9	8
	%	34.8%	25.0%	33.3%	44.2%	24.0%	28.8%	37.8%	29.0%	26.7%
Internationally	n	43	0	3	16	2	6	3	8	5
	%	12.5%	0%	16.7%	13.3%	8.0%	11.5%	6.7%	25.8%	16.7%

Note: n = number of hospitals reporting recruiting in this location. % = percentage of hospitals reporting recruiting in this location.



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.
- Adult Medical/Surgical had the highest percentage of positions filled within 60 days (57.1%), while Pediatric ICU had the lowest (28.9%).
- Regionally, Figure 4 shows that hospitals in West Texas had the highest percentage of positions filled within 60 days (51.5%), while those in the Rio Grande Valley had the lowest (36.8%).

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

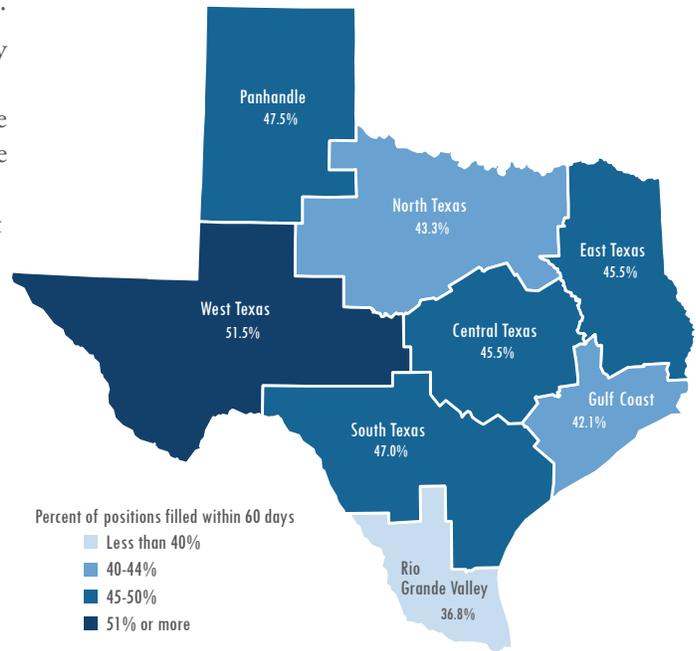
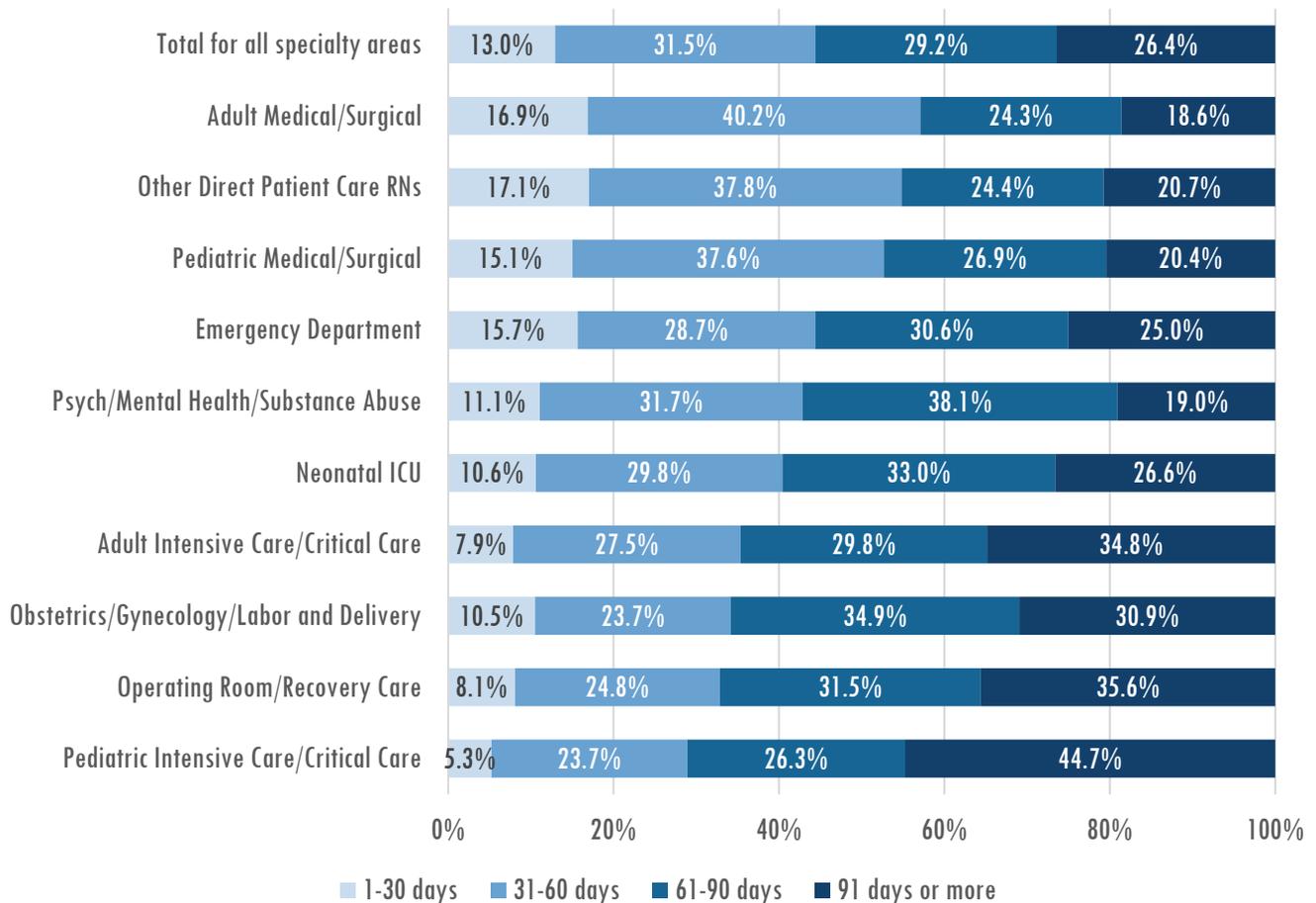


Figure 3. Number of days to fill RN positions by specialty area



Conclusion

The majority of hospitals in Texas and each region recruited RNs from Texas. The top three recruitment strategies used by hospitals for full-time employees were shift differentials (94.8%), paid vacation days (91.3%), and health insurance (89.9%). 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. 29.9% of hospitals reported that a BSN is very important when hiring RNs.

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 fourth most popular retention strategy for full-time employees, used by 81.4% of hospitals.
 - Utilize recruitment and retention strategies outlined in the Magnet Recognition and Pathways to Excellence programs from the American Nurses Credentialing Center.¹
 - 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
 - Organization of Nurse Executives (TONE) Regional Chapters
 - Texas Team Regional Teams

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