

Testimony related to the Larned State Hospital Legislative Proviso

Presented to: Legislative Budget Committee

By: Laura Howard, Secretary Kansas Department for Aging and Disability Services

December 13, 2019

Chairman Waymaster and Members of the Committee:

During the 2019 Legislative session, funding of \$186,931 was added to the Larned State Hospital budget to address staff recruitment and retention issues. Additionally, language was added to House Sub. for SB 25 requiring Larned State Hospital (LSH) to report back on the impact the additional \$186,931 had on staff vacancy rates and turnover. Larned State Hospital appreciates the Legislature's long-standing support of the hospital.

Over the past 6 months, the Kansas Department for Aging and Disability Services (KDADS) has worked closely with LSH and the Governor's office to develop a plan to reduce the wage disparity between LSH and the Larned Correctional Mental Health Facility (LCMHF/DOC), which shares the same campus. The cost associated with this plan is nearly \$1.5 million for 325 LSH direct-care employees. To facilitate the salary increases, Governor Laura Kelly issued an Executive Directive (19-510) on November 21, 2019, which had an effective date of December 1, 2019.

Specifically, the Executive Directive provides:

A 2-step increase was provided to all classified employees and the equivalent increase for all unclassified employees for the following job titles:

1. Client Training Supervisor/Training Program Manager/Mental Health Professionals
2. Licensed Mental Health Technician
3. Licensed Practical Nurse
4. Licensed Practical Nurse Senior

A 4-step increase was provided to all classified employees and the equivalent increase for all unclassified employees for the following job titles:

1. Mental Health Developmental Disability Technicians

An 8-step increase was provided to all classified employees and the equivalent increase for all unclassified employees for the following job titles:

1. Safety and Security Officer
2. Safety and Security Officer Lieutenant
3. Safety and Security Officer Supervisor

The net result is an increase in the starting salaries of the following classifications:

Position Description	Current Starting Wage	Proposed Starting Wage
MHDD Technician	\$14.66	\$16.16
Client Training Supervisor	\$15.75	\$16.56
Training Program Manager	\$15.75	\$16.56
Mental Health Professional	\$15.75	\$16.56
Licensed Mental Health Tech	\$16.56	\$17.39
Licensed Practical Nurse	\$18.70	\$19.65
Licensed Practical Nurse Senior	\$19.17	\$20.13
Safety and Security Officer	\$14.66	\$18.26

It should be noted that these actions did not bring LSH to parity with DOC for all job classifications, but these increases should make a substantial impact in reducing that disparity.

Pay increases are part of a continuing effort by KDADS to address staffing and retention challenges at our state hospitals. KDADS and LSH are working together to lower overtime costs, reduce turnover and vacancy rates, increase staff to patient ratios, provide additional tools for our human resource experts to enhance recruitment and retention efforts and ultimately increase safety and work-life balance for the dedicated staff at LSH.

Through 2019, LSH has actively recruited on social media – Facebook and LinkedIn as well as advertising on Indeed. LSH marketed positions through local radio ads, reaching targets within a 60-mile radius. LSH participated in 21 job fairs this year and advertising has occurred in local newspapers and in the Military Health Careers and Education News.

LSH continues to promote larnedcares.com and the “Be the One” brand; the LSH water tower was branded with the “Be the One” logo this year and branded apparel is available for purchase to promote the agency in a positive manner.

LSH entered a contract with KU (Rural Health Education & Services Recruitment and Retention Center) to assist with recruiting Medical, Social Workers and Psychology staff. Additional recruiting efforts not yet implemented include contracting with Nexstar Media group for television and social media efforts for recruiting throughout the state of Kansas, this remains in the bid process. LSH is also exploring with KDADS consideration of recruitment of military members through the US DOL initiative.

Retention of staff is recognized as a challenge and mandated hours for direct care staff remains very high at LSH. A work team was recently developed by KDADS to determine ways to enhance retention efforts at all State Hospitals.

Current retention efforts at LSH include having an active STAR - Special Thanks And Recognition Committee, which recognizes and demonstrates appreciation for staff throughout the year, including celebrating Hospital Week in May with a gift of appreciation for each staff member.

Employees of the quarter and year are recognized, and an annual years of service presentation is held with a hospital-wide lunch meal provided.

LSH holds an annual Mental Health Conference (in May) for a clinical educational opportunity for employees as well as outreach to the community. Four leadership trainings were held in 2019, bringing educational opportunities to LSH campus with plans for providing annual leadership training opportunities and an additional two all staff trainings in 2020. This was initiated based on feedback/data from exit interviews of staff.

LSH is working with OSH to be an outreach site for the OSH MHT Program, which has been a long-term project that has finally come to the approval phase. It has proven to inspire LSH MHDD staff with 21 employees applying for ten possible seats in the first class. The Program goes before the KSBN this month for approval to start the first class early in 2020, which will allow a promotional step for MHDD staff while being a way to develop LSH's own licensed staff to fill LMHT vacancies in the future.

LSH has an Employee Executive Committee, which continues to emphasize new ideas for retention. Individual departments and Programs hold pot lucks, holiday meals, and other individual recognitions for employees throughout the LSH campus.

KDADS and Larned State Hospital are committed to continuing to reduce the turnover and vacancy rates. While it is too early today to have precise data on the impact of the salary adjustments, we will plan on reporting back to the Legislature by mid-March with an update.

Thank you for the opportunity to present this information today and I would be happy to stand for questions.