

Rural Health Task Force: Workforce Challenges & Opportunities

Workforce Subcommittee

Problem

- Aging demographic creates pressure on health care, long term care and mental health system in terms of meeting need with an aging workforce
- Significant decline in the number of licensed health care professionals (MDs, RNs, LPNs, LNAs)
- Significant vacancy rates for hospitals, long term care facilities, home health agencies, designated and specialized services agencies
- Significant turnover rates in long term care facilities, designated and specialized services agencies

Challenges To Recruitment & Retention

- Rising higher education costs and educational debt
- Insufficient number of nurse educators
- Provider burnout/hours/administrative burden
- Lack of affordable and high-quality housing, childcare, transportation
- Lack of employment opportunities for “trailing spouse”

What Is The Need?

- VT Talent Pipeline Management Project Survey:
 - **3900** nursing related positions by April 2020. This is a low estimate- captured subset of providers - hospitals, 3 long term care facilities and one home health agency.
- Recent survey of LTC facilities:
 - 45 of 140 facilities report 571 vacant nursing related positions.
- LTC facility vacancy rates:

17.1% for RNs	31.4% for RNs
29.3% for LPNs	34.5% for LPNs
20.3% for LNAs	45.2% for LNAs
9.7% for PCAs	52.1% for PCAs

What Is The Need?

- Recent survey of Designated and Specialized Service Agencies report vacancy rates of:
 - 12% for bachelor's level clinicians
 - 11.3% for master's level non-licensed clinicians
 - 18.6% for master's level licensed clinicians
- DAs and SSAs report turnover rates of:
 - 28% for developmental service positions
 - 26% for mental health positions
 - 24% for administrative staff
- Recent survey of Home Health Agencies (VNAs & Bayada) – Coming soon

What Is The Need?

- The 2018 VT Primary Care Practitioner Workforce Snapshot:

	Total	Recommended	Difference
Family Medicine	197.89	202.68	4.79
APC/Internist	85.63	175.25	89.62
Obstetrics	58.53	57.37	-1.16
Pediatrics	89.50	66.75	-22.75
Total	431.55	502.05	70.5

Provider Strategies

Providers universally are using several strategies to recruit prospective employees and keep a high retention rate.

- Increasing wages, offering sign-on bonuses, referral bonuses, loan repayment, tuition assistance, etc.
- Providers reach beyond their geographical region to recruit nurses from Canada, nearby states, Puerto Rico
- Other examples: SWVMC tuition reimbursement program; BMH partnership with CCV medical assistant program; CVMC education partnerships with CCV/VTC LPN program; Birchwood Terrace Rehab & Healthcare SNF RN tuition payment program; BMH partnership with local nursing homes on post-acute care

Financial impact of Nursing Shortage

- In lieu of full-time employees, providers often have to resort to traveling staff
- Traveling nurse and contract staff are expensive
- Vermont nursing homes spent \$11.6 million on traveling nurses in FY17
 - 145% increase from FY14, 68% from FY16
 - Roughly half of VT facilities used travelers in FY14. Over 80% of facilities used travelers in FY17
- Vermont hospitals spent \$47 million on traveling staff in FY19
 - 101% increase from FY15

Recommendations for State Action

- Increase state funding for loan repayment, tuition assistance, grants and scholarships
- Increase EITC for eligible health care workforce
- Provide income tax credit for health care workforce
- Mandate VT enter Interstate Nurse Compact
- Modify Board of Nursing Rules governing qualifications of clinical nurse educators
- Create Military Medic to LPN bridge program
- Streamline mental health clinician licensing requirements

Recommendations, cont...

- Reduce administrative burden by streamlining quality measures and creating administrative uniformity across payers, and reducing/eliminating prior authorizations
- Expand coverage for telemonitoring as well as for store and forward telemedicine
- Prioritize health care sector for state workforce funding and the Vermont Workforce Development Review Board
- Create a State “hub” for assisting employers/employees with processing of employment-based VISAs and connecting New Americans to health care providers for employment opportunities
- State supported targeted marketing and recruitment specifically for health care workforce