



Report on State Hospital Staffing Second Quarter Fiscal Year 2014

**As Required By
The 2014-2015 General Appropriations Act, S.B. 1, 83rd
Legislature, Regular Session, 2013 (Article II, Department of
State Health Services, Rider 87a)**



**Department of State Health Services
August 2014**

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Executive Summary

[The 2014-2015 General Appropriations Act, S.B. 1, 83rd Legislature, Regular Session, 2013 \(Article II, Department of State Health Services, Rider 87a\)](#) requires the Department of State Health Services to submit a quarterly report on staffing at state mental health hospitals. The report is required to contain specific data on fill and turnover rates as well as a summary of any actions taken to improve recruitment and retention.

For the second quarter of fiscal year 2014, the lowest fill rate is for physicians (76 percent). The highest fill rate is for pharmacists (96 percent). The highest turnover rate is for PNAs (36 percent). Pharmacists have the lowest turnover rate (8 percent).

Actions taken during the second quarter include converting psychiatrist positions to advanced practice registered nurse positions, standardizing the classification of nurse executives, and exploring the development of a Social Work Compensation Plan.

Introduction

The 2014-2015 General Appropriations Act, S.B. 1, 83rd Legislature, Regular Session, 2013 (Article II, Department of State Health Services, Rider 87a) requires the Department of State Health Services (DSHS) to provide a staffing report to the Legislative Budget Board, the Office of the Governor, and the permanent standing legislative committees that have jurisdiction over health and human services on a quarterly basis. The report must include data on turnover, fill rates, and use of contractors by state hospital and position type; initiatives undertaken during the reporting period to improve staff recruitment and retention; resources expended on the initiatives; and outcomes quantifying the impact of the initiatives.

Background

DSHS operates nine psychiatric hospitals and one inpatient residential treatment facility for adolescents. The facilities are located on eleven campuses across the state: Austin State Hospital, El Paso Psychiatric Center, Kerrville State Hospital, Big Spring State Hospital, North Texas State Hospital (Vernon and Wichita Falls campuses), Rio Grande State Center, Rusk State Hospital, San Antonio State Hospital, Terrell State Hospital, and Waco Center for Youth. These facilities provide psychiatric inpatient hospital services for adults, geriatrics, adolescents, and children. Services include diagnostics, treatment, liaison with appropriate courts and law enforcement, and discharge planning. DSHS also provides psychiatric residential treatment for youth (ages 10-17) and the services include therapeutic programming and discharge planning.

The state-operated psychiatric facilities have struggled to recruit and retain adequate staff. In order to maintain staffing levels appropriate to provide patient care, the state hospitals have had to use contractors for certain clinical positions that are significantly more expensive than staff positions.

To help address the staffing issues at state hospitals the 83rd Legislature appropriated \$14.7 million (biennium) to provide a ten percent pay increase for all psychiatric nurse assistants (PNAs).

Actions Taken: First Quarter Fiscal Year 2014

The ten percent pay increase for all PNAs approved by the Legislature in 2013 was implemented during the first quarter of fiscal year 2014. As a result, the fill rate went up, but the turnover rate remained the same. Health and Human Services – Human Resources Manual (Chapter 7 Compensation, Section D Starting Salaries) limits internal applicants for a position in a higher salary group to a maximum of seven percent or the minimum of the new salary group, whichever is greater unless a higher increase is authorized by the agency head. Because PNAs are not the only job title in their classification, actions were taken to allow the PNAs to maintain their pay increase when they advance from PNA I to II, III, and IV and allow other internal applicants to receive the approved PNA salaries. This step may improve the turnover and fill rates in the future.

Actions were taken, within existing funding levels from the interagency contract with the Department of Aging and Disability Services at Rio Grande State Center, to begin to hire 12 additional nurses, a dental hygienist, and a settlement agreement coordinator. Prior to this action, contract positions were being utilized, which is more costly than hiring employees. The hiring process has been difficult because of a shortage of healthcare workers in the area.

DSHS completed an analysis of the cost of locum tenens (contracted physicians and/or psychiatrists) and discovered that locum tenens are roughly double the hourly cost of an employee. To decrease psychiatrist turnover, DSHS elected to increase psychiatric salaries and pay for this salary increase with a decrease in locum tenens usage. The state hospitals have already had some success with recruitment by increasing the psychiatrist salaries for new hires, and are working to address the salaries of current psychiatrists to ensure retention.

Resources Expended: First Quarter Fiscal Year 2014

Appropriated funds were used to implement the ten percent salary increase for PNAs, as approved by the Legislature.

Staffing: Second Quarter Fiscal Year 2014

Appendix I describes the fill rates and annualized turnover rates for clinical staff positions for the second quarter of fiscal year 2014. The physician group has been separated into two categories: psychiatrists and non-psychiatric physicians (termed simply “physicians”). Registered nurses (RNs), licensed vocational nurses (LVNs), PNAs, pharmacists, and social workers have also been included separately in the charts.

Psychiatrist

The psychiatrist fill rate is 81 percent with a vacancy rate of 19 percent. The turnover rate is 14 percent.

Physicians (Non-psychiatrist physicians)

The non-psychiatric physician fill rate is 76 percent or a vacancy rate of 24 percent. The turnover rate is 13 percent.

Nurses

For RNs, the fill rate is 92 percent, with a vacancy rate of 8 percent. The fill rate decreased by two percent between the first and second quarters of fiscal year 2014. The turnover rate for second quarter is 24 percent, the same as the first quarter.

LVNs have a 94 percent fill rate or 6 percent vacancy rate and a 32 percent turnover rate. This is the same fill rate as the first quarter and a one percent reduction in the turnover rate.

Social Workers

The social worker turnover rate is 22 percent with a fill rate of 92 percent corresponding to an 8 percent vacancy rate. The fill rate is down one percent from the first quarter and the turnover rate has increased by two percent. Experienced social workers continue to move into higher paying positions with the federal Veterans Administration or the private sector, leaving a less experienced workforce to provide services at the state hospitals.

Psychiatric Nurse Assistants

PNAs have a fill rate of 93 percent or 7 percent vacancy rate, which is the same as the first quarter. The turnover rate of 36 percent is also the same as the first quarter. The Legislature provided a ten percent pay increase effective September 1, 2013 in an effort to improve staffing trends. For the first half of fiscal year 2014, it appears to have helped the hospitals maintain PNA staffing levels, and the pay increase may further impact staffing trends as the fiscal year progresses.

Pharmacists

DSHS state mental health hospitals have board certified psychiatric pharmacists working in the facilities and providing services to patients on the units. The fill rate is 96 percent with a 4 percent vacancy rate. This is a three percent improvement over first quarter. The turnover rate is eight percent as compared to ten percent for the first quarter. Since new pharmacy schools have opened, DSHS state mental health hospitals continue to see a positive trend in pharmacy staffing rates.

Use of Consultants

Appendix II reflects the actual number of contractors that came to the hospitals. This information does not take into account the variation in the amount of time worked. A new methodology for collecting data that accounts for the variation in time worked is being developed for the next quarterly staffing report.

Actions Taken: Second Quarter 2014

All the chief nurse executives were reclassified into a benchmarked position of the same name included in the Nurse V category. This is the first time the nurse executives have been in the same classification and it will enable them to take advantage of the Nurse Compensation Plan, which allows for periodic increases in the nurses salary based on experience and advanced education and certification. It is anticipated that this change will help to stabilize nursing leadership at the hospitals.

DSHS is evaluating the potential development of a Social Work Compensation Plan to address the loss of experienced social workers similar to what has been done for nurses with the Nursing Compensation Plan.

Two psychiatrist positions were converted to three psychiatric advanced practice registered nurses. These positions have been filled. The use of telemedicine and employing more psychiatric advanced practice registered nurses continues to help address the psychiatrist shortage.

Resources Expended: Second Quarter Fiscal Year 2014

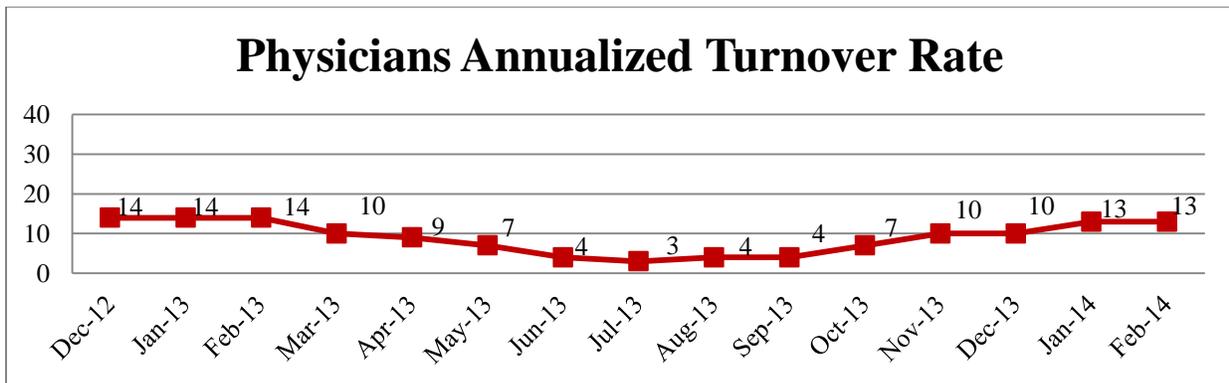
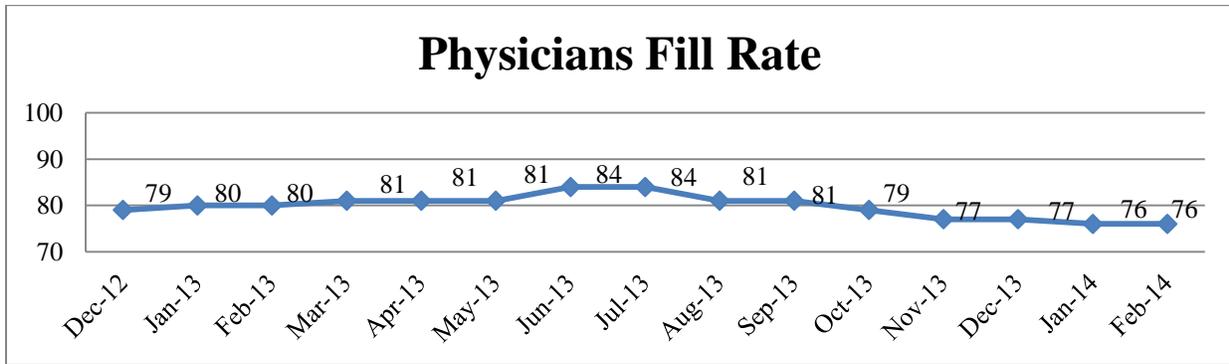
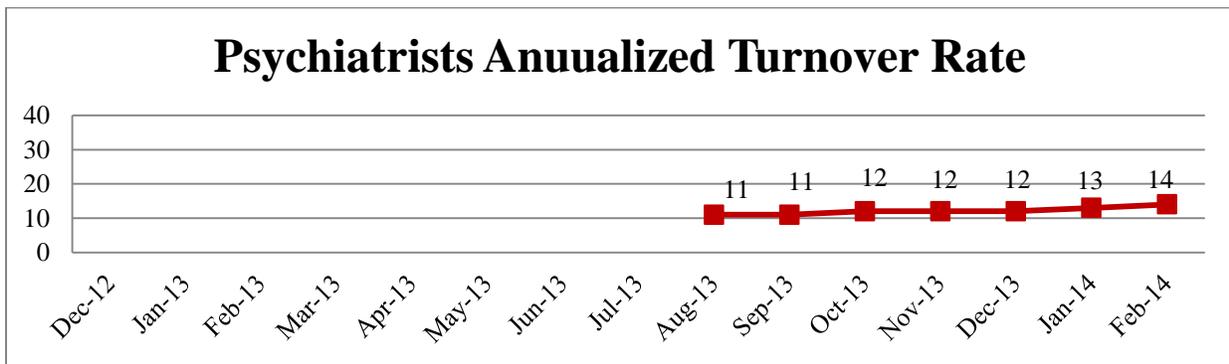
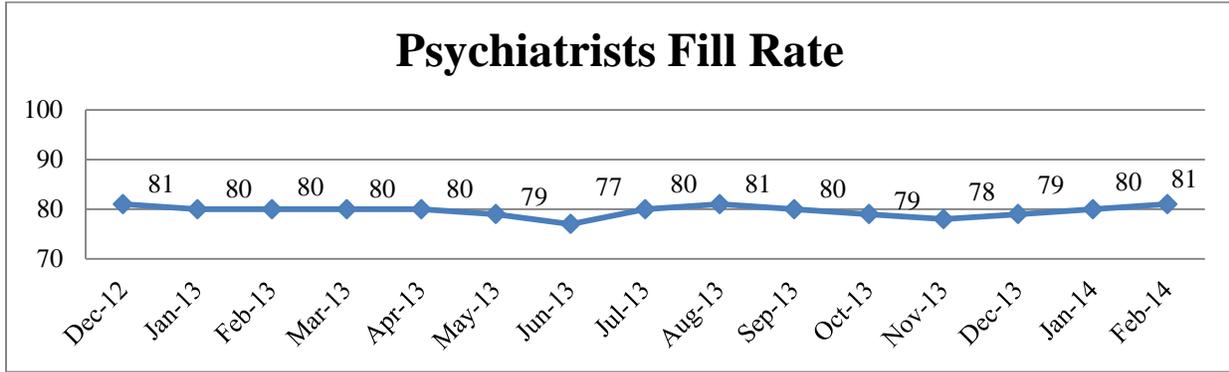
Existing funds were redistributed to convert two psychiatrist positions to nurse practitioner positions. DSHS also began to shift funds from contract psychiatrists to psychiatrist employee positions using existing funds.

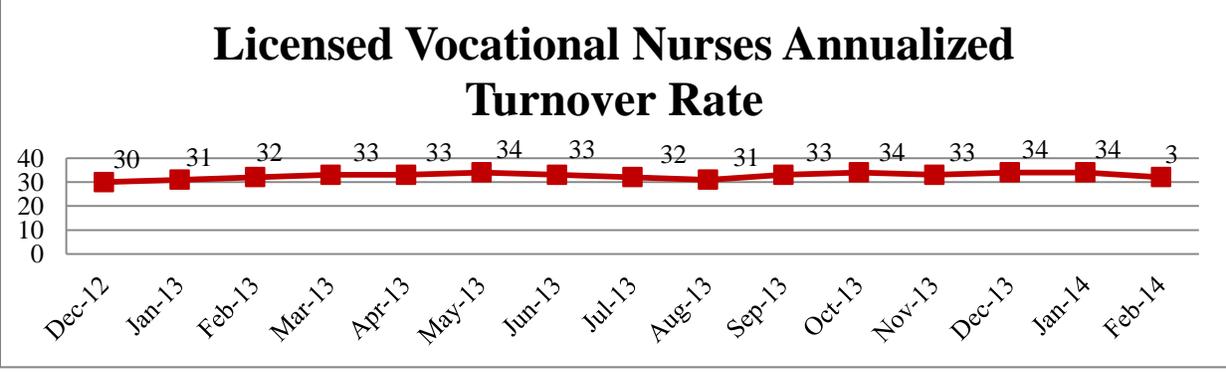
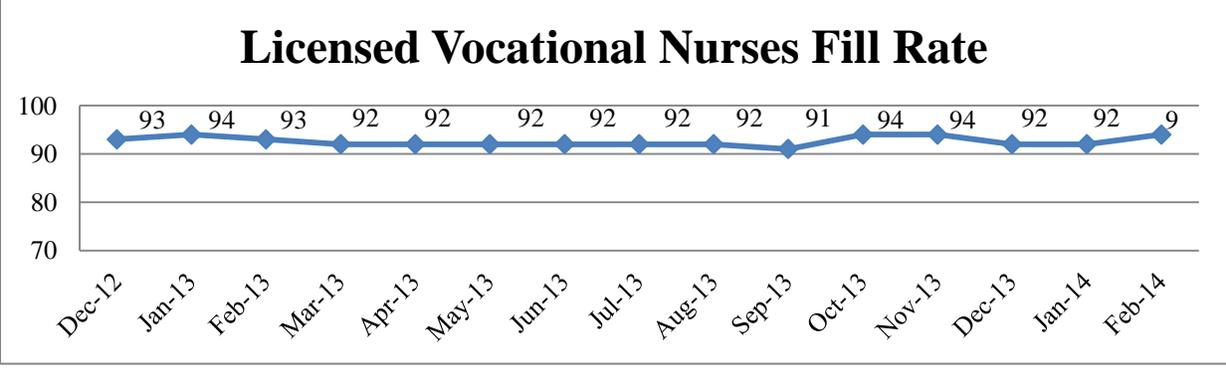
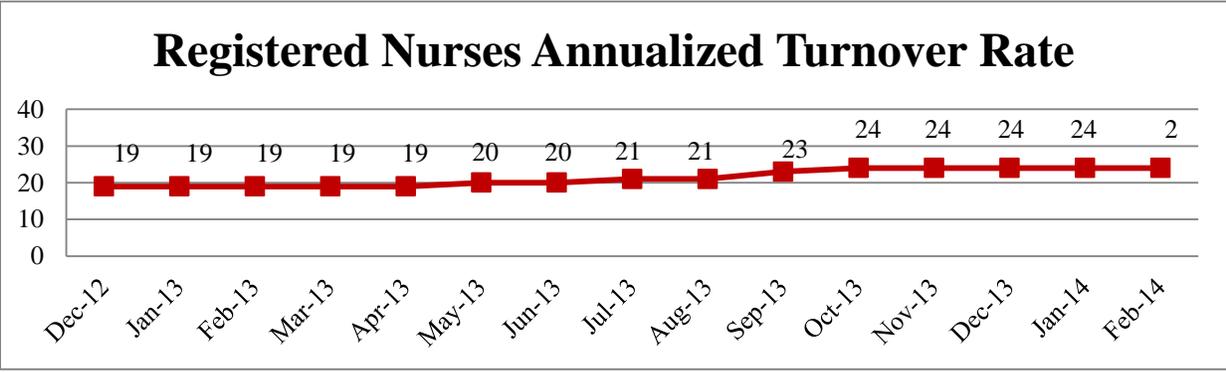
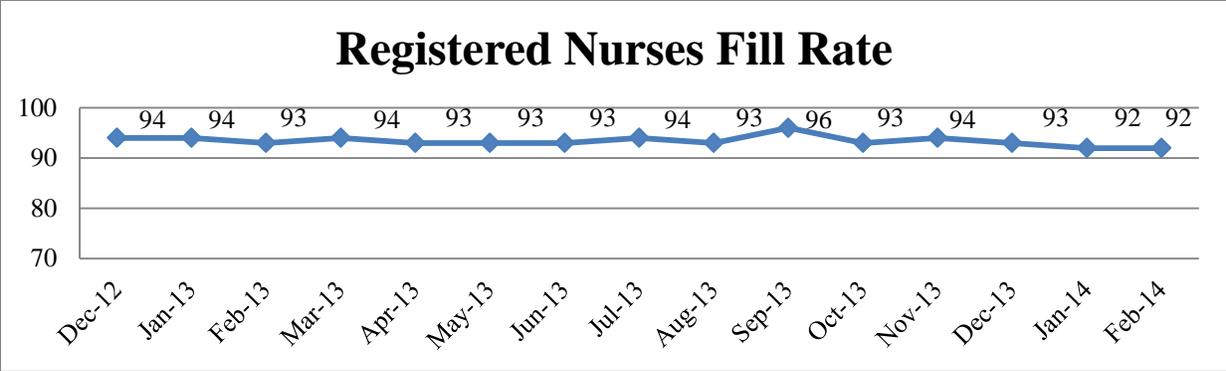
Conclusion

Between the first and second quarters of fiscal year 2014, there were not significant fluctuations in the fill and turnover rates for clinical staff at state hospitals. The lowest fill rate, 76 percent, is for physicians. The highest fill rate, 96 percent, is for pharmacists. The highest turnover rate is for PNAs, 36 percent. Pharmacists have the lowest turnover rate, 8 percent.

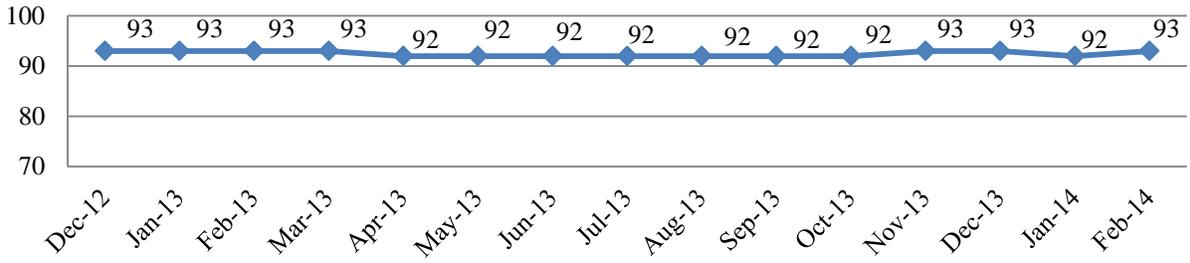
A number of initiatives were implemented during the second quarter with the intent of improving recruitment and retention. These actions have not resulted in substantial improvements to date, but it is likely that these actions will continue to affect staffing patterns over time. DSHS will closely monitor data on state hospital staffing trends and take appropriate actions to reduce the use of contractors as well as improve retention and recruitment.

Appendix I: Fill Rates and Annualized Turnover Rates by Staff Position

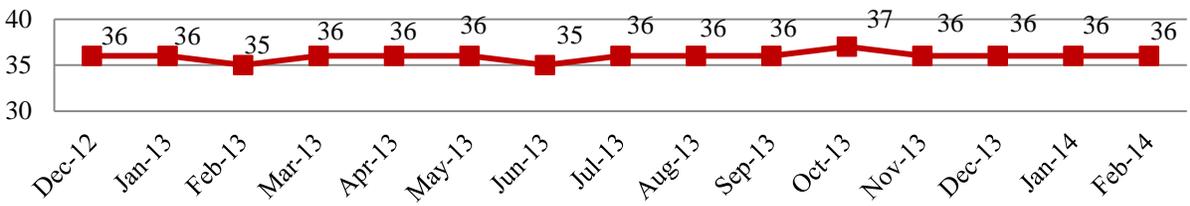




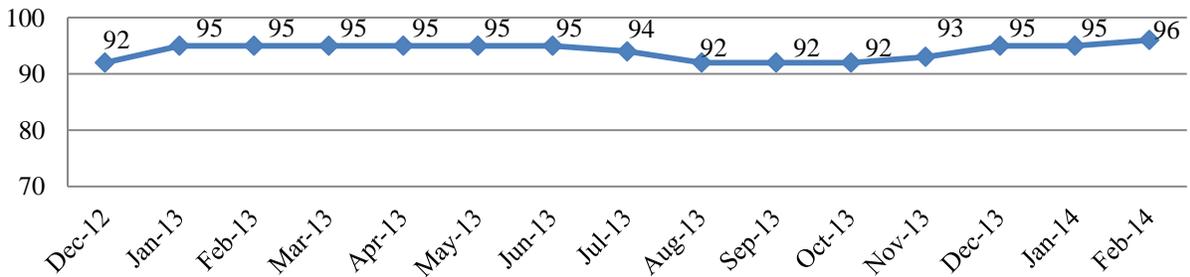
Psychiatric Nurse Assistants Fill Rate



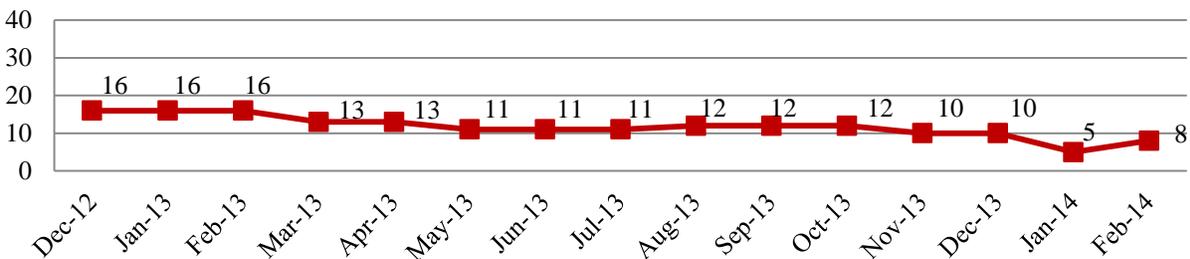
Psychiatric Nurse Assistants Annualized Turnover Rate

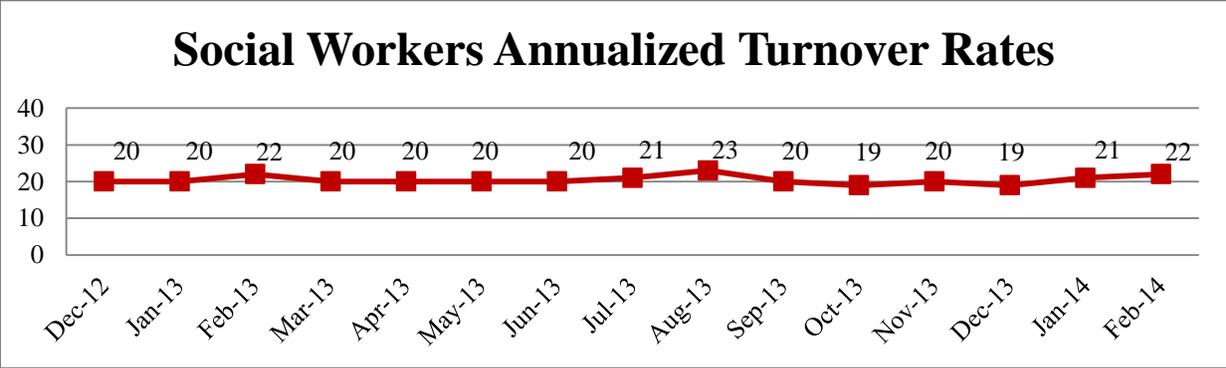
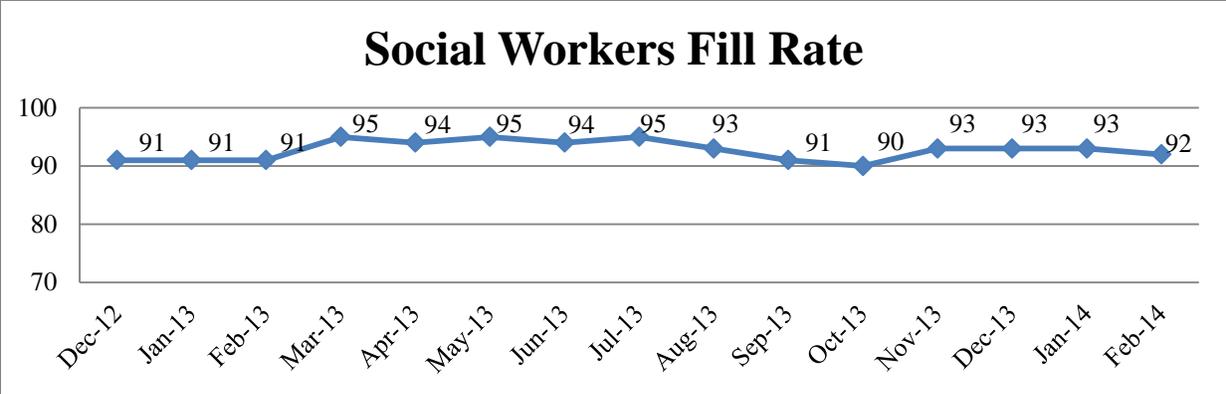


Pharmacists Fill Rate



Pharmacists Annualized Turnover Rates





Appendix II: Use of Contractors in State Hospitals

Number of Contractors Working in State Hospitals First Quarter Fiscal Year 2014												
		ASH	BSSH	EPC	KSH	NTSH	RGSC	RSH	SASH	TSH	WCY	TCID
Locum Tenens	Psychiatrist			1		6	6	10		8	2	
	Physician					5	2	3				
Contract	Psychiatrist	28	7					3	3	44	3	3
	Physician		3			2						12
	Nurse		9				74					
	Psychiatric Nurse Assistant		10									
	Clerical						11					
	Registered Therapist						6					
	Social Worker		2									
	Dentist		1									
	Ophthalmologist		1									
	Patient Services				1							
	Psychologist					2	11					
	Nurse Practitioner					2						
	Dietitian						1					
Dental Hygienist						3						
Pharmacist						5						

Number of Contractors Working in State Hospitals Second Quarter Fiscal Year 2014												
		ASH	BSSH	EPC	KSH	NTSH	RGSC	RSH	SASH	TSH	WCY	TCID
Locum Tenens	Psychiatrist					14	3	7	6	5	3	
	Physician					6		4				
Contract	Psychiatrist	29	9			5	3	3		23	3	3
	Physician	6	3							14		12
	Nurse		17				64		6	8		
	Psychiatric Nurse Assistant									16		
	Clerical						9					
	Registered Therapist	6	6				5		3			
	Social Worker											
	Dentist								6			
	Ophthalmologist											
	Patient Services											
	Psychologist					3	8		6			
	Nurse Practitioner					3						
	Dietitian						3					
Dental Hygienist						3						
Pharmacist						2						

ASH - Austin State Hospital
 BSSH - Big Spring State Hospital
 EPC - El Paso Psychiatric Center
 KSH - Kerrville State Hospital
 NTSH - North Texas State Hospital
 RGSC - Rio Grande State Center
 RSH - Rusk State Hospital
 SASH - San Antonio State Hospital
 TSH - Terrell State Hospital
 WCY - Waco Center for Youth
 TCID - Texas Center for Infectious Disease