

HDC Nursing Vacancies

1. Three of the Five HDCs currently have a severe shortage of nurses

Presently there is a severe shortage of nursing staff at three of the five human development centers:

Arkadelphia HDC vacancies:	7 RNs; 7 LPNs
Conway HDC vacancies:	8 RNs; 15 LPNs
Jonesboro HDC vacancies:	1 RN; 5 LPNs
Booneville HDC vacancies	1 LPN
Warren HDC vacancies	2 RNs

The cause of the nursing shortage is the centers' inability to offer competitive nursing wages.

2. Area comparisons of hourly wages for LPNs and RNs.

The HDCs' base hourly rate for LPNs is approximately \$19

As advertised last fall in the Arkadelphia hiring area, LPNs are offered much higher hourly wages:

\$24.40	(Southern Pines, Prescott)
\$30.00	(AHP, Conway area, 12-hour shifts)
\$32.00	(AHP, Newly Graduated LPNs)
\$42.00	(Tryfacta – Conway area, 13-week contract (\$27/hr and \$15/hr per diem)
\$26.00	(Sebastian County Jail)
\$26.02	(Indeed Average LPN Arkadelphia)

The HDCs' base hourly rate for RNs is approximately \$32.00

As advertised last fall in the Arkadelphia hiring area, RNs are offered much higher wages:

\$40.00	(AHP – Little Rock area)
\$40.00	(Wadley Hospital Texarkana)
\$43.75	(Indeed Average LPN Arkadelphia)

3. Contract Nurses are Costly.

To meet licensure requirements, the centers must have nurses. During times when employee nurses cannot meet all shifts, the superintendents must hire contract nurses at a cost of \$70 - \$80/hour for RNs and \$52/hour for LPNs, which takes an enormous “bite” out of the centers’ budget.

4. Use of Contract Nurses is causing a morale issue.

HDCs hire LPNs for approximately \$19/hr and when vacancies occur, the HDCs must pay contract LPNs \$52/hr. Contract LPNs do not receive the entire fee (\$52/hr) - the contracting agency receives part of the fee - but the contract nurses freely tell HDC LPNs that they are making from \$30 - \$35/hr., which causes ill feelings. HDCs pay new RNs approximately \$32/hr and, to fill vacant shifts, HDCs hire contract nurses at approximately \$72/hr. Contract RNs freely tell HDC RNs that they are making \$50 - \$55/hr. Retention of HDC nursing staff then becomes an issue.

5. Continuity of Care - Contract Nurses do not know HDC residents

While contract nurses are qualified as LPNs and RNs, they are only working temporarily at the HDCs and they do not know the unique needs and characteristics of HDC residents, many of whom are non-verbal and may have severe behavioral issues. The health and safety of HDC residents are dependent upon trained, experienced staff who have a heart for the residents and who are dedicated to the HDCs’ mission. It can take years to develop a rapport with HDC residents – our states’ vulnerable adults with disabilities who function as very young children - and who do not easily tolerate IVs, blood draws, etc. Continuity of Care is an issue when the HDCs must hire temporary nurses to fill mandatory nursing schedules. The HDCs are hobbled by being unable to offer competitive wages and build and retain nursing staff.

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Respectfully submitted,

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