

Case Study: Nursing Shortage in Nevada

Situation:

While the phenomenal growth of Nevada during the 1980s and 1990s provided many positives for the state and its residents, it also led to areas of concern. One of the major areas impacted by the growth was Nevada's healthcare system. In 2001, Nevada ranked last in the United States in nurse-to-population ratio with just 520 nurses for every 100,000 residents.

Over the next five years (2001-2006), Nevada remained the fastest-growing state in the nation leading to the opening of six new hospitals and 20 hospital expansions. The growth of the healthcare system created a need for 4,800 new nurses, while Nevada colleges only produce 1,200. Many expected to see Nevada's nurse-to-population ration plummet; but the opposite occurred.

In 2001 Recruiting Nevada acted:

The first objective for Recruiting Nevada was to create a regional recruiting campaign that would sell the benefits of "Nursing in Nevada." This required partnering with the healthcare stakeholders in Nevada, including the Nevada Hospital Association, Nevada Health Care Association, Nevada Nurses Association, Southern Nevada Medical Industry Coalition and the State of Nevada Governor's Office.

Then Recruiting Nevada developed an employment website specific to Nevada's Healthcare Workforce Needs:

- Provided relocation information for all areas of the state
- Added licensure information to assist relocating jobseekers
- Executed the largest online (Internet) media buy representing Nevada's needs
- Worked with local universities to recruit for future faculty

The regional recruiting effort had a secondary impact on Nevada healthcare employers:

- They stopped intentionally recruiting from one another
- They began to eliminate sign-on bonuses and instead offer relocation/housing bonuses
- They began to focus more on their retention programs which improve recruitment

The Outcome:

Despite the continued rapid growth of Nevada, the nurse to population ratio has increased by 5% since 2001 (from 520 nurses for every 100,000 residents to 548 per 100,000), according to a November 2005 report by Dr. John Packham of the University of Nevada School of Medicine.

In fact, with Recruiting Nevada's efforts focused primarily on attracting healthcare providers from California, Nevada has surpassed California and no longer has the lowest nurse-to-population ratio in the nation. During the past five years, Recruiting Nevada assisted in the efforts by recruiting hundreds of registered nurses from across the country via the Internet to local hospitals and care centers and continues to incubate thousands of nurses interested in relocation to Nevada when the timing is right.

Nevada has been the fastest growing state in the Union for 19 consecutive years

Nurse to Population ratio
2001: 520 : 100,000
2005: 548 : 100,000

5% Increase Since 2001

