The Texas Governmental Public Health Nurse Staffing Survey (TGPHNSS) assesses nurse staffing and related issues in Texas governmental public health agencies. In the spring of 2024, the Texas Center for Nursing Workforce Studies (TCNWS) administered the TGPHNSS to 74 local health departments and 8 public health service regions. A total of 31 responses were collected for a response rate of 37.8%.

Department of State Health Services (DSHS) and Health and Human Services (HHS) central offices in Austin were also surveyed and total of 13 responses were collected. These agencies and programs change year to year and the total number of programs is unknown. Therefore, no response rate is reported.

Vacancy and turnover rates are among the key measures for assessing nurse staffing adequacy. The Institute of Medicine (IOM) has asserted that vacancy rates "are widely accepted as evidence of supply shortages of RNs" and can be used to estimate current and future nursing shortages.[1] Vacancy rates indicate the ability of an organization to recruit and fill nursing positions and turnover rates indicate the ability of the organization to retain its current employees.[2,3] This report features the results of the 2024 TGPHNSS nurse vacancy and turnover in Texas governmental public health agencies. It includes statewide vacancy and turnover rates as well as vacancy and turnover by region and agency type. It is important to note that those receiving the survey for DSHS and HHS central offices were individual programs under these agencies and, therefore, do not represent the agencies as a whole.

[1]IOM (Institute of Medicine). (2011). The Future of nursing: Leading change, advancing health. Washington, DC: The National Academies Press.
[2]Rondeau, K.V., Williams, E.S., & Wagar, T.H. (2008). Turnover and vacancy rates for registered nurses: Do local labor market factors matter?. Health Care Management Review, 33(1), 69-78.
[3]Hayes, L., O'Brien-Pallas, L., Duffield, C., Shamian, J., Buchan, J., Hughes, F., Laschinger, K.S., & North, N. (2012). Nurse turnover: A literature review – An update. International Journal of Nursing Studies, 49(7), 887-905.

Vacancy

Vacancy Rates - Statewide

Table 1 displays vacancy data for all governmental public health agencies that responded to the survey. In the current study, position vacancy rates and median agency vacancy rates were assessed for January 1, 2024.

- For the 40 agencies that reported employment information for RNs, 30 (75.0%) of those agencies had a 0% vacancy rate.

- Of the 24 agencies that reported employment information for LVNs, 18 (75.0%) of those agencies had a 0% vacancy rate.

- 11 agencies reported vacancy information on APRN positions, and 8 (72.7%) of those agencies had a 0% vacancy rate.

Table 1. Statewide vacancy rates among responding agencies by nurse type, 2024

	n	Occupied FTE positions	Vacant FTE positions	Statewide position vacancy rate	Statewide median agency vacancy rate	# of agencies that reported zero vacancies
RNs	40	303	47	13.4%	0.0%	30
LVNs	24	163	20	10.9%	0.0%	18
APRNs	11	20	4	16.7%	0.0%	8

Note: n=number of agencies in Texas that reported FTE positions for each nurse type. Agencies with inconsistent staffing data were excluded from these calculations.

Figure 1 represents the position vacancy rates for Texas from 2015-2024 by nursing staff type.

- Overall, the statewide position vacancy rate was highest for APRN positions (16.7%) and lowest for LVN positions (10.9%).
- The statewide position vacancy rate for RNs was 13.4%.
- 2024 statewide vacancy rates for all nurse types show a marked decrease from 2022 but are consistent with vacancy rates from 2015-2019.

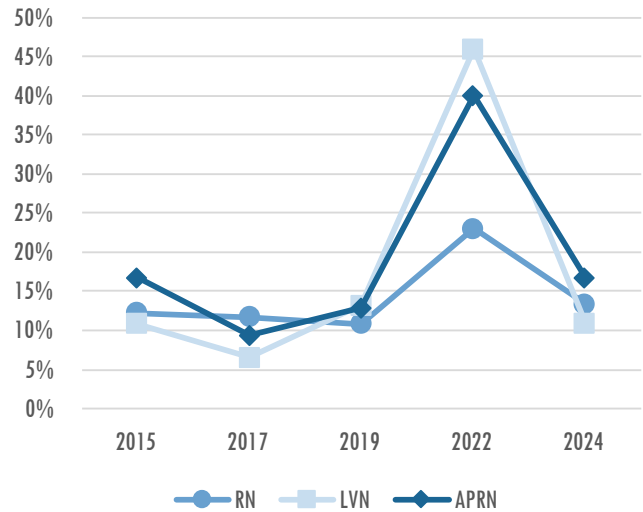Figure 1. Statewide vacancy rates by nurse type, 2015 - 2024

Table 2 shows the descriptive statistics for public health agency vacancy rates. The median represents the middle value among all position vacancy rates calculated for each individual agency. The median agency vacancy rate gives a sense of how widespread an issue staff vacancy is.

- Statewide median agency vacancy rates were 0% for RNs, LVNs and APRNs.

Table 2. Public health agency vacancy rate descriptive statistics, 2024

	n	Minimum	25th Percentile	Median	75th Percentile	Maximum	Mean
RNs	40	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	5.8%	100.0%	6.9%
LVNs	24	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	3.4%	100.0%	9.7%
APRNs	11	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	25.0%	50.0%	9.8%

Note: n=number of agencies in Texas that reported each nursing staff type

Vacancy Rates - Agency Types

Table 3 shows position vacancy rates by the different types of responding governmental public health agencies.

- The highest position vacancy rate for RNs (23.5%) was found among the 11 responding DSHS and HHS central offices' programs.
- Among local health departments, the position vacancy rate for RNs was 10.8%.
- The highest position vacancy rate was found among LVNs employed by Local Health Departments (11.9%).
- Among DSHS public health regions, the position vacancy rate for LVNs was 7.7%.
- APRNs had a position vacancy rate of 18.2% in Local Health Departments. There were no vacancies in DSHS and HHS central offices' programs for APRNs.

Table 3. Position vacancy rates in responding agencies by agency type, 2024

	Local Health Departments		DSHS- Public Health Regions		DSHS and HHS central office programs	
	Number of Agencies	Position Vacancy Rate	Number of Agencies	Position Vacancy Rate	Number of Agencies	Position Vacancy Rate
RNs	23	10.8%	6	8.8%	11	23.5%
LVNs	19	11.9%	4	7.7%	1	5.3%
APRNs	9	18.2%	-	-	2	0.0%

Note: Agencies that reported zero nurse positions for a nurse type were excluded from the vacancy rate calculation.

Vacancy Rates - Regions

Nursing position vacancy rates were also analyzed by region. Table 4 breaks down position vacancy rates by region. DSHS and HHSC central offices were counted as their own region.

- The 1 responding agency in the Panhandle reported 0.0% vacancy rates for all nurse types.

- East Texas, the Gulf Coast, South Texas, and West Texas also reported 0.0% vacancy rates for all nurse types they employ.

- Central Texas reported the highest vacancy rates for RNs and LVNs out of all public health regions. Rio Grande Valley reported the highest vacancy rate for APRNs.

- The DSHS and HHS central office programs reported a higher RN vacancy rate than any public health region.

Table 4. Position vacancy rates by region and nursing staff type, 2024

Region	n	RNs	LVNs	APRNs
Panhandle (PHR 1)	1	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
North Texas (PHR 2/3)	7	16.8%	30.5%	23.1%
East Texas (PHR 4/5N)	4	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Gulf Coast (PHR 6/5S)	7	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Central Texas (PHR 7)	3	21.1%	33.3%	0.0%
South Texas (PHR 8)	3	0.0%	0.0%	-
West Texas (PHR 9/10)	3	0.0%	0.0%	-
Rio Grande Valley (PHR 11)	3	0.0%	0.0%	33.3%
DSHS and HHS central office programs	13	23.5%	5.3%	0.0%

Note: n = number of respondents who reported each nursing staff type.

Public Health Region = PHR

"-" means data was unavailable to report the position vacancy rates by region and nursing staff type.

Turnover

Turnover Rates - Statewide

Table 5 displays the total average headcount for 2023, total number of separations, and median agency turnover rate for RNs, LVNs, and APRNs in responding governmental public health agencies. Turnover rates were assessed for the calendar year 2023 (January 1, 2023 to December 31, 2023).

Table 5. Headcount and separations in responding agencies by nurse type, 2023

	n	Average Headcount 01/01/23 – 12/31/23	Number of Separations 01/01/23 – 12/31/23	Median Agency Turnover Rate	Number of Agencies that Reported Zero Separations
RNs	35	280.5	52.0	0.0%	19
LVNs	34	158.5	19.0	0.0%	23
APRNs	12	22.0	4.0	0.0%	9

Note: n=number of agencies in Texas that reported both head counts and number of separations for each nurse type.

Table 6 shows the descriptive statistics of turnover rates. The median represents the middle value among all turnover rates calculated for each agency. The median value is reported because it is less sensitive to outliers than the mean.

- The median turnover rate for all nurse types was 0.0%.

- APRNs had the largest mean turnover rate (20.8%).

- The mean turnover rate was 16.9% for RNs and 7.1% for LVNs.

Table 6. Agency turnover rate descriptive statistics, 2023

	n	Minimum	25th Percentile	Median	75th Percentile	Maximum	Mean
RNs	35	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	25.0%	133.3%	16.9%
LVNs	35	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	100.0%	7.1%
APRNs	12	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	37.5%	100.0%	20.8%

Note: n=number of agencies in Texas that reported each nursing staff type

Turnover Rates - Agency Types

Table 7 shows median turnover rates for each nurse type by the different types of responding governmental public health agencies.

- The median turnover rate for RNs was 0.0% for all agency types except for DSHS- Public Health Regions (14.6%).

- Local health departments had a median turnover rate of 0.0% for all nurse types.
- There was no turnover among LVNs across responding agencies and programs in 2023.
- The only responding DSHS and HHS central offices' program that reported APRNs had a 50.0% median turnover rate.

Table 7. Turnover rates in responding agencies by agency type, 2023

	Local Health Departments		DSHS- Public Health Regions		DSHS and HHS central office programs	
	Number of Agencies	Median Turnover Rate	Number of Agencies	Median Turnover Rate	Number of Agencies	Median Turnover Rate
RNs	22	0.0%	6	14.6%	7	0.0%
LVNs	23	0.0%	5	0.0%	7	0.0%
APRNs	10	0.0%	1	0.0%	1	50.0%

Note: Agencies that reported zero nurse positions for a nurse type were excluded from the turnover rate calculation.

Turnover Rates - Public Health Service Regions

In Table 8, median turnover rates for RNs, LVNs, and APRNs are displayed by region.

- Agencies in three regions of Texas reported a 0% median turnover rate for RNs (Panhandle, South Texas, and West Texas).
- North Texas had the highest median turnover rate for RNs (32.1%).
- All regions reported a 0.0% median turnover rate for LVNs except for the one responding agency in the Panhandle.
- South Texas and West Texas did not provide enough data to calculate median turnover rates for APRNs.

Table 8. Median Turnover rates by region and nursing staff type, 2023

Region	n	RNs	LVNs	APRNs
Panhandle (PHR 1)	1	0.0%	100.0%	100.0%
North Texas (PHR 2/3)	7	32.1%	0.0%	0.0%
East Texas (PHR 4/5N)	4	8.6%	0.0%	100.0%
Gulf Coast (PHR 6/5S)	7	3.4%	0.0%	0.0%
Central Texas (PHR 7)	3	13.8%	0.0%	0.0%
South Texas (PHR 8)	3	0.0%	0.0%	-
West Texas (PHR 9/10)	3	0.0%	0.0%	-
Rio Grande Valley (PHR 11)	3	6.3%	0.0%	0.0%
DSHS and HHS central office programs	13	0.0%	0.0%	50.0%

Note: n = number of respondents who reported each nursing staff type

Conclusion

Statewide position vacancy rates decreased for all nurse types from 2022. Overall, the statewide position vacancy rate was highest for APRN positions (16.7%) and lowest for LVN positions (10.9%). The position vacancy rate for RNs was 13.4%.

Statewide median agency vacancy rates were 0% for RNs, LVNs, and APRNs. Among local health departments, the position vacancy rate for RNs was 10.8%. The highest position vacancy rate was found among RNs employed by DSHS and HHS central office program (23.5%).

Central Texas had the highest RN vacancy rate (21.1%) followed by North Texas (16.8%).

The median turnover rate for all nurse types was 0.0%. The median turnover rate for RNs was 0.0% across all agency types except for DSHS public health regions (14.6%). North Texas had the highest median turnover rate for RNs (32.1%) and the one reporting agency in the Panhandle had the highest median turnover rate for LVNs (100.0%).