



Public Health Nursing Learning Lab

August 27, 2025

Welcome Back!

- Joining for the first time? Please introduce yourself in the chat



Today's Topic

- Public Health Nurse Recruitment and Retention:
 - What do we know about it?
 - What strategies can we pursue to improve it?

The Nursing Shortage Continues

- In 2022, the HRSA Health Workforce Analysis estimated a shortage of 78,610 full-time RNs in 2025. The largest projected shortages were forecasted in:
 - Washington
 - Georgia
 - California
 - Oregon
 - Michigan
 - Idaho
 - Louisiana
 - North Carolina
 - New Jersey
 - South Carolina

Why Do Nurses Leave the Workforce?

- National Council of State Boards of Nursing (NCSBN) Workforce Study (2024) indicated that 40 percent of nurses overall intend to leave the workforce within 5 years
- Reasons for leaving?
 - Stress and burnout
 - Workload
 - Understaffing
 - Unsatisfactory compensation
 - Workplace violence

What About Public Health Nurses?



What motivates nurses to enter and remain in public health?

- Yeager and Wisniewski (2017) examined data from 1288 public Health nurses in local health departments in 47 states and the District of Columbia
- Identified factors influencing nurses' decisions to begin work in public health and factors that influence their decision to continue working in public health

Organizational factors in recruitment

- Nurses were asked them to rate the degree to which 12 organizational factors influenced their decision to work in public health:
 - Specific duties and responsibilities
 - Identifying with the mission of the organization
 - Competitive benefits
 - Job security
 - Flexibility of work schedule
 - Opportunities for training and continued education
 - Ability to innovate
 - Autonomy/employee empowerment
 - Future opportunities for promotion
 - Competitive salary
 - Immediate opportunity for advancement
 - Ability to work remotely

Strongest recruitment factors for PHNs

- Specific duties and responsibilities
- Competitive benefits
- Identifying with the mission of the organization

Other recruitment factors for PHNs (in ranked order)

- Job security
- Flexibility of work schedule
- Opportunities for training/continuing education
- Ability to innovate
- Autonomy/employee empowerment
- Future opportunities for promotion
- Competitive salary
- Immediate opportunity for advancement/promotion
- Ability to work remotely

Strongest retention factors for PHNs

- Specific duties and responsibilities
- Job security
- Identifying with the mission of the organization

Other retention factors for PHNs (in ranked order)

- Competitive benefits
- Flexibility of work schedule
- Opportunities for training/continuing education,
- Autonomy/employee empowerment
- Ability to innovate
- Competitive salary
- Future opportunities for promotion
- Immediate opportunities for advancement/promotion
- Ability to work remotely

What does this mean for PHN recruitment and retention?

- It is important for PHN leaders, organizational leadership, and HR professionals to consider all organizational factors influencing recruitment and retention of PHNs
- It is also important for those same persons to pay particular attention to the factors ranking highest, and to consider the differences in factors influencing recruitment and those influencing retention
- Comprehensive, ongoing organizational strategies are essential for improving recruitment and retention of PHNs
- Strategies should reflect the organization and the environment - know your PHN workforce
- PHN supervisors are a critical element in retaining public health nurses

Slido Poll 1

- What were the three most significant factors that drew you to public health nursing? (Choose 3)
 - Specific job duties and responsibilities
 - Competitive benefits
 - Identifying with the mission of the organization
 - Job security
 - Flexible work schedule
 - Opportunities for training/continuing education
 - Ability to innovate
 - Autonomy/employee empowerment
 - Future opportunities for promotion
 - Competitive salary
 - Immediate opportunity for advancement/promotion
 - Ability to work remotely



Slido Poll 2

- What are the three most significant factors that keep you in public health nursing? (Choose 3)
 - Specific job duties and responsibilities
 - Job security
 - Identifying with the mission of the organization
 - Competitive benefits
 - Flexible work schedule
 - Opportunities for training/continuing education
 - Autonomy/employee empowerment
 - Ability to innovate
 - Competitive salary
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Wisconsin Public Health Nurse Recruitment and Retention Strategies

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Agenda



- Wisconsin overview
- Statewide Public Health Nurse (PHN) Network
- Shared email inbox
- Guide to a Generalized Public Health Nursing Program webpage
- Guidelines for Hiring Nurses at Health Departments
- Public Health Council resolutions
- Next steps

Wisconsin Overview



- Office of Policy and Practice Alignment (OPPA)
- Regional team to statewide team
- 84 local health departments and 11 Tribal health centers
- Statute and rule requirements

Evolution and Change



- Pre and post pandemic environmental scan
- Internal process changes
- Assessments and analysis
- Strategic priorities
- OPPA PHNC team proposal

Wisconsin Technical Assistance Request



- Public Health Infrastructure Grant
- Recruitment and retention concerns



Statewide PHN network



- Started in November 2023
- Locally-led with state support
- 345 public health nurses registered, with average attendance over 135



Shared Email Inbox



- Direct support to provide best practice and resources
- Unified space to reach a public health nursing consultant

Guide to a Generalized Public Health Nursing Program Webpage



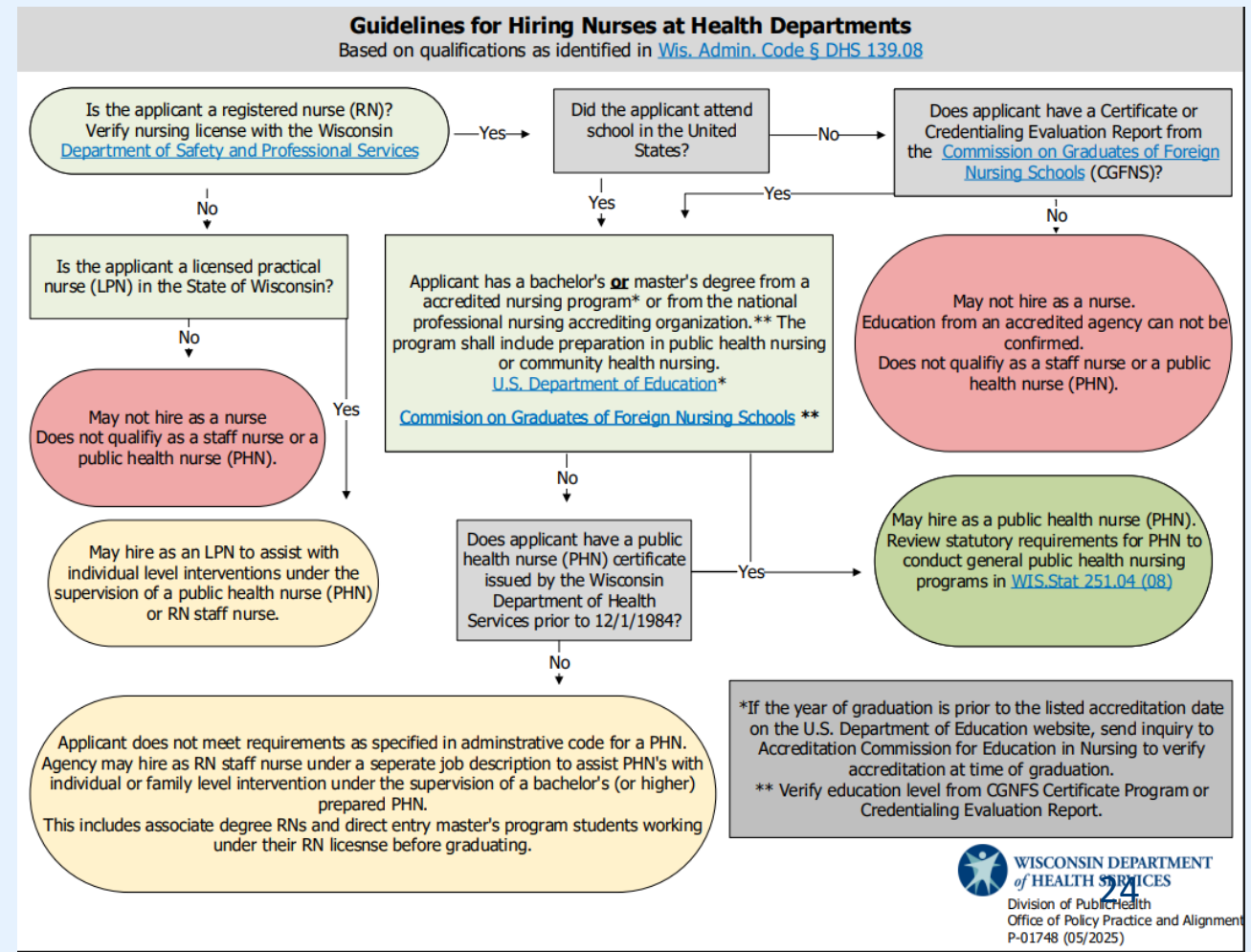
The Guide to a Generalized Public Health Nursing Program webpage includes:

- Requirements of local health departments.
- Nursing implications and examples.

Guidelines for Hiring Nurses at Health Departments



- The Guidelines for Hiring Nurses at Health Departments document is a **process map** to assist local hiring.
- It includes information about nurses that receive their **education outside the United States**.



Public Health Council Resolutions



Three resolutions presented to address recruitment and retention in Wisconsin:

- Reinstatement of Director of Public Health Nursing
- Requesting Recruitment and Retention Initiatives
- Optimizing the PHN Role for Improved Population Health Outcomes

Ongoing Efforts



- Wisconsin PHN 101 training
- School outreach
- Tribal community health connections
- Regional network and advocacy



Questions and Answers



Contact Us



OPPA Public Health Nursing Consultant Team

- DHSPHNConsultant@dhs.wisconsin.gov
- [DHS Public Health Nurse Consultants webpage](#)

Peer-to-Peer Dialogue

What are today's highest priority strategies to address PHN recruitment and retention?



Remember to Visit the PHN Learning Lab Library

- Hosted on APHN Website, Accessible from Home Page
- Session Content, PHN Workforce Publications and Other Resources, Stories from the Field
- <https://www.phnurse.org/>



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See you on September 24!

PHN Residency Programs and Leadership Pathways

