



THE PATIENT. ABOVE ALL ELSE.®

## **A CHAMPION FOR NURSES**

*St. Luke's has a long history of serving as a champion for nurses. We are proud to recognize the important contributions of all our employees by offering competitive compensation packages and a robust suite of benefits.*

### **Keeping Nurses Whole During Challenging Times**

During the COVID-19 pandemic, hospitals across the country experienced operating losses that led many to the difficult decision to lay off employees, including nursing staff. However, at St. Luke's, our leadership, managers and physicians took pay cuts yet our nursing staff remained whole. There were no involuntary layoffs or salary reductions experienced by staff nurses in the hospital.

### **Offering Competitive Wages**

The average hourly pay for nurses at St. Luke's, including premiums, currently exceeds \$53 an hour, which translates to an average full-time nursing salary of more than \$110,000 a year.

In addition, St. Luke's offered a \$6,000 retention bonus to nurses for a two-year commitment, prorated based upon hours worked.

At the current negotiating table, St. Luke's has offered a wage increase of 12%\*\* over the term of the 3-year contract, which far exceeds recently reported settlements in the Duluth area.

\*January – May 2022

\*\*As of 11-11-22

### **Providing Flexible Options**

#### *Part-time opportunities with full-time benefits*

The average nurse at St. Luke's Hospital chooses to work a .66 Full Time Equivalent (FTE), or 26.4 hours/week. We frequently welcome nurses to increase their FTE and have offered incentives for doing so.

Employees who work an average of 24 hours per week or greater receive full-time benefits. This flexibility enables employees to work a part-time schedule without the concern of losing access to the benefits on which most families rely.

### **Aligning with our Nurses on Staffing Needs**

At St. Luke's, management and frontline nurses from every unit work side-by-side to determine staffing levels, with patient safety and quality always at the forefront. If there is ever a concern about staffing, our nursing supervisors immediately respond to understand and address the concern, and then there is thorough follow up that includes staff nurses. St. Luke's has the most comprehensive staffing proposal on the negotiating table in the State of Minnesota.

### **Addressing the National Nursing Shortage**

Even prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, experts predicted a national nursing shortage due to the retiring nursing workforce and the care needs of the aging population. However, nursing schools simply do not currently have the capacity to train nurses fast enough to replace those leaving the profession. A 2021 American Association of Colleges of Nursing study found that 80,521 qualified applications were not accepted at schools of nursing due to resource constraints and a shortage of clinical sites and faculty.

#### *Actively Working to Hire for Open Positions*

From the onset of the pandemic, we have never stopped recruiting and hiring nurses. We are working hard to recruit nurses and have experienced much success. We have hired 131 RN, LPN, and Nursing Assistants in the past year, and are actively working to hire more staff to help provide additional support for our teams. We will continue to recruit aggressively, share the many benefits of being a nurse at St. Luke's and offer competitive sign-on bonuses.

#### *Growing the Nursing Workforce*

St. Luke's supports local nursing programs to help grow the nursing workforce, including partnering with the College of St. Scholastica and Lake Superior College to develop a student nurse intern program, fostering deeper relationships with nursing students and providing rich training experiences. To help with resource constraints and the shortage of nursing faculty, St. Luke's has supported staff working as adjunct faculty to help maintain class sizes and provide more opportunities for senior nursing student clinical rotations. We also provide financial stipends for nursing students, and we are pleased that 20 new graduates on stipends are scheduled to start at St. Luke's this summer.

### **Enabling Nurses to Focus on Patient Care**

As St. Luke's seeks to hire additional nurses, we are implementing new programs that provide support to help ensure our nurses can spend more time supporting patients and less time managing non-clinical tasks.

#### *Telesitter Program*

In late 2021, we initiated a new program that utilizes technology to monitor patients more efficiently and effectively, allowing one person to safely monitor multiple patients rather than having a nursing assistant sit with one patient for an entire shift. This approach allows nursing assistants to provide more support for nurses by assisting with hands-on patient care.

#### *Mobility Support Assistants*

Through this new program, assistants help manage non-clinical patient needs, including transfers and washroom usage, thus freeing up nurses to do other work.

### *Helping Hands*

In fall 2021, we initiated a voluntary program that invites all employees to sign up to be alerted when there is a staffing need. Up to three times per day, a text alert is sent with staffing needs, ranging from unskilled labor to assisting with patient care assignments to support RNs. These are paid shifts, often at overtime or bonus pay levels, and we are grateful for the collective effort to provide support for our care teams. Tens of thousands of hours of support for inpatient staff have been filled through this program.

### *Clinical Device Integration*

We are working to integrate vital sign machines (July 2022) and medication pumps (September 2022) to record patient information directly into our EMR (electronic medical record). This will assist nurses by reducing documentation time and support our focus on continuous improvement in patient safety.

### *Restructuring Nursing Leadership*

We are in the process of restructuring nursing leadership so there will be a manager on most units, which will bring more leadership presence and support for staff.

### *Peak Positions*

These positions support floor staff with admissions, discharges and other nursing duties, supporting colleagues however they're needed during times of peak demand.