

Washington's Health Workforce Sentinel Network Summary of Spring 2024 Findings

Washington's Health Workforce Sentinel Network is a tool to understand employers' workforce needs – such as challenges related to recruitment, retention and needed skills – and make that information available to educators and policy makers. Having an ample workforce is key to overcoming the state's top healthcare challenges. Findings since 2016, including an interactive dashboard, is at <https://wa.sentinelnetwork.org/>.

ABOUT US

The Health Workforce Sentinel Network supports efficient and effective health workforce preparation and deployment by:

- Identifying the skills needed and local conditions that may make hiring difficult
- Providing information about the “how and why” behind workforce demand signals
- Engaging the full network of stakeholders needed to identify and solve workforce problems

Health workforce employer Sentinels can:

- Communicate their health workforce needs to decisionmakers
- Compare their organization's experiences and emerging workforce demand trends with similar employer groups.
- Have access to current and actionable information about emerging workforce needs
- Help to ensure that the state's health workforce is prepared to respond to the transforming health care environment

SPRING 2024 FINDING BRIEFS

The following Finding Briefs highlight current workforce needs reported to the state's Health Workforce Sentinel Network by select health settings during April/May 2024:

- [Behavioral Health Clinics](https://tinyurl.com/BHCsSpring2024) (tinyurl.com/BHCsSpring2024)
- [Dental Offices](https://tinyurl.com/DentalSpring2024) (tinyurl.com/DentalSpring2024)
- [K – 12 Schools](https://tinyurl.com/SchoolsSpring2024) (tinyurl.com/SchoolsSpring2024)
- [Nursing Homes/Skilled Nursing Facilities](https://tinyurl.com/SNFsSpring2024) (tinyurl.com/SNFsSpring2024)
- [Rural Health Workforce](https://tinyurl.com/RuralSpring2024) (tinyurl.com/RuralSpring2024)
- [Small Hospitals](https://tinyurl.com/SmallHospitalsSpring2024) (tinyurl.com/SmallHospitalsSpring2024)

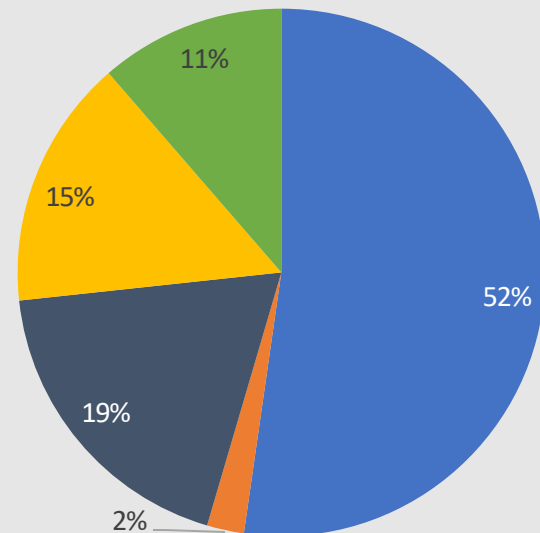
HIGH-LEVEL FINDINGS FROM SPRING 2024

- Employers are increasingly reporting that they are creating their own training programs or are implementing models based on apprenticeships and mentorships to “grow their own” employees.
- Lower wage occupations, such as nursing assistants, medical assistants and dental assistants, are reported to be difficult to hire and retain due to wage competition and, in some cases, switching to a field other than healthcare.
- While the overall use of contract/travel workers has decreased since the height of the COVID-19 pandemic, this strategy is still used by many Washington healthcare employers to fill staffing needs.

EXAMPLE OF RESPONSES ACROSS ALL FACILITY TYPES

How would you describe your facility's use of contract/travel workers now compared with your use a year ago?

- We did not use contract/travel workers a year ago and still do not now
- We did use contract/travel workers a year ago but do not now
- We've decreased the number of contract/travel workers
- We use about the same number of contract/travel workers
- We've increased the number of contract/travel workers



About the Washington Health Workforce Sentinel Network

The Sentinel Network links the healthcare sector with policymakers, workforce planners and educators to identify and respond to changing demand for healthcare workers. The Sentinel Network is an initiative of Washington's Health Workforce Council, conducted collaboratively by Washington's Workforce Board and the University of Washington Center for Health Workforce Studies. Funding to initiate the Sentinel Network came from the Healthier Washington initiative, with ongoing support from Governor Inslee's office and the Washington State Legislature.

Why become a Sentinel? As a Sentinel, you can:

- Communicate your organization's workforce needs to inform policy and planning responses.
- Have access to current and actionable information about emerging healthcare workforce needs.
- Compare your organization's experience and emerging workforce demand trends with similar employer groups.

To view an interactive summary of findings and to provide information from your organization: www.wa.sentinelnetwork.org.

Contact: healthworkforce@wasentinelnetwork.org

Sentinel Network Team:

UW Center for Health Workforce Studies: Benjamin Stubbs, Grace Guenther, Nhu Nguyen, Beverly Marshall, Susan Skillman

WA Workforce Board: Renee Fullerton, Donald Smith