

## HUMAN RESOURCES

***Kristin Morales-Lemieux, Senior Vice President & Chief Human Resources Officer, Baystate Health***

***There have been so many leadership changes, staff turnover and shortages, stress from the pandemic – it is hard to keep engaged. What is leadership’s thinking around these issues and plans to help in the future?***

***What is Baystate Health doing to retain staff? Morale is low; what are we doing to fix things?***

**Kristin Morales-Lemieux:** Thank you for raising these important issues. Stabilizing our workforce is a top priority for the leadership team at Baystate Health because without a stable and engaged workforce, our other aspirations are impossible to achieve. We are approaching concerns related to workforce in a holistic manner. Here are some of the approaches we are taking:

- Ensuring we offer competitive pay and benefits – despite a difficult budget year, Baystate Health leaders prioritized team member wages and benefits. This includes close to \$20M budgeted for merit and market-based wage increases in the FY 2023 budget as well as several benefit enhancements you’ll hear more about during Open Enrollment.
- Introducing new programs and enhancing existing program aimed at stress reduction and wellness – Baystate Health will continue to focus our efforts on listening to team members and understanding how we can develop programs that address their needs. Through this listening, we have learned about increasing stress levels both at home and at work and we have designed and implemented several new offerings including *Kumanu* – an interactive tool that guides team members through available programs using a personalized approach; *My Secure Advantage* – a financial wellness program that offers team members free one-on-one counseling focused on debt management, retirement savings, and other financial goals; *Marvin* – a virtual platform that allows team members to access behavioral health services focused specifically on the needs of care givers; and increased onsite availability of EAP services to assist individuals and teams.
- Leadership development – Baystate Health has invested in a program called *Leading with Purpose* to support our leaders in adopting and promoting a new leadership structure that focuses on elevating the voice of our team members, growing and developing talent, focusing on the greater goals at hand and achieving them through team-based planning and activities, focusing on the assets already in place at the organization and actions that have worked to achieve success in the past, and creating cycles of empowerment and action-orientation.

- Commitment to core staffing – We realize that it takes a number of team members to take safe, quality care of patients and we are committed to staffing at safe levels.
- Increased listening – Your input as to how to improve the organization and workplace for employees matters to us and we continue to find new ways to hear from you and incorporate your feedback as well as empowering teams to affect change in their areas. The continue roll out of the Daily Management System is an example of this focus.
- Workplace safety – It is important that you feel safe and secure at work – both physically and psychologically. Our work to identify and mitigate safety risks as well as a renewed focus on psychological safety is an ongoing focus.
- Promotional opportunities – Team members have told us that opportunities to grow and advance are important to them, and that they don't always feel they have an equal opportunity to do so. This year, we will be making changes that give team members clearer pathways to growth and updating our policy and procedure around posting of promotional opportunities to help ensure equal access for applicants.

***Will current employees also be getting raises to match that competitive pay?***

**Kristin Morales-Lemieux:** Baystate Health has budgeted money to adjust current employee salaries through the annual merit program in April, where increases will be made based on employee performance and position in the salary grade of their position; and through market-based equity adjustments that are made, when necessary, to ensure we are paying competitively in critical jobs where recruitment and retention is becoming problematic due to rapidly increasing salary markets.

***Are there any thoughts around having on-site daycare at our hospitals for employees? I think it would help with recruitment and retention.***

**Kristin Morales-Lemieux:** This is something we have looked at several times in the past, and we are developing a survey that will be issued as part of the Open Enrollment process for team members to tell us what types of benefits they would like to see with regard to child care services. This data will help inform our next steps.

***What are we doing about bringing in new people? When can we expect to start seeing a significant change in how many people are coming to Baystate Franklin Medical Center?***

**Kristin Morales-Lemieux:** Recruitment across the enterprise is a priority for us, and we are constantly innovating to find new and better ways to attract talent. This has been a strong year for recruitment of employees for Baystate Health, with over 3,200 new hires to the Baystate Health Team. Specific to BFMC, 176 new staff members joined in FY22.

Here are some recruitment strategy highlights. Recruitment strategies for the organization have been a combination of:

- Increase in-person recruiting events and create a monthly calendar of virtual events – BH recruitment team held over 75 recruitment events in FY22 both virtually and in person.
- Increase international pipelines – currently contracted with both O’Grady Peyton and Connectics USA to hire international nurses and laboratory staff
- Continually monitor open requisitions and identify hot spots and areas where enhanced marketing is required
- New Referral Program in October 2022 that will pay any employee \$500 who refers a candidate who is hired
- Continually collaborate with Indeed to optimize sourcing spend, which is our number one external source for recruitment
- Increased social media presence while working with marketing to share employee success stories
- Increase our visibility at community training programs especially those supporting our community hospitals
- Leveraging technology in order to speed up hiring process
- Eliminating educational barriers in entry level roles with a focus on inclusivity of individuals who meet competencies.

***We have lost cardiologists and pulmonologists, as well as many others – what is Baystate Health doing about this? How long will it take before we see results?***

**Kristin Morales-Lemieux:** We have seen an uptick in provider turnover, which is in line with our peers nationally. An extensive marketing plan is developed for each provider opening and escalated as appropriate to outside agencies. Each role is assessed for the need of locum support by BMP leadership while recruitment is ongoing.

The provider recruitment team has experienced a record-breaking year, with a total of 232 providers beginning new roles at BH. However, there are pockets in the organization where the availability of specialty trained physicians is a concern and can more than a year to recruit. Once hired, licensing can take up to five months. Currently we have 34 physicians and 38 advanced practice providers who have accepted roles at BH and awaiting licensing and credentialing to begin work with us.

***Baystate Health appears to be embracing remote employees, which includes applicants that work permanently out-of-state. For example, I am in Texas. Will there be any efforts to pursue health plans that provide similar tier 1 options that are currently only available to me if I live within the Baystate local network?***

**Kristin Morales-Lemieux:** We’ve been working with our partners at Health New England to find ways to develop plans for those employees who are living outside of the network to get them a maximum value for the money that they’re spending in the plan, offering a tier one or a domestic tier discounted benefit.

Outside of our direct service area is difficult. However, we do have an out-of-area plan. There is a lower cost sharing for those folks who are living outside of the Baystate area.

I also want to acknowledge that the participating provider network in that tier has shrunk over the last couple of years, and so we are partnering with Health New England to see if we can identify another national network to provide enhanced coverage at a lower cost. So please stay tuned for more information about that. I want to emphasize that we realize that there's more work that we need to do here to have a competitive plan offering for those of you who live remote to the greater Springfield area.