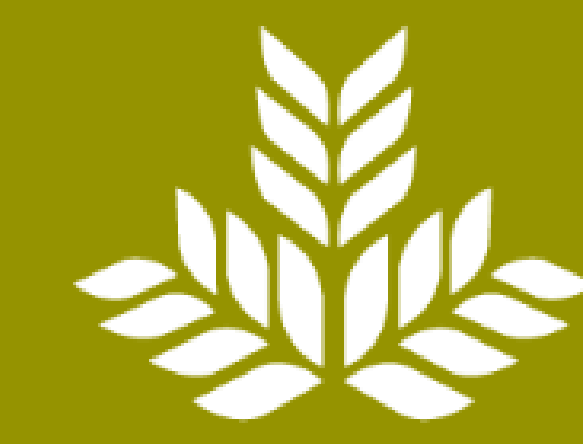




# Addressing the Workforce Shortage!

## Support to Become a Licensed Practical Nurse (LPN)



Northeast Georgia Health System

### Purpose

Northeast Georgia Health System (NGHS) began transitioning from a primary nursing care model to a Team-Based Nursing model within the acute care areas. This quickly identified the need for more Licensed Practical Nurses (LPNs).

To address the workforce deficit and create a career pipeline for those individuals interested in a nursing career, NGHS partnered with Lanier Technical College and North Georgia Technical College to create an LPN Advancement Program.

### Practice Implications

The LPN Advancement Program increases the number of Patient Care Technicians (PCTs) working on the acute care units while the participants are in school, thus filling workforce gaps. After one year, the program then increases the number of LPNs. This will allow the organization to bring additional units onboard with the Team-Based Nursing model, as only units with adequate staff are transitioned to this model.



### Methods

#### Requirements:

Participants in the LPN Advancement Program must already hold a Certified Nurse Aide (CNA) certification and be accepted into a 1-year Practical Nursing program at one of the partner schools. All pre-requisite courses must be complete prior to acceptance.

#### Work:

Participants work as a PCT for 36 hours per pay-period but are paid for 72 hours. For the other 36 hours, the students are paid to attend class and study. The position is full-time and benefited, beginning on day one of employment.

#### Expenses

During the program, the cost of all tuition/fees, books, and supplies are covered by our foundation. Everything the students need to be successful are provided to them at no cost, including the cost of the National Council Licensure Examination for Practical Nurses (NCLEX-PN).

#### Contract:

After successful completion of the Practical Nursing program and passing the NCLEX-PN exam, participants agree to remain in a fulltime LPN role for at least 2 years. Graduates participate in the Nurse Residency program at NGHS during their first year. This provides them additional training and support as they transition to practice as an LPN.

### Results

The first cohort of the LPN Advancement Program began in August 2022 with 3 students. Thirty-three percent of the students graduated from the program and successfully passed the NCLEX-PN exam. This individual was retained at 6 months and one year and will be joining the Nurse Residency Program in October 2023.

Retention will be tracked at 6 months, 1, 2, 3, and 5 years.

Cohort #2 began in August 2023 with 6 students at Lanier Technical College and 1 student at North Georgia Technical College.

One student has since been removed from the program at Lanier Technical College for failure to meet required deadlines during the first week of class.

The LPN Advancement Program attracts candidates from outside the organization and creates a career pathway for professional growth for current employees.

### Lessons Learned

With 67% loss of the first cohort, we identified interview questions to ensure the applicants have a clear understanding of program expectations and the level of discipline that will be required.

We also identified that frequent communication between the coordinator and the students is vital to their success. The coordinator can offer support as they navigate nursing school. This need led to the addition of an Advancement Coordinator to assist the PCT Program Coordinator in fulfilling these duties.

### References

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