



Health Services
LOS ANGELES COUNTY

June 26, 2017

Los Angeles County
Board of Supervisors

Hilda L. Solis
First District

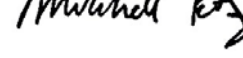
Mark Ridley-Thomas
Second District

Sheila Kuehl
Third District

Janice Hahn
Fourth District

Kathryn Barger
Fifth District

TO: Supervisor Mark Ridley-Thomas, Chairman
Supervisor Hilda L. Solis
Supervisor Sheila Kuehl
Supervisor Janice Hahn
Supervisor Kathryn Barger

FROM: Mitchell H. Katz, M.D. 
Director

SUBJECT: **HIRING COUNTY CLIENTS AS NURSING ATTENDANTS AT THE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH SERVICES (ITEM #73-B FROM THE APRIL 18, 2017 BOARD MEETING)**

Mitchell H. Katz, M.D.
Director

Hal F. Yee, Jr., M.D., Ph.D.
Chief Medical Officer

Christina R. Ghaly, M.D.
Chief Operations Officer

On April 18, 2017, the Board directed the Department of Health Services (DHS) and Workforce Development, Aging and Community Services (WDACS) to develop a plan to hire high-functioning, work-ready County clients into the new Nursing Attendant I positions of DHS' Nursing Attendant Conversion project. This project will also occur in consultation with the Departments of Human Resources (DHR), Children and Family Services (DCFS), Public Social Services (DPSS), Probation, and other related County departments.

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For this project, DHS plans to hire 305 Nursing Attendants by the end of Fiscal Year (FY) 2018-19 as "sitters" for the Medical and Surgical areas at three County hospitals: LAC+USC, Olive View-UCLA and Harbor-UCLA Medical Centers. Sitters serve the important role of remaining at the bedside of patients who require close observation and care due to altered mental state or extreme risk of falls or accidental injury. Year 1 of the project includes 153 new Nursing Attendant positions, with a January 1, 2018 program start date. Year 2 will include an additional 152 new Nursing Attendant positions.

By implementing this project, DHS expects to reduce reliance on contracted staff and hire County employees to perform this essential healthcare function. Additionally, the project will serve the important goal of providing these employees with family-level wages and benefits, without an increase in net County cost.

As requested by the Board, the Departments have developed the following plan to hire County clients into the new Nursing Attendant positions:

To ensure access to high-quality, patient-centered, cost-effective health care to Los Angeles County residents through direct services at DHS facilities and through collaboration with community and university partners.

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a. Recruitment/Client Outreach

Los Angeles County recognizes that healthcare is one of our priority high-growth sectors, which offers opportunities for County residents to enter sustainable, well-paid career-pathways. Accordingly, WDACS has made substantial efforts and deliberate investments in creating and expanding these opportunities to the targeted populations they serve. For instance, in FY 2015-16, through their America's Job Centers of California (AJCCs), WDACS placed over 1,500 participants in health care pathways through a combination of training and labor exchange services.

WDACS works closely with DPSS, Probation, and DCFS to coordinate countywide workforce services and connect their shared clients to employment opportunities. Through this collaboration, the workforce development system has access to a shared labor pool and the ability to mobilize geographically targeted recruitment efforts to meet DHS' demand, while providing access to quality jobs to targeted populations.

For the Nursing Attendant Conversion project, DHS Human Resources and WDACS are collaborating on an assessment of the 110 candidates on the current Nursing Attendant I list, as well as those hired by DHS in the last 12 months, to determine how many of these candidates have been County clients. With this information, DHS and WDACS plan to review the pathway these candidates followed to become ready for Nursing Attendant work.

DHS also recommends that WDACS use a screening component to assess whether prospective candidates have an aptitude and interest in providing physical and psychosocial care to hospital patients. For instance, successful candidates will display a caring approach, be comfortable assisting a patient with bathing and toileting, demonstrate an interest working in healthcare, enjoy interacting with a variety of people, likely have some experience as a caregiver in the home or community, be ready to commit to a structured training program, and be representative of the communities DHS serves.

In support of this effort, the County workforce system will leverage existing healthcare training and talent pipelines to source candidates to fill immediate needs, while simultaneously initiating a coordinated campaign to promote career pathways within DHS using Nursing Attendant I as the entry point. This will include a "boots-on-the-ground" recruitment campaign to source work-ready County clients by preparing the system's Career Development Specialists, Job Developers, Case Managers, and Job Coaches to identify suitable candidates based on the competencies and aptitudes identified by DHS and the development of a sustainable pipeline of talent through customized employment training.

In addition, DHS Nursing leaders from each of the three hospitals will serve as champions for this project. The champions will conduct interviews with the clients

sourced by WDACS to select candidates for the anticipated training programs, provide check-ins while the candidates are in classroom and clinical rotation training, and actively mentor the new hires during on-boarding to DHS worksites. In this way, we seek to have the candidates selected for training feel that DHS is invested in their success and help them feel invested in DHS through their interactions with the champions.

b. Identification and Funding of Training Programs

To set County clients up for success and job-readiness to work as Nursing Attendants caring for at-risk patients, DHS seeks candidates who have completed a training program and demonstrated competency set by the California Department of Public Health through certification as certified nurse assistants (CNA). The State certification process is composed of an exam covering Physical Care Skills (Activities of Daily Living, Basic Nursing Skills, and Restorative Skills), Psychosocial Care Skills (Emotional and Mental Health Needs, Spiritual and Cultural Needs), and the Role of the Nurse Aide (Communication, Client Rights, Legal and Ethical Behavior, Member of the Health Care Team).

WDACS is researching the availability of training programs with geographic proximity to DHS' hospital work sites, and the requisite classroom and Skilled Nursing Facility (SNF) agreements for students to complete their clinical rotations as pre-requisite for the State competency test. DHS has also recommended inclusion of a DHS-developed training component in the program so that candidates are already well prepared to work in DHS' hospital settings. The timeframe anticipated for a County client to complete the training and meet the certification requirements set by the California Department of Public Health is six months.

As noted in the Board motion, the County manages funding that provides our clients with work-readiness (soft skills) training, employment certification, supportive services and in some cases, income support during employment training. The County's workforce system will identify and leverage these funds and services with other available resources such as federal and State tuition grants, the Community College Strong Workforce Programs and other grants to fund training efforts in support of this initiative.

WDACS has identified several potential training partners, and is vetting curriculum and opportunities for customization for DHS. Three local community colleges have active CNA programs located near each of the County's acute-care facilities: LAC+USC, Olive View-UCLA, and Harbor-UCLA Medical Centers. Each college has the capacity to place trainees with local SNFs to complete the State clinical rotation requirement. Another potential training partner is the American Red Cross (ARC), which also operates locations near these three County hospitals and has existing capacity to meet clinical rotation requirements. ARC's curriculum includes competencies that may be of

benefit to DHS and potentially reduce or eliminate the need to develop additional curriculum. The provider has also expressed willingness to customize recruitments per DHS specifications. WDACS will continue to work with DHS to identify and build the most effective programming and to include the best partners to ensure the success of this effort.

c. Expedited Exam Process

DHR has recommended an exam plan for Nursing Attendant I similar to the successful expedited exam process implemented for DHS's Registered Nurse I (RN I) exam. The RN I exam includes an objective, on-line assessment given in an un-proctored environment. This tool is convenient for the applicant to self-schedule within an established timeframe and it has significantly sped up the RN I exam process while providing hiring managers with access to qualified candidates on a flow basis. DHR has already identified an on-line assessment geared towards CNAs for presentation to DHS' Office of Nursing Affairs.

DHR discussed the various examination options with DHS, including selective certification, to support the hiring of County clients who have completed the designated training and State certification requirements. Typically, it is best to list such specialties on the class specification; however, in this case, a specialty already exists. DHR recommends and DHS concurs that the most efficient way to run the exam to meet DHS' various Nursing Attendant hiring needs is to adopt a supplemental questionnaire tied to the training programs already listed in the Skilled Nursing specialty for the Nursing Attendant class specifications. DHR will also assist DHS to build a supplemental questionnaire that will be automatically scored by the applicant tracking system, with audit controls, which will save staff time and expedite the exam.

DHS requested approval of alternate banding in the next Nursing Attendant exam given the number of new positions, regular attrition, and difficulties filling certain hard to recruit assignments, like the night shift. DHR reviewed the exam data and conducted a data-intensive validation study to ensure the fair treatment of all candidates, pursuant to the requirements listed in Civil Service Rule 11.01. Based on the results of this study, DHR is approving the use of alternate banding for this classification for the next administration of the exam.

DHS and DHR will plan to have this new Nursing Attendant exam in place well in advance of the County clients completing their training programs. DHS Human Resources will also offer training to those in the CNA training programs on how to set up a profile in the County's recruitment portal to apply for the Nursing Attendant jobs. DHR will dedicate an analyst to assist DHS examination staff in the administration and creation of an eligibility list. By changing the examination plan, automating the screening process and devoting DHR resources, we estimate the first batch of

candidates will be on a list within three weeks of application, far more quickly than the current exam process.

d. Goal to Hire Nursing Attendant I positions with County Clients

Due to the timeframe needed to train County clients to take the California certification test, DHS recommends that it start to hire for the Year 1 Nursing Attendant positions as soon as possible from the existing eligible list. This will allow DHS to decrease its reliance on external contracts, while the new exam is initiated and WDACS sets up the necessary training programs. DHS will then focus the Year 2 hiring efforts on the anticipated pool of County clients resulting from the training programs.

To support these efforts, DHS recommends that WDACS seek to enroll 200 clients for the initial pipeline, as DHS will have 152 new Nursing Attendant positions in Year 2, as well as other vacancies due to normal attrition. DHS will target filling more than two-thirds of the Year 2 positions from the anticipated pipeline and consider this pool for all Nursing Attendant vacancies and not just for the new sitter opportunities. Through these efforts, DHS and WDACS expect to meet the important goals of providing training and job opportunities to County clients; filling the Year 2 sitter positions with high-functioning, work-ready employees, without an increase in net County cost; and developing a partnership to collaborate on future Nursing Attendant pipelines.

If you have any questions or need additional information, please contact me at (213) 240-8101.

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c: Chief Executive Office
County Counsel
Executive Office, Board of Supervisors
Department of Human Resources
Department of Workforce Development, Aging and Community Services