



The State of Nursing

By:

Vermont Federation of Nurses and Healthcare
Professionals

Vacancy Rates

- According to the UVMHC Nursing Workforce we have the following Vacancy Rates as of the 4th quarter for FY23:
- Abbreviations:
 - RN- Registered Nurse
 - LPN -Licensed Practical Nurse
 - LNA- Licensed Nursing Assistant
 - MHT- Mental Health Tech
 - CPSA – Clinical Patient Safety Attendant

Vacancies
as of 4th
quarter FY 23

Role	Vacant FTEs	Vacancy Rate
Clinical RN	467	28.4%
LPN	9.5	17.3%
LNA	118.3	39.1%
Medical Assist	37.1	22.1%
CPSA	8.9	9.8%
MHT	2.9	6%
Nursing Leaders	3.1	3.6%

When compared with the 2nd quarter in FY 23 we see little progress.

Role	Vacant FTEs	Vacancy Rates	Vacancy FTE difference
RN	484.1	29.1%	16.9
LPN	11.3	20.6%	1.8
LNA	110.7	36.6%	-7.6
Medical Assistant	31.8	19%	1
CPSA	5	5.5%	-3.9
MHT	13	26.8%	10.1
Nurse Leader	4	4.6%	.9

Recruitment Time

For FY 23 to date	Time to Fill positions
RN	170 days
LPN	131 days
LNA	134 days
MA	53 days
CPSA	354 days
MHT	222 days

**FY23 YTD
Hires/Termination**

Role	Starts	Terminations
RN	151	123
LPN	18	3
LNA	82	50
MA	63	56
CPSA	33	22
Nurse Leader	1	2

Overtime

- Staff burning out on the number of calls they get a week asking them to come in.
- In our Resource Dept. they can get as many as 6 calls a day.
- In March 2023, RNs worked 11,797 hours of OT
 - Travel RNs worked 9,720 hours of OT
 - LPNs worked 148 hours of OT
 - LNAs worked 4357 hours of OT
 - OT as listed here varies from 1.5-2x hourly rate

Travelers

- As of 8/16/23 UVMHC employs 343 travelers that would be in union positions.
- 75 in technical professional jobs
- 268 RNs and LPNs
- We know there are other traveler positions in the hospital but are not privy to that information....yet.

Traveler Pay

- We recognize that pay for travelers has gone down significantly from the \$200/hr bill rate that was commanded by some during the height of the pandemic.
- Pay rate now varies from :
 - \$60-\$125/hr for techs
 - LPNs at \$75/hr
 - RNs from \$90-\$170/hr
 - 103 RNs and 5 tech travelers are hired in for 96 hours per pay period(2 weeks).
 - This equals \$3,026,864.00 per period
 - In July our 2,539 union members were paid \$7,916,826 in an average two week pay period.

The Difference

- 2,539 VFNHP members = \$7,916,826
 - Avg. \$3,118.08 per pay period
 - 343 travelers = \$3,026,864
- Avg. \$8,824.67 per pay period

Real Pay

- When you average out our July nurse travelers hours x bill rate, UVMMC is paying \$113.72/hr
- For an RN III on step 12 their pay plus benefits, UVMMC pays approximately \$55.17/hr.
- Difference of \$58.55/hr
 - This is based on pay rate of 44.75 for 72 hours and hospital paid benefits of \$750/pay period

We're
WHAT??

The Best States for Nurses

- Per an article in nursejournal.org published in 2/10/2023 our overall ranking was 49th out of 51.
- Per an article in Beckershospitalreview.com dated 5/19/23, Vermont ranked 46th for salary adjusted for cost of living
- Per an article on wallethub.org published 5/2/23, Vermont ranked 42nd overall, but ranked 5th in the most nurse job openings per capita and ranked 48th for nursing salary adjusted for cost of living

Money matters

- From this we see it is disingenuous to strictly look at salaries. If looking at salaries alone, we rank in the median of the 50 states. Adding in the high cost of living in Vermont along with our housing market, it certainly changes things. Nurses often hear from travelers that they enjoy VT and love working with us, but they can't afford to stay here. Several travelers have had to cancel their contracts due to lack of housing.

How we compare

- During our Bargaining in 2018, UVMMC when looking at cost of living focused on the rent of a 2 bedroom apartment as a comparison.
- In Portland, Oregon the Oregon Health and Science University is an 576 bed academic medical center that is expanding. The average cost of rent for a 2 bedroom apartment:
 - Per rentcafe.com \$1,763
 - Per zillow.com \$1,950 (median)
 - Per rentometer.com \$1,776

How we compare

- In Vermont the same 2 bedroom apartment is
 - Per rentcafe- \$2,236
 - Per zillow.com- \$2,150 (median)
 - Per rentometer- \$1,872

We recognize that Portland has much more availability in housing than Vermont. However, there is a stark difference in starting pay for RNs.

- At OHSU- \$42.75/hour
- At UVMMC-\$36.04
- A difference of \$6.71 an hour or \$12.561 a year in a city with a similar cost of living.

Putting our Patients First

- UVMHN recently hired a consultant BDO to look at ways to contain health care costs. The recommendations will have a huge impact on the way our Advance Practice Nurses interact with their patients if this rollout is what it seems. We are in the middle of requesting more information from our employer.
- This initiative called "Scheduling Simplification" will affect our primary care providers, APRN and MDs alike under the guise of high value care. These APRNs and MDs have panels of up to 900 patients.
 - It appears this initiative will limit patient visits to 15 minutes, even if this is not your normal patient.
 - VFNHP is very concerned about the stress this will put on our APRN colleagues in primary care, and feel we should be focused on recruiting more APRNs instead of increasing their volumes.

Putting our Patients First

- An example of a Concern for Safe Staffing Form an Outpatient Clinic that shows how far behind we are in responding to patients:
- RX requests- 181 new
- Calls- 130 new
- Pt Advice Requests- 249 new
- Referral Messages -226 new
- Prior Authorizations -69 new
- To help clean up on how far behind they were, they had nurses come in on a Saturday for 4 hours to work on taking down the "in basket"

UVMHN:
Reactive not
Proactive

- At the recent hospital budget hearing we heard many comments about the need to reduce travelers and to "grow talent locally." Anna Noonan also inferred that they have known about the nursing shortage pre-pandemic. If they knew this, why didn't they try to get more nurses here? VFNHP went on a Unfair Labor Practice strike in 2018 one of the issues we brought up repeatedly at the table was recruitment and retention. We knew then that what we were offering nurses and our benefit package was not enough to bring nurses to UVMHC.

Reactive

- In the beginning of the pandemic VFNHP agreed to hold off on union negotiations for one year.
- In July 2021 a contingent met with Dr. Leffler to discuss wages. We were seeing our colleagues leaving UVMHC for travel jobs or fear. We asked for an immediate 10% across the board increase and were told emphatically NO.
- In December 2021, UVMHC asked to meet with us and discuss a wage reopener. They were offering the same 10% we asked for but the conditions they put on it were unacceptable.
- In February 2022 UVMHC came back to us with an offer for an immediate wage increase of 10% for all nurses with another 5% in October 2022 and October 2023. Our members accepted this offer.
- Why did this take so long when it was clearly the right thing to do?

Recent Survey Results

- A small sampling of our nurses showed the following results:
- 39 out of 258 plan to leave UVMHC before the end of the year
- 37 out of 257 plan to change jobs within the organization
- Factors playing into this decision:
 - 113 responded salary/benefits
 - 19 responded workplace violence
 - 77 responded family
 - 29 responded promotion or opportunities
 - 125 responded work/life balance

Survey comments

What they don't like about UVMIMC

- **Administration making money-lead decisions without a clinical lens. I depend on my support staff (OSS and our amazing medical assistant) and they are not currently paid enough to reflect their value to our team. RNs should be paid more as well. I support my family and we have never been able to afford daycare and live paycheck to paycheck.**
- **Lack of support from management**
- **Being asked to do more with less**
- **Not enough CTO**
- **Parking**
- **Travelers that are not invested in our community!**

Survey Comments

What they like about UVMIMC

- **I love my colleagues and patients.**
- **When we actually well -staffed enough to give quality care.**
- **Making a positive difference in my patients' day**
- **I love my coworkers**
- **The support of my coworkers**
- **Staff to patient ratios**
- **My patients**