

## Shearwater Health Case Study: Nurse Recruitment

**Hospital Client:** CHI St. Alexius Health Williston

**Location:** Williston, ND

**Summary:** CHI St. Alexius Health Williston faced a nurse staffing shortage. Dan Bjerknes, VP of Operations, responded to this challenge by hiring international nurses from a variety of nurse staffing providers. This helped resolve the hospital's nursing shortage, but his experience demonstrated that quality and preparation of nurses varies depending on the staffing provider used. Shearwater Health has been a vital partner in solving the staffing shortage due to extensive preparation and careful management.

As Williston, ND experienced a surge in its population due to a boom in the oil industry, individuals from all over the country relocated there. While this was great for the town's economy, it created a nursing shortage at CHI St. Alexius Health Williston. Dan Bjerknes, the hospital's VP of Operations, found himself with multiple staffing partners to help solve the problem. Dan stated, "our biggest problem was finding and hiring enough nurses while still maintaining a high level of quality."

Dan used a variety of nurse staffing providers to meet the hospital's demand. This led to a "melting pot" of nurses from different companies and nationalities. Because nurse staffing partners differ in recruitment and onboarding processes, the hospital's managers had to quickly learn the best ways to support international nurses.

One nurse staffing partner that stood out to Dan was Shearwater Health. Since 2015, Shearwater has placed 10 nurses at CHI St. Alexius Williston. Their goal is to meet the staffing needs of U.S. hospitals with international nurses who are culturally and clinically prepared. To Dan, Shearwater's process of "arriving" nurses to the U.S. sets them apart from other nurse staffing companies. Unlike many competitors, the Shearwater team guides the nurses through the psychological and emotional transition to becoming full-time employees in the U.S. healthcare system.

The process of preparation begins before the nurse even steps foot in the U.S. Shearwater representatives ensure that each individual receives personalized attention through the cultural and training program. Jethro Villarta, a Shearwater Health nurse, believes he received all the training he needed to be successful in the United States. "Coming from the Philippines, I think the acculturation training was a very big help for us. Not just to get ourselves prepared for the cultural differences but also to know how to deal with these differences in the workplace."

Once the nurse arrives to the United States, this preparation and support continues throughout the contract. Kate Hufana, another Shearwater nurse, experienced this first hand, and concluded that Shearwater, "will give you the dream that you want—the American dream. They will fulfill your dream before you leave your country, and once you arrive in the U.S. they will never abandon you or leave you hanging... In my heart, I know that they've helped me a lot from the very start—beginning with the immigrant visa sponsorship, NCLEX, and IELTS sponsorship. But the most important thing is the family immigration assistance, which is a unique benefit from Shearwater."

Dan believes it is the nurses' preparation that allows Shearwater to stand out amongst other staffing providers, with the result that "nurses are very polished before they get here." When asked about choosing a nurse staffing partner, he believes it is preparation that matters. Shearwater has developed an entire process to make sure the nurse is at his or her best to start at each designated hospital. Furthermore, in response to working with Shearwater Health, Dan highlighted, "for a hospital that has had about 60 long-term nurses like this, Shearwater has been a great partner and has helped CHI St. Alexius Williston resolve many of their staffing issues."