

The Home Health and Hospice Care Nurse Staffing Study (HHHCNSS) assesses nurse staffing and related issues in home health and hospice agencies. In 2022, the Texas Center for Nursing Workforce Studies (TCNWS) administered the HHHCNSS to 303 Texas home health and hospice agencies with a patient census of at least 250. Respondents provided data for 85 agencies for a response rate of 28.1%. These agencies were representative of Texas home health and hospice agencies by geographical designation and agency type. Data is compared to 2017 numbers as the 2019 survey had too low of a response rate to report. It is important to note that between the 2017 and 2022 HHHCNSS, the COVID-19 pandemic occurred.

This report presents position vacancies and staff turnover at Texas home health and hospice agencies. It includes rates of each across Texas regions and nursing staff types. The vacancy rates measure the percentage of positions that were vacant on one day during one of the year’s peak occupancy times (January 21, 2022). The turnover rates measure the frequency of staff separations, both voluntary and involuntary, over a one year period (January 1, 2021–December 31, 2021). High vacancy and turnover rates can lead to negative outcomes that can affect quality of care such as losing experienced staff and increasing the workload and stress levels of existing staff.¹ High vacancy and turnover is also costly to agencies due to the high cost associated with overtime or the use of agency nurses to fill vacant positions as well as the cost associated with recruiting qualified nurses.

¹ American Association of Colleges of Nursing, “Nursing Shortage Fact Sheet,” 2012, <http://www.aacn.nche.edu/media-relations/NrsgShortageFS.pdf>

Vacancy

Table 1 presents the total number of occupied and vacant FTE positions reported by home health and hospice agency respondents by nursing staff type and the resulting position vacancy rate for each.

- Position vacancy rates ranged from 12.6% among HHAs/NAs/CNAs to 19.9% among licensed vocational nurses (LVNs).
- Only 15 of 82 responding agencies (18.3%) reported zero vacancies for RNs.

Table 1. Number of occupied and vacant FTE positions by nursing staff type

	n	Total Occupied FTE Positions	Total Vacant FTE Positions	Statewide Position Vacancy Rate	Number of Respondents that Reported Zero Vacancies
RNs	82	784	153	16.3%	15
LVNs	80	554	138	19.9%	22
HHAs/NAs/CNAs	70	456	66	12.6%	40

Note: n = number of respondents who reported each nursing staff type

The position vacancy rates in Table 2 represent the total percentage of vacancies for a position across a region.

Table 2. Position vacancy rates by region and nursing staff type

Region	RNs	LVNs	HHAs/NAs/CNAs
n	82	80	70
Panhandle	16.1%	24.5%	12.3%
Rio Grande Valley	16.9%	19.0%	44.4%
North Texas	8.1%	3.8%	0.0%
East Texas	17.5%	12.8%	30.8%
Gulf Coast	19.1%	26.9%	12.3%
Central Texas	6.5%	7.9%	0.0%
South Texas	22.8%	26.9%	24.3%
West Texas	10.2%	17.0%	0.0%

Note: n = number of respondents who reported each nursing staff type

- Overall, the position vacancy rate for registered nurses (RNs) in Texas was 16.3% in 2022, though the position vacancy rates for RNs ranged from 6.5% in Central Texas to 22.8% in South Texas.
- For LVNs in Texas, the position vacancy rate ranged from 3.8% in North Texas to 26.9% in the the Gulf Coast and South Texas.
- For home health and nursing aides (HHAs/NAs/CNAs) in Texas, the position vacancy rate was 12.6% in 2022, ranging from 0.0% in Central, North, and West Texas to 44.4% in the Rio Grande Valley.

Figure 1 shows the position vacancy rates among home health and hospice agency respondents from 2011–2022 for RNs, LVNs, and HHAs/NAs/CNAs.

- Statewide position vacancy rates for RNs, LVNs, and HHAs/NAs/CNAs all peaked in 2022.
- The RN vacancy rate increased from 12.4% to 16.3% from 2017 to 2022.
- The LVN vacancy rate increased the most out of the nursing types from 2017 to 2022 going from 8.9% to 19.9% vacancy rate.
- The HHAs/NAs/CNAs vacancy rate showed the smallest increase from 10.5% to 12.6% from 2017 to 2022.

Table 3 presents descriptive statistics of facility vacancy rates, including median facility vacancy rates, which represent the middle vacancy rate among all facility vacancy rates calculated for each respondent.

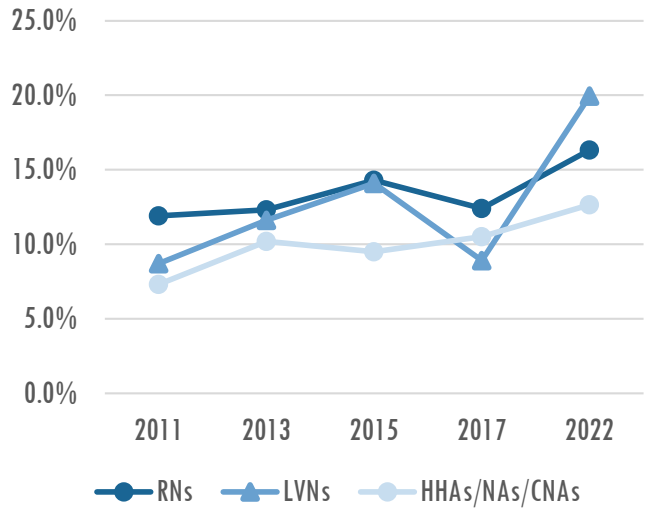
- The median facility vacancy rate for RNs, LVNs, and HHAs/NAs/CNAs in 2017 was 0%. Each

Table 3. Facility vacancy rate descriptive statistics

	n	Minimum	25th Percentile	Median	75th Percentile	Maximum	Mean
RNs	67	0.0	5.7%	16.7%	33.3%	67.0%	21.2%
LVNs	59	0.0	0.0%	20.0%	41.7%	100.0%	24.5%
HHAs/NAs/CNAs	40	0.0	0.0%	41.7%	100.0%	400.0%	72.1%

Note: n=number of respondents that reported each nursing staff type

Figure 1. Position vacancy rates for RNs, LVNs, and HHAs/NAs/CNAs, 2011-2022



Note: 2011-2015 vacancy rates were recalculated for agencies with a patient census of 250 or greater and will not match those in past HHCNSS reports. 2019 data is unavailable as the response rate was too low to report on.

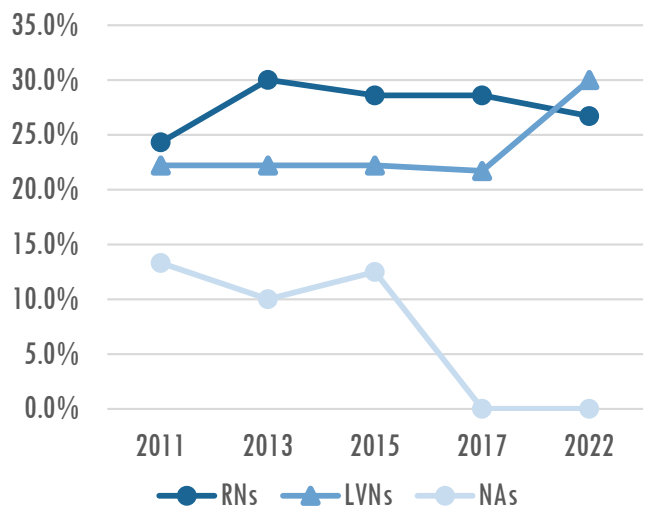
nursing type now has a median vacancy rate of 16.7%, 20.0%, and 41.7%, respectively.

Turnover

Figure 2 shows the median facility turnover rates among home health and hospice agency respondents from 2011–2022 for RNs, LVNs, and HHAs/NAs/CNAs.

- Statewide, the median facility turnover rates for RNs decreased slightly from 28.6% to 26.7% from 2017 to 2022.
- LVNs had a large increase in statewide turnover rates from 2017 to 2022 going from a turnover rate of 21.7% to 30.0%.
- The median facility turnover rate for HHAs/NAs/CNAs remained at 0.0% from 2017 to 2022.

Figure 2. Median facility turnover rates for RNs, LVNs, and HHAs/NAs/CNAs, 2011-2022



Note: 2011-2015 turnover rates were recalculated for agencies with a patient census of 250 or greater and will not match those in past HHCNSS reports. 2019 data is unavailable as the response rate was too low to report on.



Table 4. Median facility turnover rates in Texas by region and nursing staff type

	RNs	LVNs	HHAs/NAs/CNAs
n	63	60	45
Panhandle	99.5%	39.1%	25.0%
Rio Grande Valley	12.5%	16.1%	0.0%
North Texas	19.4%	13.3%	10.0%
East Texas	50.0%	33.3%	0.0%
Gulf Coast	42.9%	33.3%	20.2%
Central Texas	25.8%	45.0%	0.0%
South Texas	37.6%	82.6%	0.0%
West Texas	23.6%	22.2%	20.8%

Note: n=number of respondents that reported an average number of employees and total separations for each nursing staff type

Table 4 shows the median facility turnover rates in Texas by region and nursing staff type among respondents that reported an average number of employees and the total number of separations during the reporting period.

- The Panhandle had the highest turnover rate for any nurse staff type with a 99.5% turnover rate among RNs.¹
- South Texas had the highest median turnover rate among LVNs at 82.6%.
- The lowest median facility turnover rates were among HHAs/NAs/CNAs.

Table 5. Facility turnover rate descriptive statistics by nurse type

	n	Minimum	25th Percentile	Median	75th Percentile	Maximum	Mean
RNs	63	0.0%	14.6%	26.7%	50.0%	200.0%	41.2%
LVNs	60	0.0%	8.3%	30.0%	65.4%	200.0%	40.1%
HHAs/NAs/CNAs	45	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	50.0%	267.0%	32.8%

Note: n=number of respondents that reported each nursing staff type

¹Turnover is calculated by dividing the total number of separations for the year 2021 by the headcount for 2021 (the headcount is calculated by taking the average between the headcount at the beginning of the year and the end of the year). The Rio Grande Valley had almost as many separations as they did number of employees.

Conclusion

Overall, the position vacancy rate in Texas was 16.3% for RNs, 19.9% for LVNs, and 12.6% for HHAs/NAs/CNAs. The majority of respondents experienced vacancies for each of the nursing staff types. Position vacancy rates for all nursing staff types have increased since 2017, with LVNs showing the greatest increase.

Table 5 presents descriptive statistics of facility turnover rates, including median facility turnover rates, which represent the middle facility turnover rate among all facility turnover rates calculated for each respondent.

- A higher proportion of respondents experienced turnover for LVNs compared to RNs and HHAs/NAs/CNAs.

Table 6 shows the differences in characteristics of respondents that experienced turnover for RNs.

- Respondents that experienced no turnover among their RN staff were more likely to be smaller (250 to 1,000 unique clients per year) and to be home health agencies.

Table 6. Characteristics of respondents that experienced RN turnover vs. those that did not

	No RN Turnover	Experienced RN Turnover
Patient Census		
250-1,000 (n=53)	13.2%	86.8%
1,001+ (n=10)	10.0%	90.0%
Agency Type		
Combined (n=3)	0.0%	100.0%
Home Health (n=54)	14.8%	85.2%
Hospice (n=6)	0.0%	100.0%

Note: n=number of respondents that reported an average number of RNs and total RN separations

The median facility turnover rate was 26.7% among RN positions, 30.0% among LVN positions, and 0% among HHAs/NAs/CNAs. A large proportion of respondents experienced turnover for LVNs. Respondents that experienced no RN turnover were more likely to have a patient census of 250 to 1,000 and to be home health agencies.



Recommendations

According to the Nursing Practice Act (NPA), LVNs are required to have supervision by a more advanced degree.⁴ This makes it difficult for LVNs to work in home health and hospice settings as they don't have complete independence for practice. That, combined with the decline of LVN programs in Texas (97 programs in 2011, 90 programs in 2017, and 85 programs in 2021), the LVN vacancy rates have been increasing in home health and hospice care settings. In 2011, the vacancy rate was 8.7%, in 2017 the vacancy rate was 8.9%, and in 2022 the vacancy rate was 19.9%. Turnover rates have also been increasing among LVNs. In 2011 the turnover rate was 22.2%, in 2017 it was 21.7%, and in 2022 it was 30.0%.

- To decrease the vacancy and turnover rates among LVNs, home health and hospice agencies should be encouraged to form affiliations with LVN programs to promote the setting among LVN graduates.
- Home health and hospice care organizations, stakeholders, and other interested parties should also consider developing more in-depth studies on LVNs across Texas to understand what factors contribute to their decision on their decided nursing setting. This knowledge would benefit these organizations in the upcoming session.

