

## New campaign tries to pull nurses from larger cities

By Mackenzi Klemann

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LIMA — A new campaign is looking to cities like Dayton, Columbus and Toledo to recruit registered nurses and nurse practitioners, as the number of nursing-related jobs in the Lima area continues to grow.

There are now at least 150 registered nurse and 75 nurse practitioner job openings within a 15-mile radius of Lima, according to help wanted advertisements published by Ohio Means Jobs.

Ohio Means Jobs-Allen County and the Greater Lima Region this month launched a digital campaign targeting nurses and nursing students in cities like Cincinnati, Fort Wayne, Toledo and elsewhere, touting the region's lower cost of living, proximity to universities and the abundance of nursing jobs that pay comparable wages to larger markets.

The median hourly wage for a registered nurse in Lima hit \$33.69 in May 2019, compared to \$32.64 in Dayton, \$30.69 in Toledo and \$30.74 in Columbus during the same period, according to hourly wage estimates from the Bureau of Labor Statistics.

The median hourly wage for a nurse practitioner is even higher, at \$48.13 per hour in Lima as of May 2019, while the median wage for all occupations in Lima is just \$17.40 per hour, according to BLS estimates.

Cory Wertz, chief nursing officer for Mercy Health-St.

Rita's Medical Center, said the growth in healthcare often outpaces the supply of nurses, which can make those positions more difficult to fill.

Add to that the perception that small cities like Lima — and the smaller hospitals within those cities — have less to offer than large hospitals in big cities, another challenge for the hospitals, nursing homes and home health care agencies trying to recruit more and more nurses to the area.

"I learned it was the opposite," said Wertz, who moved away from her hometown of Delphos only to return years later. "I had more ability to grow here and this area had a great potential to raise a family."

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