

Survey: About one-third of hospitals need traveling nurses to function

by Bend_Weekly_News_Sources

what true."

"The clinical workforce in the United States has become increasingly mobile," notes Susan Nowakowski, president and CEO of AMN Healthcare. "A growing number of nurses are considering travel opportunities, filling gaps in hospital staffs caused by worker shortages. Traveling nurses play a critical role in maintaining services and quality of care at hospitals and other medical settings nationwide."

Two-thirds of CNOs surveyed indicated their hospitals had used traveling nurses sometime during the previous 12 months to supplement their existing staffs. The majority (57.88%) said that their hospitals currently are using traveling nurses. One-third of CNOs said their hospitals typically use one to five traveling nurses per month, while 30% said their hospitals use six or more traveling nurses per month.

The use of traveling nurses is driven largely by the national nurse shortage, the survey suggests. Over 70% of CNOs surveyed said that an inability to recruit enough permanent staff is a "most important" reason for using traveling nurses. According to Nowakowski, hospitals typically will use traveling nurses to fill gaps in the nursing staff until permanent nurses can be found. Other reasons CNOs cited for using traveling nurses included maintaining quality of care, filling in for retiring or relocating nurses or those on family leave, and preventing revenue loss resulting when beds are closed due to inadequate nurse staffing.

The great majority of CNOs surveyed (93%) rated the skill level of traveling nurses as either "adequate" or "equal or superior to" existing staff. Seventy-four percent of CNOs indicated that the value of traveling nurses to their hospitals is either "worth the cost" or "break even."

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