



**REPORT ON STATE HOSPITAL STAFFING
SEPTEMBER THROUGH NOVEMBER 2013
First QUARTER Fiscal Year 2014**

Background

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 on a quarterly basis that includes data on turnover, fill rates, use of contractors by state hospital and position type, initiatives to improve staff recruitment and retention, resources expended on the initiatives, and outcomes of the initiatives.

Staffing: First Quarter Fiscal Year 2014

Chart I describes the fill rates and annualized turnover rates for clinical staff positions for the first quarter of fiscal year 2014. Physicians (both medical and psychiatry), registered nurses (RNs), licensed vocational nurses (LVNs), psychiatric nurse assistants (PNAs), pharmacists, and social workers have been included. In subsequent reports, the psychiatrists will be separated from the physicians to help demonstrate the effect of actions being taken to enhance psychiatrist recruitment and retention.

Physicians

DSHS state mental health hospitals have a vacancy rate of 22 percent for physicians. The use of telemedicine, and successfully employing more psychiatric advanced practice registered nurses, has helped to address the psychiatrist shortage.

Nurses

DSHS state mental health hospitals are experiencing a 6 percent vacancy rate with registered nurses, but a turnover rate of 24 percent as more experienced nurses move to higher paying positions in the private sector. LVNs have a 6 percent vacancy rate and a 33 percent turnover rate.

Social Workers

DSHS state mental health hospitals have a 7 percent vacancy rate and a 20 percent turnover rate for social workers. Experienced social workers 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 in the DSHS state mental health hospitals have a 7 percent vacancy rate and a turnover rate of 36 percent. The Legislature provided a 10 percent pay increase effective September 1, 2013, which hopefully will have a positive impact on staffing trends.

Pharmacists

DSHS state mental health hospitals have board certified psychiatric pharmacists working in the facilities and providing services to patients on the units. The vacancy rate is 7 percent and the turnover rate is 10 percent. Since new pharmacy schools have opened, DSHS has seen a positive trend in pharmacy staffing rates.

Chart II reflects the actual number of contractors that came to the hospitals. A caveat to the number is that one contractor could have been there all quarter, while another for only a few hours; therefore, DSHS will look at different ways to present this data in the future to help with trend analysis. The large number of contractors at Rio Grande State Center is the result of the Department of Justice settlement agreement. Some of the physician contractors may be on contract for special consultation; however, all of the locum tenens are on contract because positions are vacant and cannot be filled.

Actions Taken: First Quarter Fiscal Year 2014

A 10 percent salary increase for all the PNAs was approved by the Legislature during the 83rd Regular Session and 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 7 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 salary increase when they advance from PNA I to II, III, and IV. Hopefully, this step will 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 (DADS), 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.

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, the department 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, but will need to address the salaries of currently employed psychiatrists to ensure retention.

Resources Expended: First Quarter Fiscal Year 2014

Funds were used to implement the 10 percent salary increase for PNAs, as approved by the Legislature.

Chart I

Fill Rates and Annualized Turnover Rates for Critical Staff Positions at All State Mental Hospitals

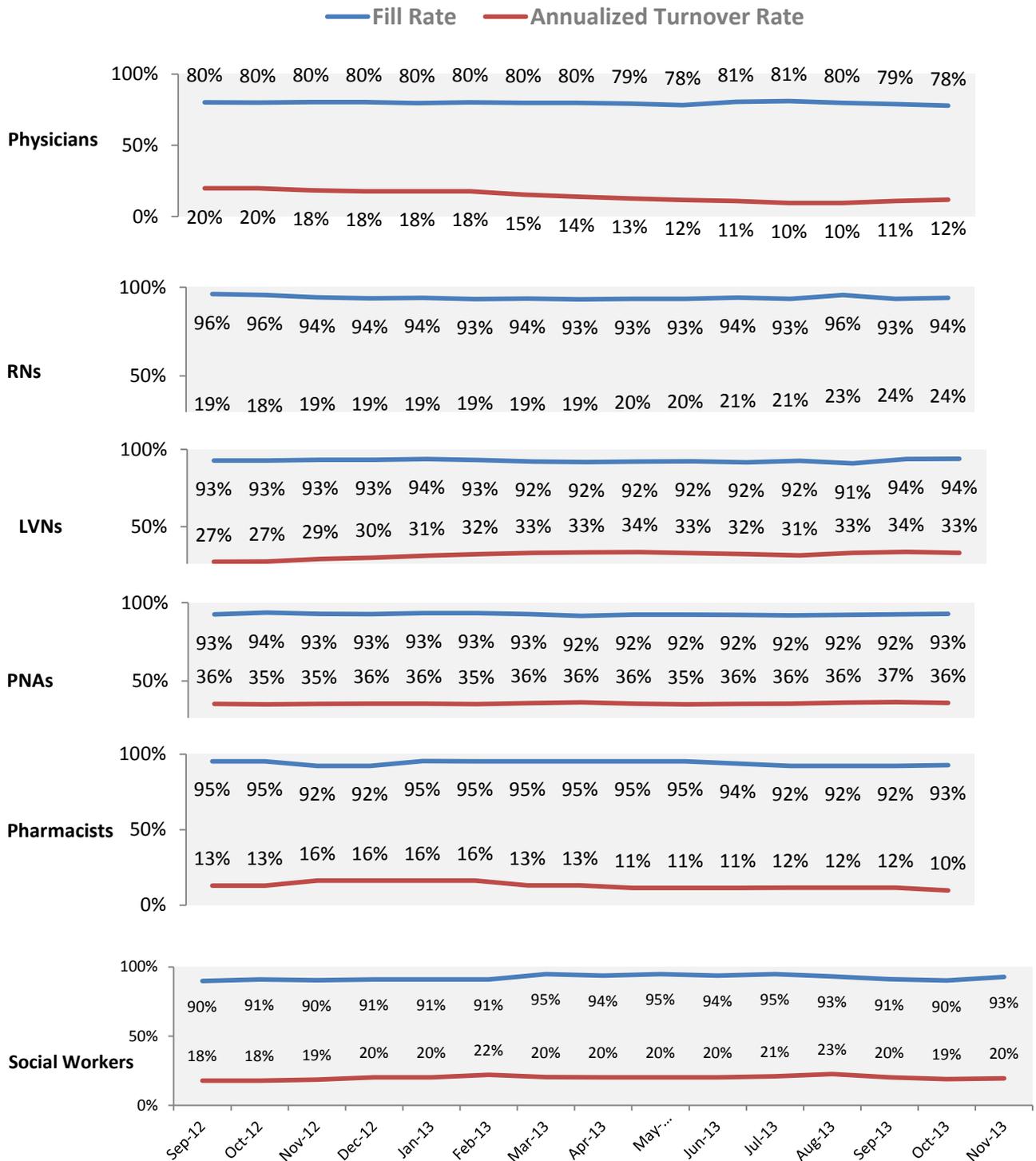


Chart II

Number of Contractors Working at the State Hospitals First Quarter Fiscal Year 2014

Hospital		ASH	BSH	EPC	KSH	NTH	RGC	RSH	SAH	TSH	WCY
Locum Tenens	Psychiatrists		7	1		6	6	10		8	2
	Physicians		3			5	2	3			
Contract	Psychiatrists	28						3	3	44	3
	Physicians					2					
	Nurses		9				74				
	PNAs		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					

This chart reflects the actual number of contractors that came to the hospitals. One contractor could have been there all quarter, while another for only a few hours.