

It's no secret the healthcare industry has faced challenges in the last few years and continues to face these same challenges that have re-shaped healthcare altogether. One of those challenges being the increased demand for nursing staff. Supply and demand are in play, causing a national nursing shortage, this shortage increased by the COVID-19 pandemic. Not only have the costs for medical services and products risen, but nursing salaries have as well, to the tune of as much as 25-35%.

So, what does this mean for recruiting? Recruiting for correctional facilities brings its own pre-pandemic challenges, so to add in the re-shaped healthcare landscape of salary rates, flexibility, and the already-existing competition with hospitals and urgent care centers, it takes creativity to navigate the current circumstances.

MEDIKO has made an intentional effort to adjust to the changing market in the industry, helping to remain competitive in recruitment and retaining top talent. MEDIKO leadership has used platforms such as Indeed and Salary.com to conduct the research needed to know what the going rate in each area is, while also comparing the national rate and closest metropolitan areas within 45 minutes of the facility. Since the market research has been done, salaries have been adjusted, while also implementing more and higher-based sign-on and retention bonuses.

In addition to increased salaries, MEDIKO makes sure to offer a thorough benefits package to all eligible employees, including 401k options and paid time off. Most notably, MEDIKO continues to keep the employee's portion of health insurance at a minimum by absorbing most, if not all, of the plan increase.

Just as desk jobs moved to work-from-home or a hybrid schedule during COVID-19, employees in all professions started to rethink how they work and schedule themselves. Pre-pandemic it was easier to hire nurses for eight-hour shifts and PRN. Today, nurses generally want to work 12-hour shifts, allowing for more flexibility in their week. Offering flexible shift options is another adjustment MEDIKO has made to fill the gap in the nursing shortage.

"These changes are definitely permanent," says MEDIKO Controller Candice Hansley, CPA. "Every time I research salaries, the average goes up a little bit, so it seems to be continuing. The pandemic caused a very competitive market, pressing employers to match rates. If not, nurses move on."