

Staffing Shortage Survey Summary

In October, the Nebraska Hospital Association sent a staffing shortage survey to the membership to help quantify the shortage of health care workers in Nebraska. While not every member participated in the survey, the results show that Nebraska is currently facing a shortage of health care workers, and is projected to do so over the next five years.

The surveys are split into groups: 1) Critical Access Hospitals; 2) Lincoln and Omaha Hospitals; 3) Large Rural Hospitals; and 4) Small, Non-CAH Hospitals. Many of the surveys returned did not include the projected need for the next five years or the average length of time to fill open positions. Therefore, the results do not adequately represent the overall need of health care workers statewide.

It is obvious by looking at the numbers that Nebraska is in need of nurses, radiological technicians, food service workers, pharmacists, and laboratory technicians. In many of Nebraska's hospitals, a constant search is being conducted for nurses, radiological technicians and pharmacists. Since the responses vary so drastically, it is difficult to determine the average time to fill open positions. The time varied from one week to one and a half years.

As the surveys show, 46 of Nebraska's hospitals employ 11,506.47 full time equivalent employees. Those same 46 hospitals currently have 1,264 vacant health care positions. Additionally, over the next five years, 1,038 individuals will be needed to fill vacancies in the critical access, small rural and large rural hospitals. That number does not include any hospital vacancies in the Lincoln and Omaha hospitals. The health care worker shortage will continue to impact Nebraska's hospitals.