



Recruitment and Retention Strategies in the Wake of the COVID-19 Pandemic

COVID-19 has fundamentally changed the face of the health care workforce. The pandemic has strained hospitals, affecting caregivers' well-being and resulting in many leaving their hospital jobs. The AHA has been collecting resources to assist organizations in their efforts to plan for the future post-COVID-19 workforce.

Hospitals and health systems have been developing creative ways to recruit and retain their workforce. The following initiatives are examples of how organizations can bring in new talent using scholarship funds and education, as well as support current employees by providing organization-owned housing or funds to assist employees in purchasing a home near their place of work.

RETENTION: EDUCATION

UCSF ADDRESSES GERIATRICIAN NURSING SHORTAGE

The UCSF School of Nursing seeks to boost the workforce of trained health care professionals by preparing advanced practice nurses to diagnose, treat and advocate for the complex health needs of older adults. Through its Master of Science program, the school provides specialized training in adult gerontology with a rigorous two-year curriculum that combines extensive didactic courses and clinical residencies. The Adult Gerontology Primary Care Nurse Practitioner specialty prepares nurse practitioners to deliver comprehensive care for diverse, high-risk populations in community- and hospital-based primary care clinics, skilled nursing facilities and patients' homes.

BRYAN HEALTH WILL RECEIVE OVER \$1 MILLION FOR 125 PARTICIPANTS A YEAR TO RECEIVE CERTIFIED NURSING ASSISTANT OR PHLEBOTOMY TRAINING

Bryan Health College, in Lincoln, Neb., offers an 8-week phlebotomy course, and works closely with the Bryan Health hospitals to provide students real-life experience and on-the-job training. The college also offers a certified nursing assistant program. Using American Rescue Plan funding, Bryan Health College offers tuition assistance to individuals looking to begin a health care career.

ADVENTIST HEALTH-COPE HEALTH SCHOLARS MEDICAL ASSISTANT PROGRAM

The COPE Health Scholars Medical Assistant Program is an innovative joint effort of COPE Health Solutions and Adventist Health to provide an affordable and convenient way to enter the field. Over the course of seven months, program participants gain the skills and foundational knowledge needed to succeed as a medical assistant in a clinical environment through virtual self-study lectures as well as in-person training guided by experienced professionals in the field.

KUMC URBAN SCHOLARS PROGRAM

The Urban Scholars Program for Students Underrepresented in Medicine recruits students from the urban areas of Kansas (Kansas City, Topeka, Wichita and Lawrence) who are committed to improve health care within their communities. Applicants must attain a minimum of sophomore standing and have two years of undergraduate education remaining. The program provides Urban Scholars with assured admission to the University of Kansas School of Medicine upon successful completion of program requirements and graduation from their undergraduate institution.

KEARNEY HEALTH OPPORTUNITIES PROGRAM

A partnership between the University of Nebraska Kearney and University of Nebraska Medical Center, the Kearney Health Opportunities Program serves as a pipeline to grow the state's health care workforce by recruiting and training students from rural Nebraska who are committed to practicing in these areas after professional school. Participants are awarded full-tuition scholarships to attend UNK and guaranteed admission to UNMC if all requirements are met.

They receive additional assistance, along with a \$2,000 room waiver, through the KHOP Learning Community. A requirement for freshmen, the one-year residential learning community gives students a chance to explore various health care careers while receiving support and guidance as they transition to college.

OZARK SCHOOL DISTRICT PARTNERSHIP HELPS GROW THE FUTURE HEALTH CARE WORKFORCE

CoxHealth announced a new partnership with the Ozark School District on a health sciences academy, which is part of Ozark High School's new Ozark Innovation Center. CoxHealth is a premier sponsor of the academy, which will offer high school students introductory training to health care careers. The academy offers a state-of-the-art simulation training environment, with clinic exam rooms, a surgical theater, pharmacy, medical laboratory, radiology, an ambulance and more. They also partnered with vendors to supply medical equipment and CoxHealth is funding a full-time academic educator who will lead health care instruction at the academy.

SANFORD HEALTH: CLASSROOMS TO CAREERS

Sanford Health's Classrooms to Careers program helps students gain experience in health care careers, and lowers barriers and provides support and opportunities for high school students typically underrepresented in the health care field. The program is a partnership between a local high school, Southeast Technical College and Sanford Health.

TRAINING RURAL TO SERVE RURAL: BACCALAUREATE-MD PROGRAMS AND THEIR RURAL RESULTS

Since 2015, Marshall University has recruited local students in rural West Virginia for their accelerated baccalaureate-MD program. The University of New Mexico also offers a BA/MD program with a focus on serving rural and underserved urban areas of New Mexico. Both programs offer tuition assistance and set students up for success by partnering with local hospitals to help meet the workforce needs of rural America.

RETENTION: HOUSING

ST. LUKE'S ENTERS INTO A PARTNERSHIP ON HOUSING DEVELOPMENT IN WOOD RIVER VALLEY, IDAHO

Access to affordable housing in tourist areas throughout the country has been an issue for many hospitals. The pandemic and the shift to remote work has exacerbated this, as people are choosing to relocate.

Carmen Jacobsen, COO/CNO of St. Luke's Wood River, shared that, "The limited availability of housing to rent or own is a challenge felt by our entire community and significantly impacts the ability to recruit and retain employees at SLWR. It affects all job families and levels, clinical and non-clinical. St. Luke's Wood River currently has 69 vacant positions with a vacancy rate much higher than the three hospitals in our region. Nursing positions account for 28% of the vacancies. Despite offering significant financial incentives, the lack of available housing and the cost of living are frequently cited as the primary reason for declination of employment offers."

Together with St. Luke's Wood River Foundation and ARCH Community Housing Trust, a 12-unit single-family home housing development will be built in the county. The homes will be long-term rentals for SLWR employees who meet criteria as determined by the hospital and the leases will stipulate that continued employment is a condition of housing.

BOZEMAN HEALTH TO INVEST IN WORKFORCE HOUSING

To positively affect housing options in the communities served, Bozeman Health (Mont.) made an initial investment to secure 100 units in a future workforce housing complex, in partnership with locally-led ERES Capital, the investment and development division of ERES Companies. The goal is to have these units available for employees to rent at attainable rates. Phase 1 construction will begin early summer of 2022 with completion in the second half of 2023. Bozeman Health also will be able to expand the number of units available to employees in future phases of the project.

NORTHWELL HEALTH EMPLOYEE PERKS: HOUSING ASSISTANCE SPURS FIRST-TIME HOMEBUYERS¹

In collaboration with the Long Island Housing Partnership, Northwell Health offers eligible employees as much as \$5,000 in financial assistance to purchase a home on Long Island. Everyone is eligible – as long as they have been at Northwell for one year and are benefit-eligible and fall within LIHP's income requirements/guidelines. LIHP's partnership with Northwell began in 2006. Since then, the program has evolved to include rehabilitation grants, which help cover renovations such as a new roof or hot water heater, and matching grants. LIHP secures the grants, which are in addition to Northwell's contribution. The program has assisted 252 employees for a total of \$1.55 million to date with buying homes.

JOHNS HOPKINS "LIVE NEAR YOUR WORK" PROGRAM

Johns Hopkins offers grants of up to \$14,500 toward a down payment and closing costs associated with buying a house in designated city neighborhoods after completing three eligibility requirements.

1. <https://jobs.northwell.edu/benefits/>

CLEVELAND CLINIC EMPLOYER-ASSISTED HOUSING PROGRAM

Cleveland Clinic's home purchasing program provides \$20,000 in the form of a forgivable loan that can be used for down payment, closing costs or mortgage points associated with buying a home in the Greater Circle Living target area. The loan is completely forgiven if the employee continues to work for the Cleveland Clinic and occupies the home.

BJC HEALTHCARE AND WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY "LIVE NEAR YOUR WORK" PROGRAM

Designed to help lift the financial burden of buying a home in the St. Louis area, this program provides forgivable loans to eligible Washington University and BJC HealthCare employees.

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