

Industry Leader Interviews

Health

Docking Institute of Public Affairs

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Methods

Docking Institute of Public Affairs personnel interviewed leaders from Health companies in the State of Kansas from July 10 to July 21, 2008. Health companies were identified using North American Industrial Classification System (NAICS). The list of Health companies to contact for interviewing was obtained from the Kansas Department of Labor. Ten industry leaders were interviewed. The sample was not randomly drawn. Rather, the employers with the largest workforces were targeted for interviewing. The responses shown in this report are suggestive and not inferential – similar to that of a focus group.

With input from Wichita State University's Center for Economic and Business Research, the Docking Institute designed an interview schedule to assess industry leaders' perceptions of strengths and weaknesses of their cluster's workforce quality and supply in Kansas, types of training on basic and industry-specific skills most needed among new hires, and anticipated growth in cluster workforce needs over the next 10-15 years.

Findings

The first few questions of the interview ask the respondent to estimate the number of workers that fall into each of these categories:

- Administrative and office support staff
- Nursing assistants
- Nurses
- Therapeutic & diagnostic services
- Facility services

The percentages provided by each employer for each category were collected. Figure 1 shows the aggregation of the percentages for each job category. The figure shows that 32% of the employees of the Health companies interviewed are nurses, while 24% work in therapeutic and diagnostic services. Seventeen percent are employees working in facilities services, 15% are administrative and office support workers, and 12% are nursing assistants.

Figure 1: Aggregation of Percentages of Workers

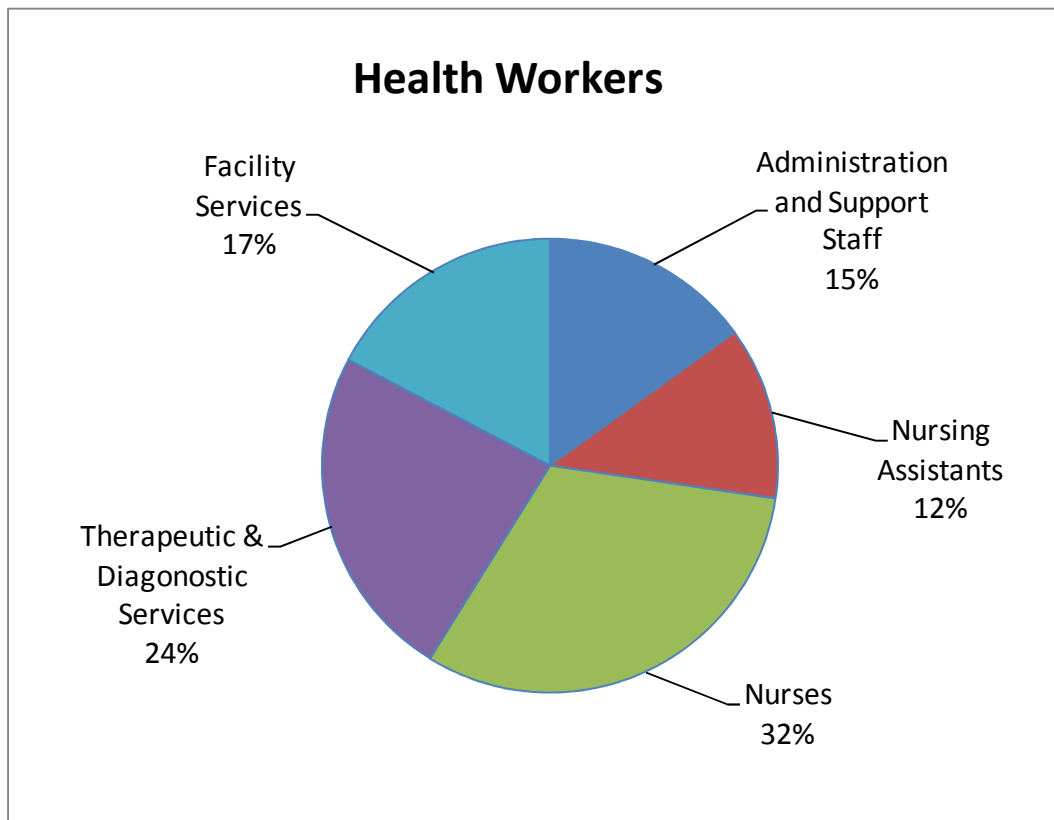


Figure 2 shows the responses to questions addressing the supply of workers available for hire. The answer options are shown in the legend in the right of the figure.

The figure shows that, of the employers interviewed, three suggest that there is an abundant supply of facility services workers, and one suggest there is an abundant supply of nursing assistants and administrative and office support staff, each.

There is a general feeling that there is at least a small shortage of therapeutic and diagnostic services workers, nurses, and nursing assistances; while there is an adequate supply of facilities workers and administrative and support staff.

Employers also feel that there is a great shortage of nurses and therapeutic and diagnostic services workers.

Notably, no employers feel that there is an adequate supply or an abundant supply of nurses and therapeutic and diagnostic services workers.

Figure 2: Supply of Workers

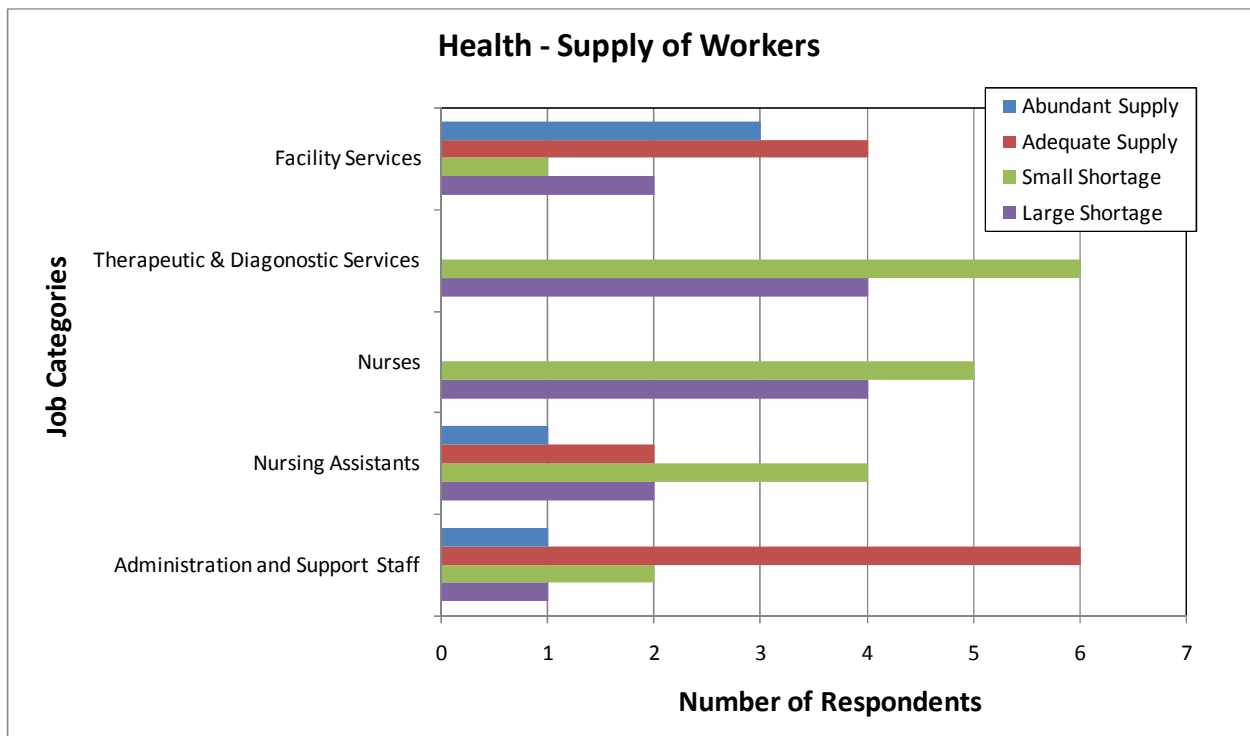


Figure 3 shows responses to questions addressing the ease of hiring workers today compared to five years ago. The figure suggests that employers perceive that it is generally the same or more difficult to hire new good workers across the board for all types of workers.

Only one employee finds it easier to hire facility services workers today than it was five years ago.

Figure 3: Ease of Hiring New Workers

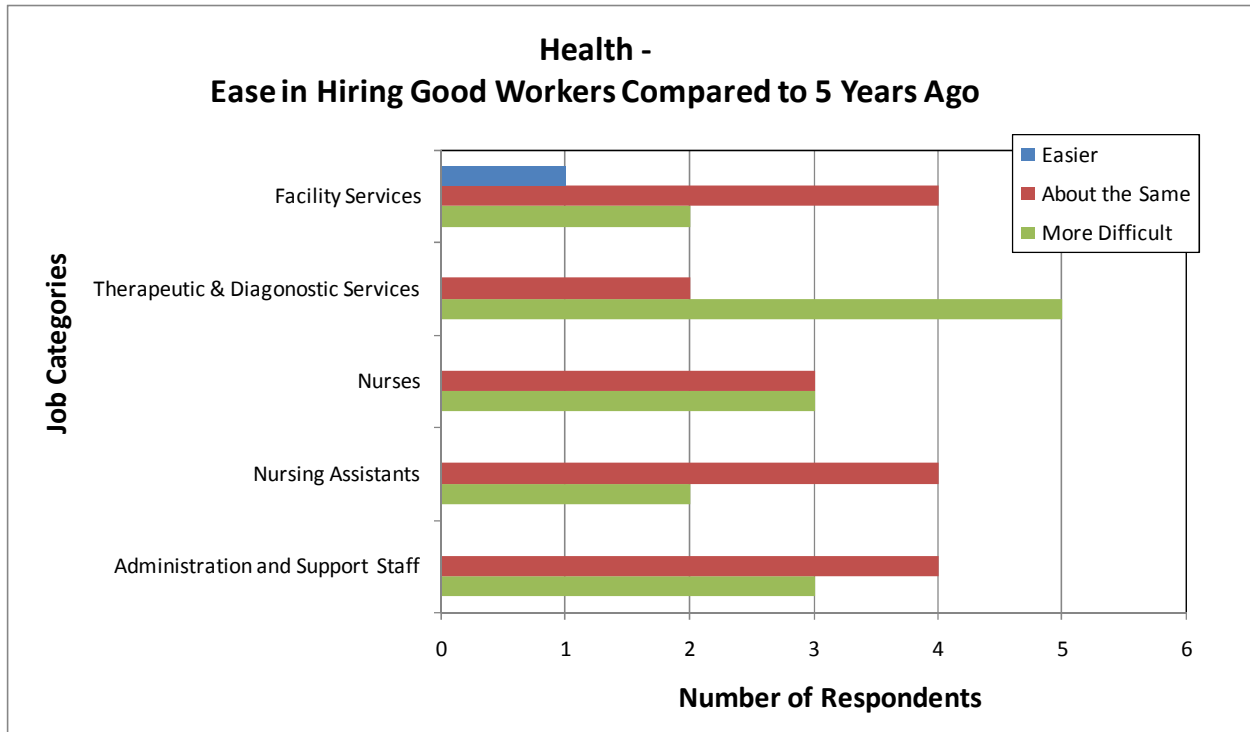


Figure 4 shows the responses to questions addressing the preparation of new hires that have recently graduated from high school, community college or tech school, or college. The figure also shows the preparedness level of employers with advanced degrees.

The figure shows that employers generally find most employees somewhat prepared for employment.

High school graduates seem more likely to be *not prepared* for work than others, while workers with advanced degrees seem to be more likely to be *very prepared* for work than others.

Figure 4: Preparation for New Hire



Tables 1 thru 3 provide responses from “open-ended” questions. Each table includes the question(s) asked of respondents as well as the responses grouped into themes. The answers are ordered by most prevalent first.

Table 1 shows that work ethics, motivation, and English grammar, and commitment to the employers as areas mentioned by employers of high school graduates that need improvement. Health companies that hire community college and technical school graduates focus on communications skills, interpersonal relationship skills, leadership and teambuilding, and self-motivation as areas needing improvement. Employers of college graduates see interpersonal relationship skills, hands-on experience, communications skills, and leadership and teambuilding as areas needing improvement.

Table 1: Skills and Skill Sets Lacking or Needing Improvement

Thinking of skills or skill sets needed at the workplace, are there certain skills that _____ seem to lack or that could be improved upon?		
High School Graduates	Community College or Technical School Graduates	Four Year, Advanced, and Specialized Degree Holders
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Work Ethics/Work Habits/Punctuality 2. Self-Direction and Motivation 3. English Grammar and Spelling 4. Commitment to Employer 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Communications Skills 2. Interpersonal Relationship Skills 3. Leadership and Teambuilding Skills 4. Self-Motivation and Self-Direction 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Interpersonal Relationship Skills 2. Hands-On Experience/Practical Knowledge 3. Communications Skills 4. Leadership and Teambuilding Skills

Table 2 shows responses to a question asking about needed training for current and future workers that the public education system might appropriately address. Knowledge of the professional work environment, knowledge of group behavior, technology skills, and English skills are areas that employers feel the public school system might address.

Table 2: Training Needs that Public Education Might Address

When thinking about new AND current workers, do you have industry-specific training needs that the public education system might appropriately address?
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Knowledge of Professional Work Environment 2. Knowledge of Group Behavior 3. Technology Skills 4. English Skills

Table 3 shows the response to a question about training needs 10-15 years in the future. The table shows that employers suggest that employees will need training in knowledge of medical and science technology, computer operations, basic nursing skills, and interpersonal relationship skills.

Table 3: Training Needs in 10-15 Years

Thinking about your industry in the next 10-15 years, in what areas do you think future employees will need additional training or improvement?
1. Knowledge of Medical/Science Technology
2. Computer Operation
3. Basic Nursing Skills
4. Interpersonal Relationship Skills

Finally, Table 4 shows some quotations from the interviews.

Table 4: Quotes from Interview Respondents

Additional comments regarding workforce training.
"We find that many new nurses with two-year degrees lack clinical skills."
"Sometimes the technical skills seem good, but the soft skills and professional skills are lacking - everything from dealing with people to dressing properly for the workplace."
"The health field changes so quickly that I think this sort of long-term thinking is unrealistic."
"We have a serious shortage of nurses. I am not sure the Board of Regents is listening to us about this. I hope this [survey] does some good."