

The Washington Health Workforce Sentinel Network

Providing the “How” and “Why” in Workforce Demand Data

Health Workforce Council Listening Session

June 26, 2024

Yakima, WA

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University of Washington

Center for Health Workforce Studies



Washington's Health Workforce Sentinel Network Leadership and Funding

Partnership between

- Washington Workforce Training & Education Coordinating Board
- University of Washington Center for Health Workforce Studies

Ongoing funding provided by the Washington State Legislature



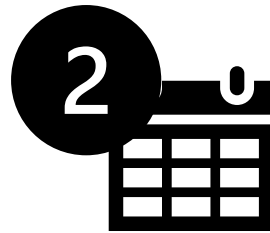
Washington's Health Workforce Sentinel Network



Tool to allow **employers** to share their **health workforce needs**



Statewide

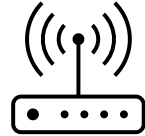


Twice a year



All sectors

Objectives

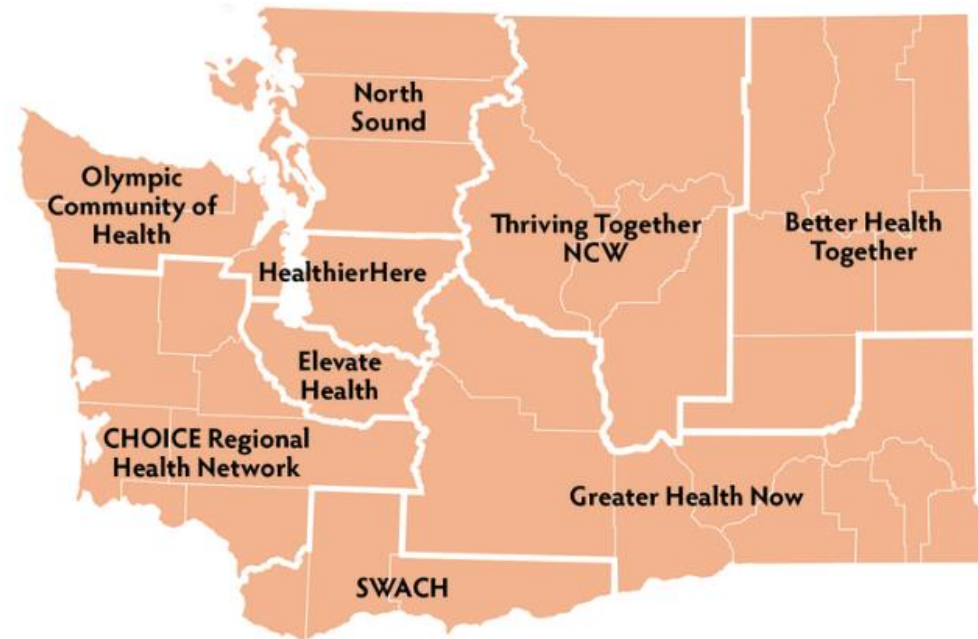


Signals describe the **how** and **why** behind health workforce needs



Inform solutions for employers, educators and policymakers

Findings from Greater Health Now ACH



Responses by facility type – Greater Health Now ACH

Reported to Sentinel Network (Fall 2023 & Spring 2024)

Facility Type	N	Population Served (%)		
		Rural	Combination Rural/Urban	Urban
Behavioral Health Facility	31	45.2	51.6	3.2
Long Term Care Facility	18	22.2	72.2	5.6
Federally qualified health center (FQHC) or community clinic providing care free or on sliding fee scale	10	30	70	0
Public health	9	22.2	77.8	0
Other	8	50	50	0
Rural health clinic	8	75	25	0
Acute care hospital (25 beds or fewer)	7	85.7	14.3	0
Dentist office/dental clinic	7	42.9	57.1	0
School	7	57.1	42.9	0
Primary care medical clinic (not FQHC/community clinic or rural health clinic)	6	33.3	66.7	0
Pharmacy - hospital/clinical	5	60	40	0
Emergency Medical Services/Fire Department	4	75	25	0
Higher education / research	4	25	50	25
Home health care service	4	75	25	0
Hospice	3	33.3	66.7	0
Pharmacy - community/retail	3	100	0	0
Medical and Diagnostic laboratory	2	50	50	0
Specialty medical clinic	2	0	100	0
Total	138	45.7	52.2	2.2

Occupations with Exceptionally Long Vacancies by Facility Type

GHN ACH, Reported to Sentinel Network (Fall 2023 & Spring 2024)

Behavioral Health Facilities

Rank	Occupation Title
1	Substance Use Disorder Professional
2	Mental Health Counselor
3	Marriage And Family Therapist
4	Peer Counselor
5	Social Worker - Child, Family And School
5	Social Worker - Healthcare

Long Term Care Facilities

Rank	Occupation Title
1	Nurse, Registered
2	Nursing Assistant
3	Social Worker - Healthcare
4	Community Health Worker
4	Cook/Food Services
4	Mental Health Counselor
4	Nurse, Licensed Practical

Small Hospital + Rural Health Clinic

Rank	Occupation Title
1	Nurse, Registered
1	Physician/Surgeon
1	Mental Health Counselor
4	Community Health Worker
4	Environmental Services
4	Physical Therapist
4	Social Worker

FQHCs or Community Clinics

Rank	Occupation Title
1	Nurse, Registered
1	Physician/Surgeon
1	Social Worker - Child, Family And School
4	Community Health Worker
4	Nurse Midwife
4	Nursing Assistant
4	Substance Use Disorder Professional

Reasons for Exceptionally Long Vacancies – GHN ACH

Reported to Sentinel Network (Fall 2023 & Spring 2024)

Registered nurses – Reports of competition among employers for a limited number of RNs, which can lead to nurses requesting high wages and specific working conditions.

“We continue to use agency nurses off-and-on ever since COVID began back in 2020. There just aren't enough available RNs or LPNs in [our] county. Our hospitals, nursing homes, and clinics just steal from each other, and staff rotate from one location to another.” [Nursing home or skilled nursing facility]

“Most hospital nurses are used to working 3 days a week and they do not want to switch to a 5 day work week.” [FQHC or community clinic]

Registered nurses – Employers in rural areas report additional challenges

“Our location poses a challenge... I really like the idea of an apprenticeship program, hosting students, and potentially some additional programs that offer tuition assistance for RNs who take jobs in rural health systems. I am also interested in ways to recruit and host people from other countries.” [Acute care hospital, 25 beds or fewer]

Reasons for Exceptionally Long Vacancies – GHN ACH

Reported to Sentinel Network (Fall 2023 & Spring 2024)

Mental health counselors – Similar wage competition as was reported for RNs, plus licensing and the need for specific skills were reported as barriers.

“Many MHC's were unable to work because although they completed the work requirements for licensure and had submitted the licensing application it was taking many months for the licenses to become approved.” [Behavioral-mental health clinic]

*“Seeking counselors with youth and bi-lingual experiences.”
[Behavioral-mental health clinic]*

Reasons for Exceptionally Long Vacancies – GHN ACH

Reported to Sentinel Network (Fall 2023 & Spring 2024)

Medical assistants – Employers report a lack of local applicants. Some have instituted internal training programs to “grow their own” MAs.

“We are a small community and the closest college that has an MA program is 30+ minutes away.” [FQHC or community clinic]

*“High demand position. We have partnered with a state program to administer an MA apprenticeship program. Great success but still a staffing issue.”
[Acute care hospital, 25 beds or fewer]*

Recruitment and retention strategies – GHN ACH

Reported to Sentinel Network (Fall 2023 & Spring 2024)

Many respondents cited providing better salaries and benefits as key strategies. Others described strategies such as employee appreciation events, listening sessions and more robust onboarding procedures, among others.

“Higher wages, better benefits.” [Multiple facility types]

“We do small perks like a monthly lunch for all staff and we support their work by providing consults as needed, and frankly we pay them quite a lot.”

[Behavioral-mental health clinic]

“A robust HR Team who vets, schedules, and follows a good program of onboarding and orientation and follows up with new staff on a regular basis.” [Small hospital]

“Career paths with higher pay opportunities, raises, decreasing provider visit expectation, Indirect Care time built into Provider contracts.” [Community clinic]

Thank you!

wa.sentinelnetwork.org

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