



COUNTY OF SANTA CLARA
Health System

**Custody Health Services
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TO: Public Safety and Justice Committee
 Supervisor Simitian, Chairperson; Supervisor Lee, Vice-Chairperson.
 Jeffrey, V. Smith, M.D. J.D., County Executive

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SUBJECT: Off-Agenda Report on County Comparisons of Processes and Best Practices of the Hiring Process of Custody Health Workers

On October 3, 2019, Supervisor Wasserman requested Custody Health Services (CHS) to provide an off-agenda report relating to staff communication with colleagues in neighboring jurisdictions regarding their process of hiring custody health workers and the possibility of improving best practices and expediting the County hiring process.

Custody Health Services (CHS) Physician and Psychiatrist provider workforce are hired, credentialed, and privileged by Santa Clara Valley Medical Center. While physicians get a flat fee for hazard duty pay per pay period, psychiatrists are incentivized with a 25% premium in pay for working in the custodial setting. The composition of the CHS providers includes a mix of physicians, psychiatrists, and Advanced Practice Practitioners (APP): Physician Assistants (PA) and Nurse Practitioners (NP).

In California, the supply of primary care physicians and psychiatrists is projected to decrease by anywhere from 8% to 25% over the next 10 years as more providers are retiring than are completing residency training; adding to a national shortage particularly of psychiatrists in the industry. The use of nurse practitioners and physician assistants are expected to continue to help alleviate this shortage. In addition, CHS has two contracts that augments the provider workforce: South Bay Medical Emergency Group, Inc. for physicians and Traditions Behavioral Health (TBH) for psychiatrists. Thus far, the efficacy of hiring practices for the CHS provider workforce for on-site positions through SCVMC is reliable. CHS, too, is exploring the use and expansion of telemedicine through its existing provider contracts.

What follows is our analysis of current Santa Clara County nursing hiring practices and recruitment activities as compared to other competing county employers. While actual assumptions regarding the nursing workforce hiring practices of other counties are outside the scope of this report, the comparisons will offer prospective that corresponds to a broader discussion on maintaining a qualified CHS nursing workforce.

The hiring process for CHS nursing staff involves several county agencies including the Employee Services Agency (ESA), Employee Health, VMC Finance, Office of Budget, and Analysis (OBA), and the Sheriff's Office (SO). County agency partners for new hire recruitment and onboarding maintain strict guidelines that are outside of Custody Health's purview. As a result, it typically takes 3 months to fill an actual vacancy – 2

months toward recruitment as provided for by the bargaining unit memorandum of understanding and the rest is time allocated for onboarding.

This report consists of information received from other counties on the hiring process, recruitment incentives, and pay differentials for workers assigned to provide patient care in the custody setting. The representatives of the participating counties were only able to provide nursing related hiring processes and pay incentives and therefore, a comparison study with CHS nurse hiring process was conducted. The four counties that participated in this survey include:

- Sacramento County
- Riverside County
- Orange County
- Alameda County

Santa Clara County

Successful candidates for Custody Health Nursing ideally have a foundation of acute care experience, preferably critical care, that provides the flexibility to multitask and employ critical thinking skills in difficult situations. Nurses in corrections must not only quickly assess and determine appropriate interventions in time-pressured situations but must also be constantly mindful of personal safety. The autonomy and confidence necessary for a correctional nurse are best developed in critical care or in a multi-discipline medical surgical unit that builds autonomy and critical thinking in a structured, resource-rich environment.

Pursuant to the Memorandum of Understanding with the Registered Nurses Professional Association, all coded vacancies that the County intends to fill shall be posted on the work unit where the vacancy exists for a period of seven (7) calendar days. The position must be awarded to the internal applicant with the most seniority provided that the applicant is able to fill the position within six (6) weeks. The resulting vacancy created by the transfer must also be posted in the same manner. If a vacant position exists after exhausting the above provision, a requisition is initiated through NeoGov. The hiring process is continued as follows:

1. The County Employee Services Agency (ESA) provides a certified list of candidates approximately 4-8 weeks after receiving a requisition from CHS.
2. A CHS representative will contact the candidates for prescreening and/or schedule interviews.
3. Once a candidate is selected and an offer is accepted by the candidate, the onboarding process begins.
4. CHS contacts the ESA HR Support for candidate onboarding, Employee Health for medical clearance and the Sheriff's Office for backgrounds check. This process entails another 4-6 weeks.
5. Upon receipt of all clearances and onboarding documents, the candidate is invited for Health System New Hire Orientation. Thereafter, the new employee receives orientation and department-specific onboarding with CHS Staff Development.

The County does not currently provide incentives specific to recruitment. However, incentives in the form of pay differentials are available to the majority of CHS employees. The following are pay differentials for nursing staff members:

- Shift differentials of \$5.50 per hour for evening shift (1500 – 2330 hrs.), \$9.50 per hour for night shift (2330 – 0730 hrs.), \$18.00 per day for split shift (defined as eight (8) hours of work which are not completed within any nine (9) consecutive hours in a workday)

- Hazard Duty Premium is \$3.00 per hour for Nursing Staff represented by the Registered Nurses Professional Association (RNPA)
- Call-back Pay - a minimum of four (4) hours call-back time shall be credit if overtime work does not immediately follow or precede the regular work shift.
- Call-in Pay - a minimum of four (4) hours shall be reimbursed to the nurse if staffing needs change and no work is available and/or no alternate assignment can be made once the nurse reports to work for a specific area.
- Charge Nurse differential of \$3.75 per hour
- Weekend shift differential of \$3.00 per hour for productive time on a Saturday and/or Sunday

Sacramento County

The current process for hiring was not provided by Sacramento County. Although the Sacramento does not currently provide incentives specific for recruitment, they do have the following pay differentials along with a retention program for Nursing staff members:

- 15% differential pay provided at date of hire.
- Nursing Longevity Top Step Program:
 - Additional 5% at 5 years from date of hire (when staff member reaches top step)
 - Additional 5% at 10 years from date of hire
 - Total Possible differential for Day - Shift Nurses = 25% at 10 years
- Nurses Night-Shift Differentials:
 - 5% (at date of hire); 7.5% (after 5 years); 10% at (10 Years)
 - Total Possible differential for Night-Shift Nurses = 35% at 10 years

Riverside County

Riverside County shared that current process for hiring health workers assigned to in-custody settings begin with an approval from finance, administration, executive office, and lastly human resources. The following steps are as follows:

1. Once a list of potential candidates is provided to the department, interviews are conducted, and a selection is made.
 2. Behavioral Health applicants are also provided with facility tours during the application process as an introduction to the custody environment setting.
 3. Once the candidate accepts the offer for employment in the jail facility, the background check is completed. This overall process can take a minimum of 14-16 weeks from start to finish.
- Salary Differentials:
 - \$1.00 per hour for working in Corrections.
 - \$1.15 per hour for an Institutional Nurse or Sr. Institutional nurse who is assigned to work as a Supervising Institutional Nurse
 - \$1.00, \$2.00 or \$4.00 per hour depending on the jail facility where the staff member is assigned (location of facility)

- \$1.00 per hour if floating to a facility other than the one assigned.

Orange County

The current hiring and recruitment process is under review to streamline current operations. Currently the Human Resource Department recruits for each open classification as follows:

1. Tests are provided to narrow down the candidate selection pool, if necessary, and interviews are conducted.
2. Once a selection is made, the Sheriff's Office conducts the background check. The Custody Health Department (CHS) is working closely with the Sheriff's Office to shorten the process for any new professional staff members so that the clinical staff may become on board expeditiously.
3. Once the candidate has successfully completed the background check, an official job offer is made.
4. Once accepted, the Human Resource Department completes other various activities such as mandatory training, medical clearance, etc.
5. When that is complete, the new staff member is provided a date of orientation for their classification within the CHS Department.

- Salary Differentials, Incentive and Retention Programs

- Jail Hazard Pay: \$0.75 per hour

- Shift Differential:

1700 – 2330 hrs.: \$1.75 per hour

2300 – 0730 hrs.: \$2.75 per hour

- Nurse Hiring Incentive of \$1000 upon completion of 1 year probation payable within 2 pay periods.
- Nurse Retention Incentive:
Upon completion of 10,400 service hours (about 5 years), employee shall receive 3% percent of annual base salary as a one-time, lump sum payment.

Upon completion of 20,800 service hours (about 10 years), employee shall receive 3% percent of annual base salary as a one-time, lump sum payment.

Alameda County

Alameda County did not provide detailed information on their current hiring process and other incentive program for nursing staff. However, confirmation regarding of shift differentials for healthcare staff assigned to in-custody settings were provided:

- Pay Differentials for Medical Staff
 - Shift differentials for PM and NOC assignments
 - Weekend shift differentials

Conclusion

Nurses working in the custody setting are a unique type of nurse who must be able to advocate for what is best for the patient (inmate), have strong assessment and triage skills, possess excellent communication skills, and can work with a wide range of patients with different kinds of illnesses. Santa Clara County exercises leading practices in hiring and onboarding this niche of nurses to provide in-custody patient care. In addition, Santa Clara County-CHS offers competitive pay incentives and pay differentials for nurses when compared to other County jurisdictions reviewed in this report.