



SwedishAmerican Hospital + Healthcare Workforce Logistics:

# Streamlining Temporary Staffing for Improved Efficiency + Lower Costs

**SWEDISHAMERICAN**  
**A DIVISION OF UW HEALTH**

## ABOUT SWEDISHAMERICAN HOSPITAL

A major acute care hospital in Rockford, Illinois, SwedishAmerican Hospital is also the largest regional cancer center and the only heart hospital in the region. The award-winning SwedishAmerican Hospital system also includes a medical center in Belvidere, a network of primary care, immediate care, multi-specialty clinics, and a home healthcare agency.

# THE SITUATION

As a Nurse Manager of Patient Procedures at SwedishAmerican Healthcare, Jessica Bye, BSN, RN juggles a variety of tasks. Patient care is first and foremost, but she also manages other nurses, creates schedules, and when a nurse goes on leave, she must find a temporary nurse to fill in.

Just six months ago, this particular task was a nightmare--and not simply because of the small candidate pool in Rockford. Using an antiquated system with no support, Bye enters the specific details of what she needs, then waits for approvals, waits for candidates, and then, when she finally finds someone to hire, she receives no guidance on how much to pay them.

Uncertain about the rate and terms, yet desperate to fill the spot, Bye signs the contract. Now the headache passes on to the credentialing team. Productivity comes to a halt as they chase down the necessary documents.

Months later, hospital leadership will review the overall expense for temporary providers, but they will have no idea which departments are driving the costs or if the rates are competitive. They will want answers though.

“ When a 337-bed hospital spends over a million dollars on temporary nurses, therapists, and allied health providers, it raises a red flag. Something had to change. ”



Mark Robinson, MBA, PHR, SHRM-CP,  
Director of Talent Acquisition and Workforce Planning

## KEY CHALLENGES

- ▶ **Antiquated system** made the process time-consuming and cumbersome.
- ▶ **Inconsistent process** to request, evaluate, and track temporary staff.
- ▶ **Lack of support** with rate negotiation.
- ▶ **Limited insight** into where and why temporary staff was utilized.

## HWL IN ACTION: IMPLEMENTATION STEPS

- **EVALUATE VENDORS:**  
Used advanced data analytics to determine which current vendors were in SwedishAmerican's best interest to continue relationships.
- **CONTRACT AGENCIES:**  
Developed, distributed and executed standard agreements with all vendors qualified to provide services.
- **ESTABLISH PRE-SCREENING STANDARDS:**  
Created requirements for initial candidate screenings to be conducted by agencies.
- **CONFIGURE VMS:**  
HWL customized the VMS for SwedishAmerican's process and reporting requirements.
- **TRAIN VENDORS:**  
Trained each contracted agency on how to use the VMS to identify SwedishAmerican's needs and submit qualified candidates.
- **PROGRAM MANAGEMENT:**  
SwedishAmerican's dedicated HWL Account Manger coordinates all aspects of ongoing, day-to-day program oversight and support for nurse manager and talent acquisition. The team also works to expand and refine the vendor panel as needed.

## THE SOLUTION

SwedishAmerican Hospital partnered with Healthcare Workforce Logistics (HWL) to customize its Vendor Management Solution (VMS) for the hospital's specific needs. As part of this process, HWL performed a market rate analysis and evaluated regional staffing agencies--both existing vendors and new potential partners.

What they found was SwedishAmerican had indeed been paying more than the market rate--anywhere from \$10 to \$43 more per hour! They were also missing out on candidates by not partnering with several key agencies in the region. HWL approached the approved vendors with new or renegotiated contracts. Within 4 weeks, the technology platform was built and the Managed Services Program in place, so the managers began using the new system to find temporary staff.

“The change in process is like night and day,” “Managers send an email to our HWL account manager, and the process begins. They will typically have a resume to review in one or two days. This system saves them so much time and makes their jobs easier.”

Mark Robinson, MBA, PHR, SHRM-CP  
Director of Talent Acquisition and Workforce Planning

The credentialing team benefits too. The VMS provides one central location for licensing and other documentation, so it is easy to see if anything is missing and who is responsible for sending it. The system also gives leadership a clear view of where and how often each department is using temporary help. “The reporting allows us to identify areas where perhaps we need a new full-time employee rather than continuing to rely on temporary help,” explains Robinson. “This transparency just wasn't available until now.”

### GOAL

Ease the temporary staffing process while saving time, reducing costs, and improving fill rates.

## SwedishAmerican

|  | Hourly rate | Guaranteed Hours/Week | # of Weeks |
|--|-------------|-----------------------|------------|
| Billing Rate   | \$115.00    | 36                    | 13         |
| Call Coverage Facility Fee: \$15.00 per hour                   |             |                       |            |
| Call In Rate Facility Fee: \$150.00 per hour with 2 hr minimum |             |                       |            |
| Call Times: 15:00-7:00 am weekdays and 24 hours on weekends    |             |                       |            |

Proposal from staffing agency prior to HWL implementation. Average rate for same position with HWL is \$72-\$74.

“Managers love the new solution for the time it saves them, but there are other advantages too. The quality of candidates has been excellent. HWL provides more candidates to choose from.”

Lindsay Yowell, BSN, RN, Operational Supervisor

## THE RESULTS



**100% fill rate** since program launch



**\$390k** annual savings



**100% satisfaction** among managers



**Paying \$10-\$43** less per hour



**Saves average 5-6 days** in credentialing time per hire

In the six months since launching the HWL solution, SwedishAmerican Hospital has achieved a 100% fill rate for their temporary staffing needs. They are paying contractors anywhere from \$10-\$43 less per hour. “In an environment where you are constantly trying to cut spending, the solution was an easy choice,” says Robinson. “The justification for making this change was all in the numbers.”

“Leadership may love the financial savings, but the time put back in my day is priceless. HWL is a lot less work than our previous system. HWL does the work for you.”

Jessica Bye, BSN, RN, Nurse Manager of Patient Procedures

From the credentialing team to hospital leadership, everyone benefits from the HWL solution. Even patients, though they may not know it, are receiving better care from higher quality temporary providers and floor managers with more time to dedicate to patient care.