

AHA Summer 2021 Capacity and Staffing Survey

Executive Summary, August 6, 2021

The Arkansas Hospital Association surveyed member hospitals on the current bed capacity, staffing, and COVID-19-related services. Responses were received from 57 hospitals. Of those, 29 have ICU beds and 51 have medical/surgical beds.

ICU Bed Capacity

Of the hospitals with ICU beds, 17% said that they may be able to increase ICU beds if requested by the Arkansas Department of Health or Winter Task Force. The remaining 83% stated that they would be unable to increase beds if requested unless critical barriers were addressed.

Of the 29 hospitals with ICUs, barriers to increasing bed capacity include:

- 86% do not have sufficient staff.
- 21% do not have sufficient space.
- 7% do not have sufficient equipment.

For 69% of the hospitals with ICUs, staffing was the only barrier reported.

Among the 5 who responded that they may be able to increase ICU bed capacity, one noted that this would require a reduction in medical/surgical beds because of staffing restraints. The others replied that they could increase by 2-5 beds (12-50% increase over July 1 levels).

Medical/Surgical Bed Capacity

Of the hospitals with medical/surgical beds, 22% said that they may be able to increase medical/surgical beds if requested by the Arkansas Department of Health or Winter Task Force. The remaining 78% stated that they would be unable to increase beds if requested, unless critical barriers were addressed.

Of the 51 hospitals with medical/surgical beds, barriers to increasing bed capacity include:

- 84% do not have sufficient staff.
- 27% do not have sufficient space.
- 14% do not have sufficient equipment.

For 69% of the hospitals with medical/surgical beds, staffing was the only barrier reported.

Among the 11 who responded that they may be able to increase medical/surgical bed capacity, one noted that this would require a reduction in ICU beds because of equipment restraints. The others replied that they could increase by 8-10 beds (10-130% increase over July 1 levels).

Clinical Staffing

Most acute care hospitals reported shortages of direct patient care clinical staff.

- 78% of acute care hospitals reported clinical staff out due to COVID-19 quarantine or isolation. Among hospitals experiencing absenteeism, this represents an average 3% of clinical staff (range of 1-10%). In EMResource, the percent of staff reported “furloughed” due to quarantine or isolation has increased 176% since July 1.
- 96% acute care hospitals reported clinical staff vacancies. Among hospitals reporting vacancies, this represents an average 17% vacancy rate (e.g., 17% of clinical staff positions are unfilled).