

McLane Children's Baylor Scott & White: Meeting Nurse Staffing Needs with International Recruitment

McLane Children's Baylor Scott & White is in the small central Texas city of Temple. McLane Children's was previously a hospital within a hospital but then moved to a renovated, freestanding hospital across the street and officially opened its new facility on October 4, 2011, with 112 inpatient beds on two campuses. There are 48 private medical/surgical rooms, 16 private pediatric ICU rooms and 48 neonatal ICU beds. The hospital has skilled providers in 40 pediatric subspecialties and a 14-bed pediatric emergency department that treats about 27,000 children per year.

Challenge

McLane Children's is challenged by its location. Temple has fewer than 70,000 residents and McLane Children's serves a 30,000 square-mile radius that encompasses a myriad of small to medium towns. Austin is about 50 miles away, with San Antonio, Dallas and Houston two to three hours from Temple. Even though McLane Children's is only a 25-minute drive from Killeen, Texas, which has 125,000 people, and Waco, Texas, which also has 125,000 people, there is a small pool of nurses to choose from, especially when considering nurses with a pediatric specialty.

"It's been a big challenge recruiting specialty nurses with pediatric experience," said Ellen D. Hansen, RN, BSN, MS, Chief Operating Officer & Chief Nursing Officer of McLane Children's. Hansen has 32 years of healthcare experience in freestanding children's hospitals.

McLane Children's does have access to a Bachelors-prepared program at the nearby University of Mary Hardin-Baylor in Belton, Texas. There are also two associate degree programs nearby at Temple Community College and Central Texas Community College. This gives McLane Children's an adequate pool of new graduates; however, more than half of those are ADN's, which then must enter bachelors programs to further their education in their nursing careers.

With experience working in children's hospitals in Phoenix and Atlanta, Hansen helped open McLane Children's. She said her previous hospitals were considered prestigious places of employment for nurses who had achieved success in their careers. Hansen intends for McLane Children's to be that type of hospital, but that wasn't the case at first. Bachelor-prepared nurses from Austin, Houston or Dallas would come to McLane Children's, get a year's worth of experience and then return to work at a hospital in Austin, Houston or Dallas. New graduate nurses are now carefully screened in relation to their long-term commitment to McLane Children's.

Partnership

Before Hansen came to McLane Children's, she worked at Phoenix Children's Hospital, which partnered with O'Grady Peyton International, an AMN Healthcare company. O'Grady Peyton offers long-term nursing employment by enlisting qualified nurses from around the globe to complete assignments in the United States.

While at Phoenix, Hansen was involved in the hiring of 60 international nurses. "They all finished their contracts and every one of them took a job with us," said Hansen. "And when I left, only one of them had actually resigned and moved on to another position. So we retained 59 of 60. To me that is very successful."

After Hansen got to McLane Children's and experienced the recruiting challenges of a smaller community, she went to O'Grady Peyton and together they started the planning for supporting her nurse workforce with international nurses.

Solution

Partnering with O’Grady Peyton, Hansen said that she brought in 30 international nurses to McLane Children’s. Out of the 30, there were three who didn’t work out. Out of the 27 who remain, 23 have been hired. The remaining four are not off contract yet.

“Standard of care is our most important goal but gains are going to come long term,” Hansen said. “An 18- or 24-month contract is expensive. In some hospitals, administrators can’t see past that. But if you are still working with that nurse three years later, it ends up paying for itself. It’s an investment upfront and it’s a risk, but it’s paid off in two different organizations in two different states for me.”

Why international nurses? “The No. 1 answer is their attitude,” said Hansen. “They came wanting to work and being grateful for the job and grateful for the opportunity to move to this country and start a better life for their family.”

One of Hansen’s takeaways in using international nurses is you just don’t have to acclimate the international nurses to working in the United States, you have to acclimate the US nurses to working with international nurses. Learning each other’s idiosyncrasies and cultural habits makes for easier synergy and long-term work relationships.

Why did Hansen use O’Grady Peyton?

“I talked to other international recruiting firms, as well as some that were coming straight out of Mexico with a bachelors degree program, but they were nowhere near the caliber of the people I worked with at O’Grady Peyton,” said Hansen. “The nurses that they brought and the O’Grady Peyton team have been very, very good to work with”

Hansen works very closely with every one of the international nurses she hires, including helping the nurses’ spouses to secure employment opportunities at McLane Children’s, Baylor Scott & White or in the community. She coaches the spouses on how to interview in the United States and what employers are looking for in potential employees. Hansen says McLane Children’s has hired 10 of the spouses and helped another four obtain positions within the community, and that helps keep their nurses.

“Whenever we had any issues with an employee, I would call my O’Grady Peyton rep and she would have somebody visit the facility, follow the nurse and observe the behavior,” said Hansen. “She would then do a very detailed action plan and coach the nurse and our leadership team. This was key to improving the performance of a couple of the nurses who struggled at first. We were very close to saying this is not going to work out and today they are some of our very best nurses.”

Summary of McLane Children’s and O’Grady Peyton Partnership

- McLane Children’s onboarded 30 international nurses. Of the 27 nurses still on staff, 23 have completed contracts and converted to staff positions. Four are still under contract.
- Most of the 30 international nurses started within 90 days of offer.
- O’Grady Peyton does not charge additional fees if staff convert to permanent employees at end of contract period.
- O’Grady Peyton handles immigration, US licensure, relocation, payroll and benefits and in return charges an hourly rate for an 18- to 24-month contract period.

To learn more about O’Grady Peyton International Nurses, call **(800) 532-3034** or visit **www.ogradypeyton.com**

