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Sign-on Bonus Policy
for
Mental Health/Developmental Disability/Substance Abuse Services (MH/DD/SAS) Registered Nurses

Effective November 1, 2008

DHHS Division of Human Resources

Purpose

The purpose of the sign-on bonus is to serve as a recruitment incentive to employ registered nurses in order to adequately staff MH/DD/SAS facilities that have shortages which impair the delivery of essential services to residents and patients. The sign-on bonus shall be targeted to entry level direct care registered nurse classifications that have unacceptable vacancy rates for which it is difficult to attract applicants for available positions. The sign-on bonus shall supplement an active and aggressive recruitment program.

Authority

HB 2436 Section 26.12B(a)(b)(c) of the 2008 session of the General Assembly

Final decisions for eligible classifications, amount of the sign-on bonus, bonus eligibility and other terms and conditions reside with the DHHS Director of Human Resources.

MH/DD/SAS State Operated Services shall receive approval from the DHHS Director of Human Resources, or designee, to institute a sign-on bonus program which will be based on documented market conditions.

MH/DD/SAS State Operated Services has authority for facility implementation of the sign-on bonus policy, subject to the DHHS Director of Human Resources approval, and shall develop an initial 12-month strategy before implementation of the sign-on bonus program with quarterly reports submitted to the DHHS Director of Human Resources.

Eligibility

The sign-on bonus applies to newly employed direct care registered nurses in permanent full-time or permanent part-time positions in a MH/DD/SAS facility. For the purpose of this policy, a direct care registered nurse provides treatment and care or directly supervises registered nurses in the treatment and care of clients and residents. A registered nurse employed with duties in education, recruitment, or other duties not associated with the direct care of clients and residents is ineligible.

Newly employed permanent full-time and permanent part-time registered nurses who work 36 consecutive months for 30 to 40 hours per week for a facility are eligible to receive up to an $8,000 sign-on bonus. Permanent part-time employees who are hired to work and continue to work for 36 consecutive months for at least 20 hours but less than 30 hours per week for a facility are eligible to receive up to a $4,000 sign-on bonus. Newly employed registered nurses must remain employed in a registered nurse direct care classification for 36 consecutive months to be eligible for the final installment of the sign-on bonus payment. Newly employed registered nurses who receive a sign-on bonus and are subsequently promoted to a direct care registered nurse supervisor/manager in the facility are also eligible for the final installment after completion of 36 consecutive months. Eligible registered nurse applicants must meet the minimum job requirements for the specific registered nurse vacancy.

Sign-on Bonus Terms and Conditions

A sign-on bonus shall not be paid when contract placement or recruitment fees are paid by the Department in connection with the employment of a registered nurse. Registered nurses who are employed using special schedules and incentives such as a modified-Baylor plan are ineligible. Employees whose performance ratings, at any time, are not at or above level three ("good") on the five-level rating scale, or have documented disciplinary actions for misconduct or performance, shall be ineligible for the second installment of the sign-on bonus. Registered nurse employees who terminate their employment with a MH/DD/SAS facility, either voluntarily or involuntarily, before the completion of 36 months of consecutive service shall repay a prorated amount of the sign-on bonus based on months of service completed. Permanent full-time or permanent part-time employees in other facilities, state agencies or universities are ineligible to receive a sign-on bonus and shall remain ineligible for up to twelve months from their date of separation. Applicants who have previously received a sign-on bonus under the MH/DD/SAS bonus program are ineligible.

Sign-on Bonus Repayment Formula
The repayment of a sign-on bonus shall be based on the following formula:

1) $ of Initial Sign-on Bonus Received / 36 Months = Prorated Monthly Amount

2) Prorated Monthly Amount x [36 Months – Months Worked] = Amount Due

The amount due shall be deducted in full from the employee's final paycheck. If the amount deducted exceeds the final paycheck, the remaining balance shall be paid in full to the facility within 60 days from the last date of employment with the MH/DD/SAS facility.

One-half of the sign-on bonus shall be paid in the employee's first paycheck with the second installment to be paid after the successful completion of 36 months of consecutive state service as a registered nurse in a MH/DD/SAS facility.

Other Policy Terms and Conditions

An employee who receives a sign-on bonus by one MH/DD/SAS facility who subsequently transfers to another MH/DD/SAS facility before the completion of 36 consecutive months forgoes the final sign-on bonus installment.

The registered nurse job posting shall state the use of and amount of a sign-on bonus.

A formalized agreement establishing the terms and conditions of the sign-on bonus shall be signed by the facility's human resources manager and the newly hired registered nurse, with the original placed in the employee's personnel file.

A facility's sign-on bonus for permanent part-time registered nurses with an appointment of 20 but less than 30 hours per week shall be one half of the sign-on bonus for permanent full-time and permanent part-time appointments of 30 to 40 hours per week.

An employee with less than 24 months of consecutive service who changes from a permanent full-time or permanent part-time 30-40 hour appointment to a permanent part-time 20<30 appointment forgoes the final sign-on bonus installment.

The consecutive months of service begins on an employee's new hire or reinstatement date. One month of credit toward the 36 months is granted when in pay status for one-half or more of the scheduled workdays and holidays in the pay period.

Credit towards consecutive service months only applies to registered nurses in pay status. The number of months on leave without pay shall be applied to the 36 months when the employee returns to pay status.

Time on workers compensation and military leave applies to the 36 months of consecutive service with the final installment being paid when the employee returns to work.

The sign-on bonus does not apply to longevity.

Bonus payments are subject to payroll taxes.

Bonus payments are subject to overtime calculation for FLSA non-exempt positions (non-discretionary bonus).

A 6% retirement contribution is deducted from the initial and final bonus payment.

The MH/DD/SAS sign-on bonus program shall be administered without regard to race, religion, creed, national origin, or sex.