



Report on State Hospital Staffing Third 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
October 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 third quarter of fiscal year 2014, the lowest fill rate was once again for physicians, at 83 percent. The highest fill rate was once again pharmacists at 95 percent. The highest turnover rate continues to be for psychiatric nurse assistants at 36 percent. In the third quarter, psychiatrists had the lowest turnover rate of 11 percent.

Actions taken during the third quarter include continued efforts to convert psychiatrist positions to advanced practice registered nurse positions, exploring the development of a Social Work and Psychology Compensation Plan, and implementing the psychiatrist equity adjustment.

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.

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 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.

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.

Actions Taken: Second Quarter Fiscal Year 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 began 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 (APRNs). These positions have been filled. The use of telemedicine and employing more psychiatric APRNs 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.

Staffing: Third Quarter Fiscal Year 2014

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

Psychiatrists

The psychiatrist fill rate is 83 percent with a vacancy rate of 17 percent. The fill rate is up two percent over the second quarter. The psychiatrist turnover rate is 11 percent, a three percent decrease over the second quarter.

Physicians

The physician fill rate is 75 percent with a vacancy rate of 25 percent. The fill rate is down one percent from the second quarter. The turnover rate for physicians is 16 percent, a three percent increase compared to the second quarter.

Nurses

For RNs, the fill rate is 93 percent, with a vacancy rate of 7 percent. The turnover rate for third quarter is 26 percent, a slight increase from the first and second quarters.

LVNs have a 94 percent fill rate with a 6 percent vacancy rate and a 31 percent turnover rate. There is very little variance compared to first and second quarter figures.

Social Workers

The social workers fill rate is 94 percent with a vacancy rate of 6 percent for the third quarter. The turnover rate for social workers is at 26 percent. The fill rate is up two percent from the second quarter. 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 92 percent with an 8 percent vacancy rate, which is one percent lower than the first and second quarters. The turnover rate is 36 percent, which remained the same as the first and second quarters. The Legislature provided a ten percent pay increase effective September 1, 2013 in an effort to improve staffing trends. For the first three quarters of fiscal year 2014, it appears to have helped the hospitals maintain PNA staffing levels, and the pay increase may further impact staffing trends in the future. Some individual hospitals have shown improvement while others continue to struggle to fill positions.

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 95 percent with a 5 percent vacancy rate. This is a one percent decrease from the second quarter. The turnover rate is 14 percent for the third quarter, which is a 6 percent increase from the second quarter.

Use of Consultants

Appendix II reflects the actual number of hours contractors have spent at the hospitals. Rio Grande State Center has the most contractor hours worked with a total of 10,607 hours during the third quarter. El Paso Psychiatric Center has the least hours worked by contractors with a total of 227 hours. Nurses had the most contractor hours worked (10,314 hours) and ophthalmologists had the least (72 hours).

Actions Taken: Third Quarter 2014

Actions taken during the third quarter include continued efforts to convert psychiatrist positions to APRN positions, and exploring the development of a Social Work and Psychology Compensation Plan. Additionally, a psychiatrist equity adjustment was implemented in May. Prior to this adjustment, new psychiatrists were being hired at salaries higher than psychiatrists already employed at the hospitals, and this dynamic inequity was resulting in the loss of some very experienced psychiatrists. The equity adjustment should improve the retention rate for psychiatrists.

Resources Expended: Third Quarter Fiscal Year 2014

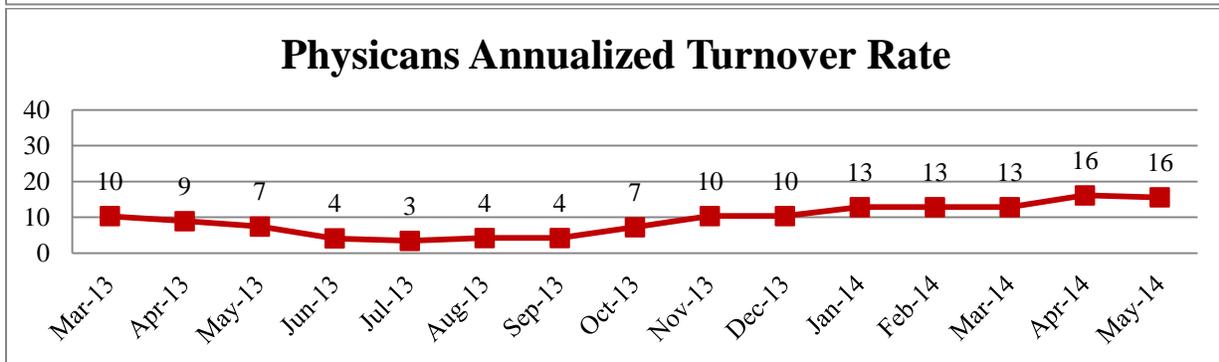
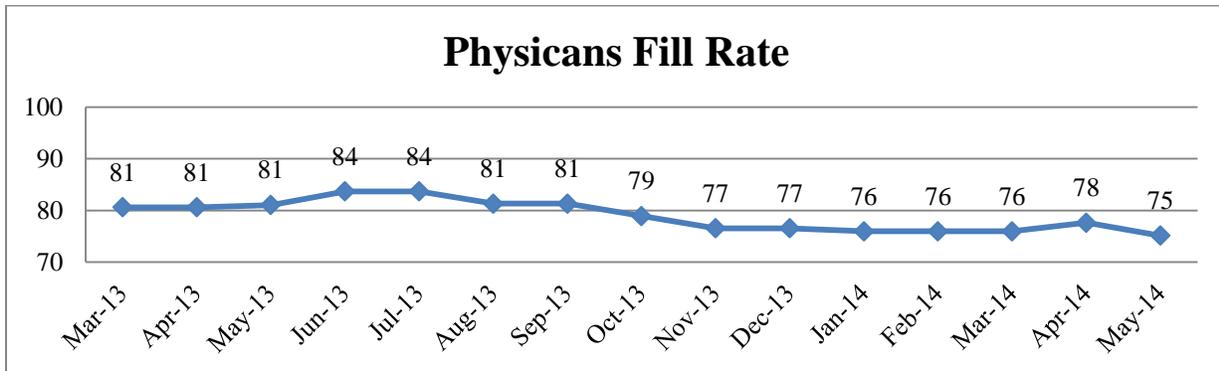
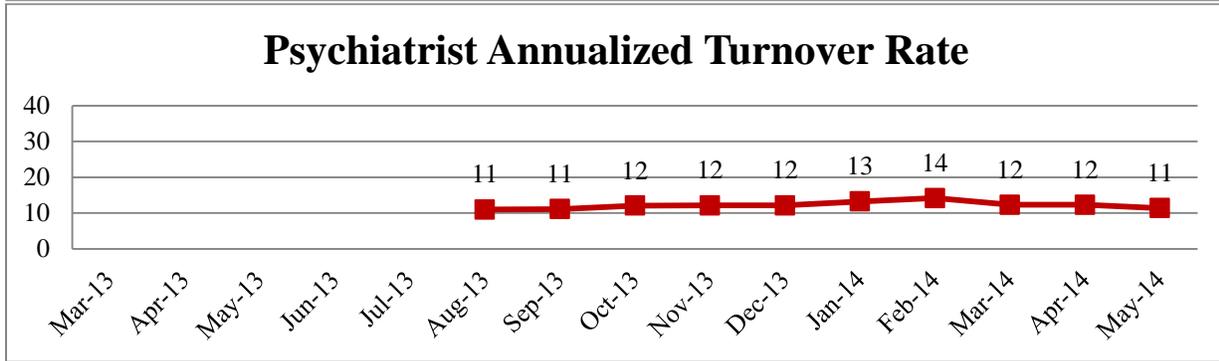
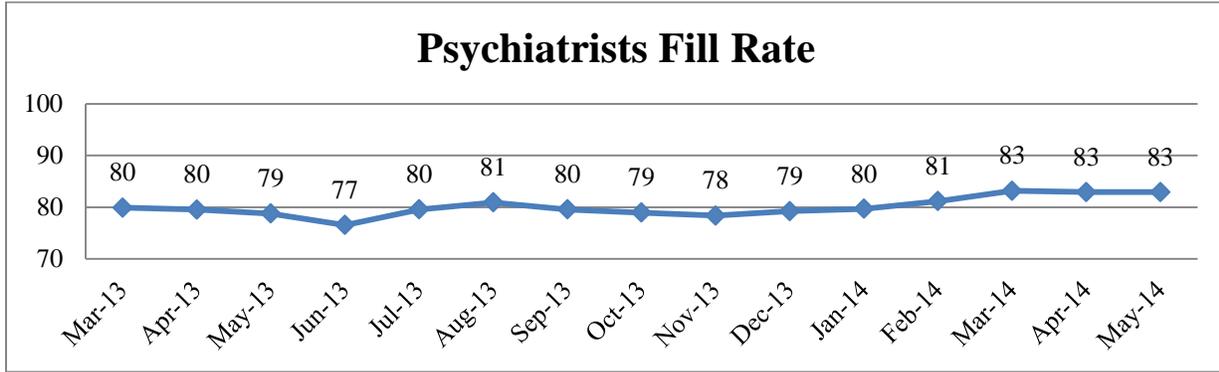
Funds were redirected to initiate the psychiatrist equity adjustment in May, and it is anticipated that this action will have a positive impact on the turnover and filled rates in the final quarter of fiscal year 2014.

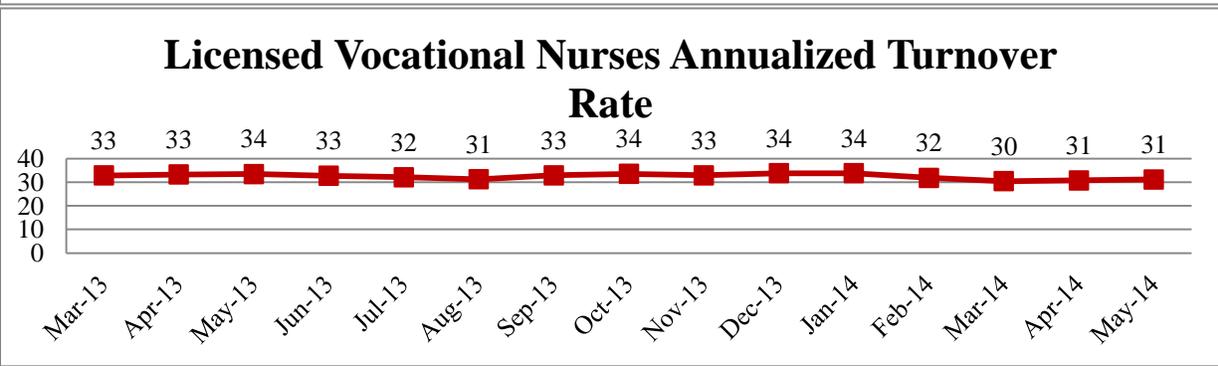
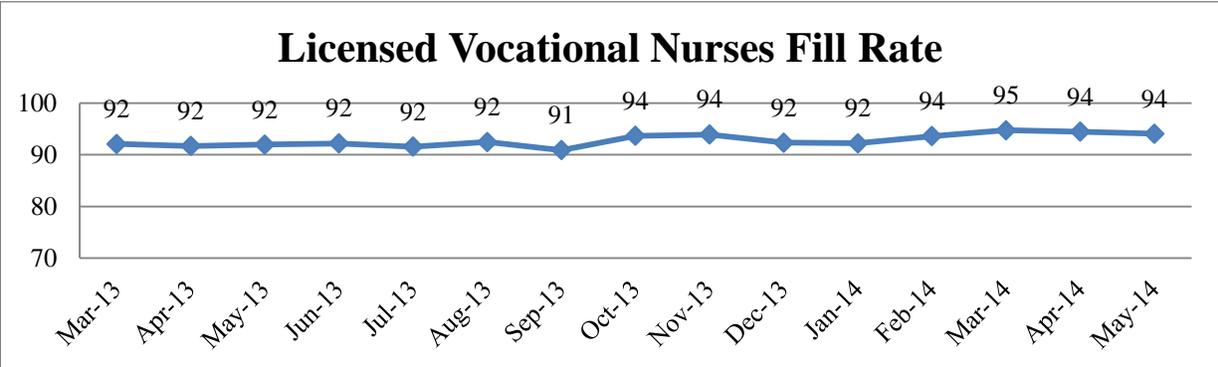
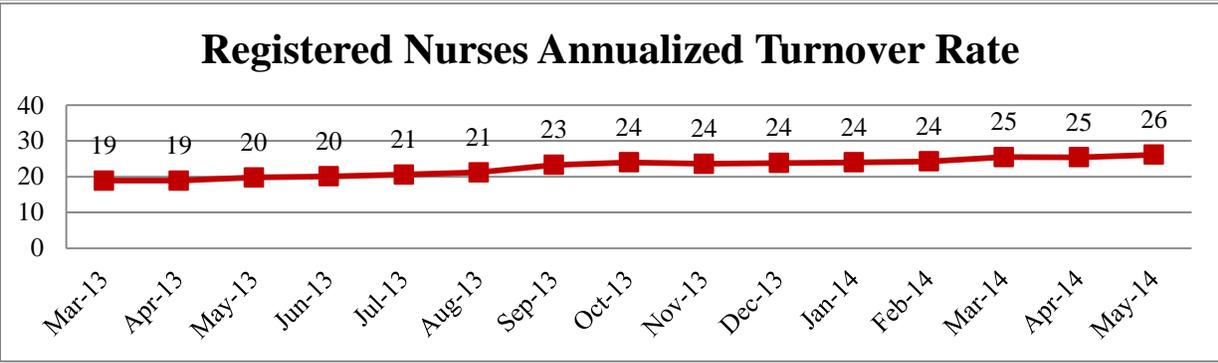
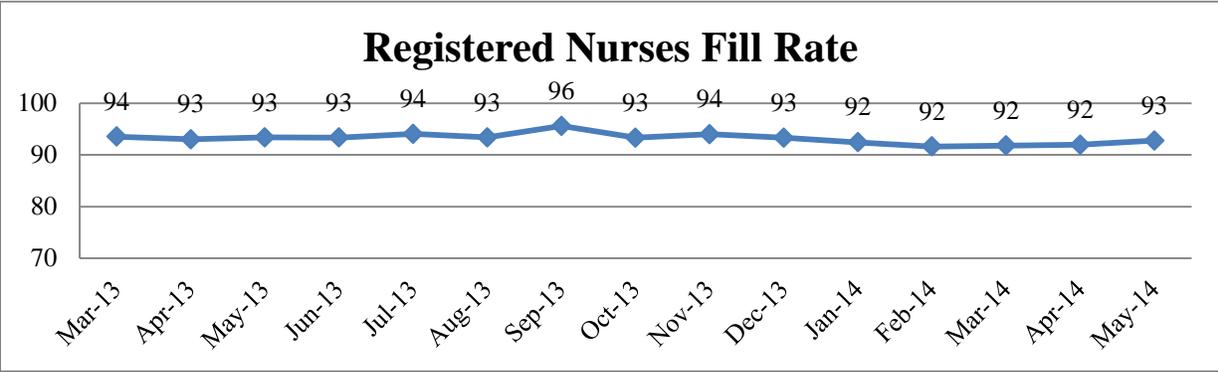
Conclusion

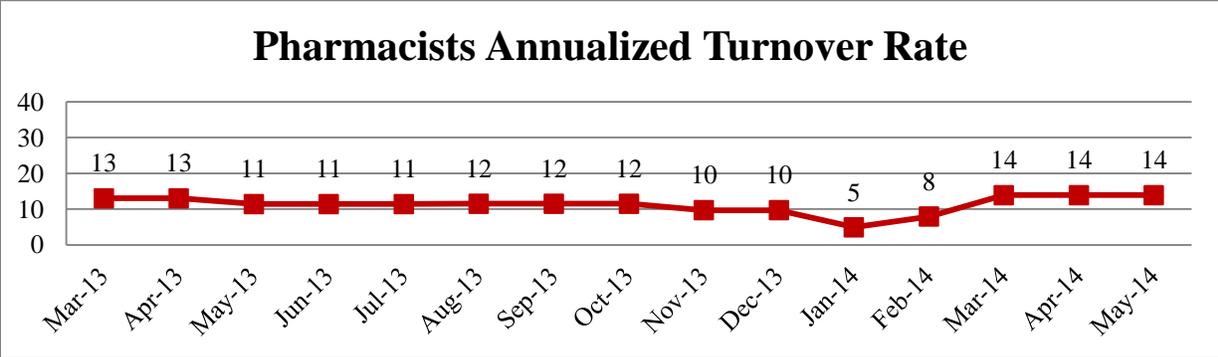
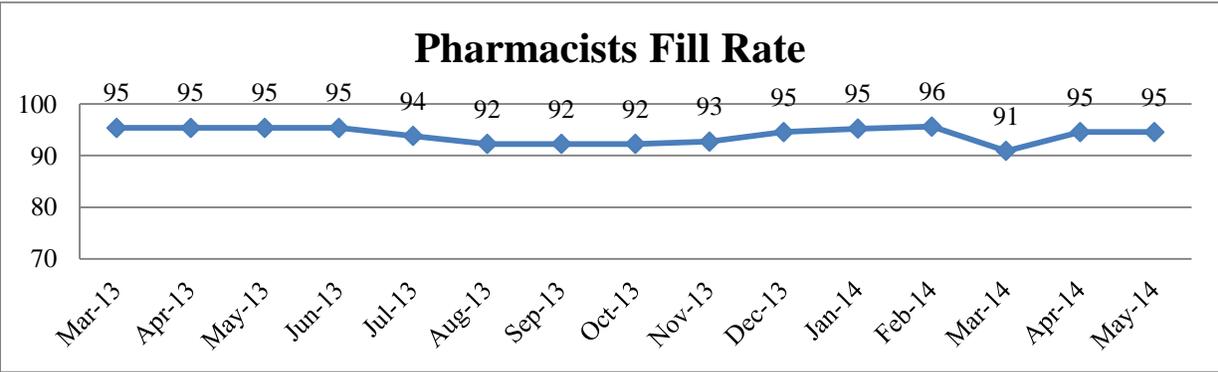
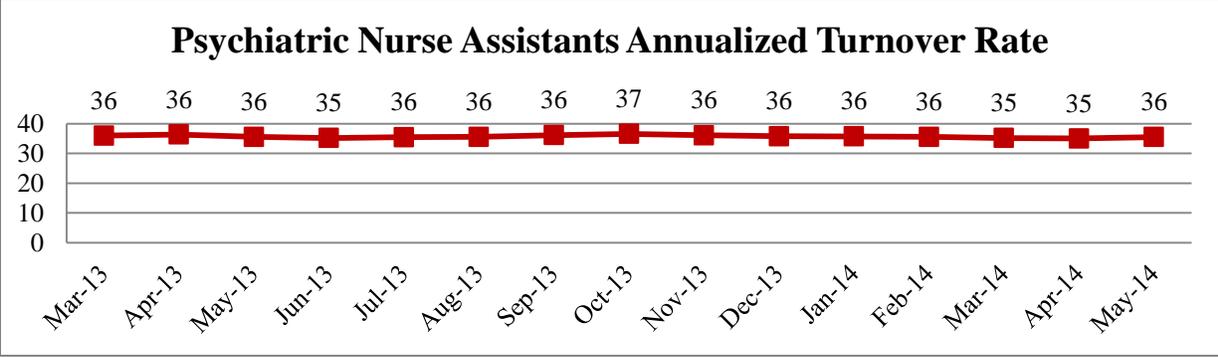
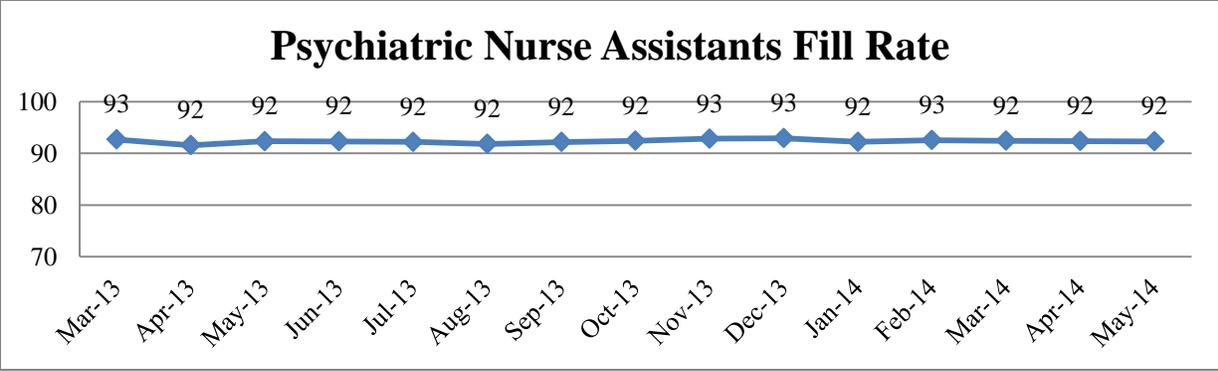
Between the second and third quarters of fiscal year 2014, there were generally not significant fluctuations in the fill and turnover rates for clinical staff at state hospitals.

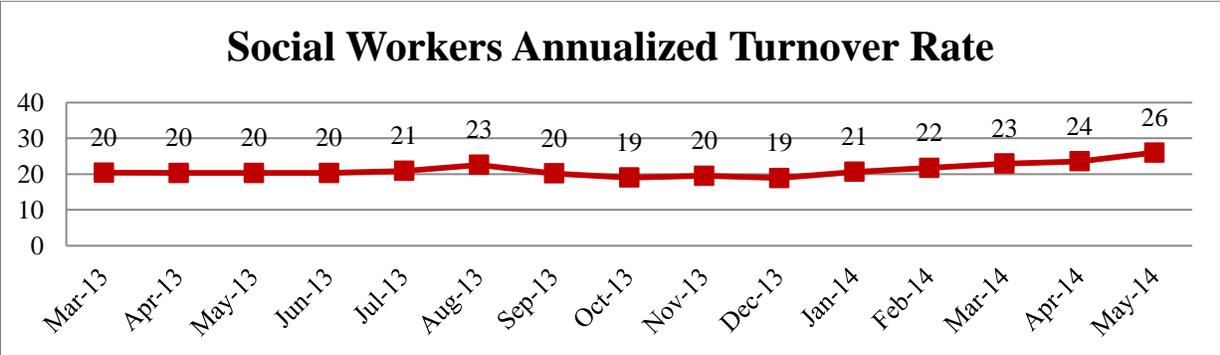
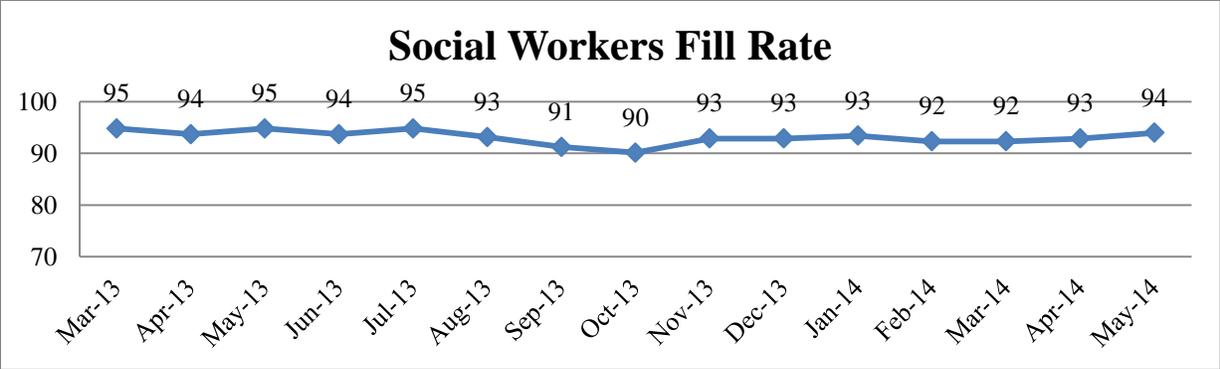
Of significance, the psychiatrists' turnover rate was the lowest this quarter, which may be related to the equity pay for that discipline. Stabilizing and retaining psychiatrists will be a critical improvement.

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









Appendix II: Use of Contractors in State Hospitals

Number of Contractor Hours in State Hospitals Third Quarter Fiscal Year 2014													
		ASH	BSSH	EPPC	KSH	NTSH	RGSC	RSH	SASH	TSH	WCY	Total	
Locum Tenens	Psychiatrist	0	0	0	0	2,132	610	340	598	0	464	4,144	
	Physician	0	0	0	0	1,242	378	304	0	0	0	1,924	
Contract	Psychiatrist	2,250	766	0	0	0	290	546	0	361	62	4,275	
	Physician	49	53	0	0	0	88	0	0	38	0	228	
	Nurse	0	1,452	0	0	0	5,445	1,778	105	1,534	0	10,314	
	PNA	0	463	0	0	0	0	865	162	5,652	0	7,142	
	Clerk	0	0	0	0	0	2,310	0	0	0	0	2,310	
	Reg. Therapist	237	0	0	252	0	547	0	24	0	0	1,060	
	Social Worker	0	235	0	0	0	36	0	0	0	0	271	
	Dentist	0	12	0	184	0	0	0	247	0	0	443	
	Ophthalmologist	0	24	0	0	0	0	0	0	48	0	72	
	Patient Services	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	87	0	87	
	Psychologist	0	0	0	0	0	0	551	0	960	48	1,559	
	Nurse Practitioner	0	0	227	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	227	
	Dietitian	0	0	0	0	0	0	86	0	0	403	0	489
	Dental Hygienist	0	45	0	0	0	0	190	0	0	0	235	
Pharmacist	0	0	0	0	0	0	76	0	224	490	0	790	
	Total	2,536	3,050	227	436	3,374	10,607	3,833	2,320	8,262	526	35,171	

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