



## MEDIA RELEASE

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### **Health Care Vacancies and Turnover in Kansas Remain High**

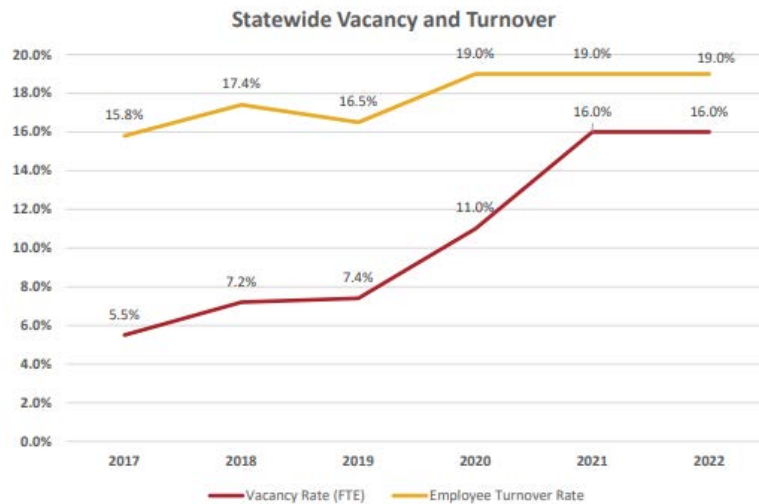
*Report Focuses on Challenges and Trends for Sustaining Skilled Workforce*

(June 15, 2023) – The Kansas Hospital Association has published its annual [Kansas Health Care Workforce Report](#). The report utilizes data gathered from various sources to illustrate the current pulse on health care workforce challenges in Kansas.

The 2023 KHA Workforce Survey is the primary source of data, providing vacancy and turnover rates for 28 hospital-based and four clinic-based positions and highlighting those positions most in-demand statewide and regionally. With this information, hospital and health system leaders gain a better understanding of the current workforce environment, as well as what to expect in the future. The data is designed to inform strategies for recruitment and retention to ensure Kansas hospitals have the capacity to support the health of their local communities.

“Workforce is a top strategic priority for Kansas hospitals and the Kansas Hospital Association,” said Chad Austin, president and CEO of the Kansas Hospital Association. “We are focused on approaches that attract more Kansans into health care careers to ensure hospitals have the staff needed to deliver the best patient care.”

This year, 109 Kansas hospitals participated in the survey, the highest participation in the last ten years. Statewide, vacancies and turnover remain at record-high levels. Most positions surveyed have remained steady or increased from last year’s numbers. The exception is for vacancy rates in diagnostic imaging, laboratory and therapy, which have declined since last year (except for respiratory therapists).



The report displays vacancy and turnover rates in 2022 for licensed practical nurses and registered nurses are at peak levels with 25 percent of hospital LPN jobs and 21 percent of staff RN hospital jobs vacant, and 22 percent of LPNs and 18 percent of RNs turning over throughout 2022. Other top in-demand, statewide positions include 21 percent of certified respiratory therapists, 21 percent of sterile processing technicians and 20 percent of medical laboratory technicians.

Overall employee turnover rate for surveyed health care positions in Kansas averaged 19 percent, with the occupations that turned over the most being housekeepers (32 percent), nursing assistants (30 percent) and food service/dietary aid workers (27 percent).

The report also includes breakouts of vacancies and turnover geographically by the seven regions in Kansas and by rural and urban areas. Southwest Kansas has the highest vacancy rates with 20 percent of open jobs. The largest openings in that region include 37 percent of medical laboratory technicians, 37 percent of LPNs and 34 percent of sonographer/ultrasound technologists.

When looking at rural and urban areas in Kansas, the overall vacancy rates are both 16 percent of the workforce surveyed, but rural Kansas hospitals report a higher need for respiratory therapists, sonographer/ultrasound technologists, occupational therapists and physical therapists. On the other hand, urban Kansas hospitals face higher vacancies for sterile processing technicians, nursing assistants and CT technologists.

Laboratory staff across much of the state continue to be hard to find, with vacancies in Southwest Kansas reaching 37 percent for medical laboratory tech positions. In Northwest Kansas, vacancies are 21 percent for MLT positions and 34 percent for medical technologist positions. Southeast Kansas is facing a quarter (25 percent) of MLT positions open and 20 percent of MTs positions open.

In addition to laboratory employees, another noteworthy vacancy is in respiratory therapists. Vacancies are 27 percent for certified RTs and 28 percent for registered RTs in Northwest Kansas; 22 percent and 20 percent respectively in North Central Kansas; and 50 percent and 21 percent respectively in Northeast Kansas.

KHA has continued to work to combat these issues on a variety of fronts including resiliency and retention education efforts, advancement of health care apprenticeship opportunities, and workforce executive roundtables that bring together colleges and hospitals to collaboratively address these issues.

The association partnered with the Kansas Chamber of Commerce and Kansas State Department of Education to host Kansas' first annual Virtual Health Care Career Day in April that saw more than 100 school districts and 2,000+ students participate in learning about the wide variety of career opportunities in health care.

These efforts provide a foundational starting point as KHA partners with organizations across the state and across business, industry and government, to holistically address this issue of workforce to ensure Kansas hospitals continue to deliver the best care to every patient, every time.

Hospitals also are looking internally, working with schools and partners, and policy makers to ensure Kansas has the health care workers our state needs to deliver quality health care to all Kansans. Hospitals are working to upskill employees with apprentice programs and career ladders that not only build the workforce, but support families and communities.

“This year’s [Kansas Health Care Workforce Report](#) is a reminder that we still have work to do,” Austin said. “But with hundreds of occupations, the health care field is a world of possibilities that is growing and evolving every day. KHA and its member hospitals and health systems strive to assist individuals in finding a place in this exciting and challenging field.”

The Kansas Hospital Association is a voluntary, non-profit organization existing to be the leading advocate and resource for members. KHA membership includes 238 member facilities, of which 123 are full-service, community hospitals. Founded in 1910, KHA’s vision is: “Optimal Health for Kansans.”

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