



**Archie Hendricks Sr.
Skilled Nursing
Facility**

“ Maintaining a dedicated and skilled workforce, with minimal turnover, is essential to successfully managing a skilled nursing facility. We could not achieve this without making a serious investment in attracting, developing and retaining high quality staff.”

– Lee Olitzky, Director

Archie Hendricks Sr. Skilled Nursing Facility

Tribal Elders Benefit from a Culture of Care & Compassion

Located in the heart of the Sonoran Desert, 60 miles west of Tucson, Arizona, the Tohono O'odham Nursing Care Authority operates a successful nursing facility, one of the very few managed by Native Americans in the United States. The facility, known as the Archie Hendricks Sr. Skilled Nursing Facility, is funded in large part by the Tohono O'odham Nation and receives federal support through Medicaid and Medicare. It was founded a decade ago so American Indian elders could access quality nursing and hospice care – regardless of their ability to pay – while remaining on the land they've called home for generations.

From its beginning, this 60-bed skilled nursing facility has operated at near full occupancy and today remains committed to maintaining its low ratio of residents to staff. It has an impressively low 7% average turnover rate as compared to the 40% national average. It has won national recognition, including high marks from Harvard's Honoring Nations project and a five-star rating from the Centers for Medicaid and

Archie Hendricks Sr. Skilled Nursing Facility Sells, AZ

- Founded 1998
- 2009 Revenue: \$9.3 million
- 125 employees
- Average workforce turnover for last 3 years: 7%
- Average tenure: 5 years
- 2009 Top Small Workplace winner as awarded by *Winning Workplaces* and *The Wall Street Journal*

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Medicare, awarded to only 12% of U.S. nursing homes. The agency operates on a budget of \$9.3 million today, a 30% increase from 4 years ago.

Despite its tough realities: located in a remote, high poverty area, facing a severe shortage of a trained labor force, and the ever-present pressures from government to do more with less, the Archie Hendricks Sr. Skilled Nursing Facility stands out. Their reputation for high-quality care is due to its dedicated board of directors,

executive management and workforce. Its leaders have intentionally nurtured a supportive organizational culture built upon the respect for indigenous values and traditions. It has deployed innovative strategies to attract and retain staff, it maintains a strong sense of community among its residents and employees and continually encourages all employees to grow and actively participate to improve the operation. Consequently, the Archie Hendrick's Facility experiences minimal staff burnout and turnover which accounts for its consistently high customer satisfaction scores from its elderly residents and their families.



Attracting and Retaining A Stable Workforce

The Archie Hendricks facility is located within a remote community where unemployment is at 26% and the average annual income is far below the federally defined poverty line.

Over the past few years, the workforce has expanded substantially as the nursing facility has grown. The organization has a strict mandate to hire as many O'odham people as possible which can be a challenge given that most local residents lack the necessary medical skills and credentials and area educational institutions, while improving, are ill-equipped to address the skill shortage. Nevertheless, nearly 80% of its 125-person staff are Native American, work full time and are female.

Despite limited resources to pay staff top wages, this facility has been very successful at attracting staff. Today it serves as one of the best options for employment in the region providing staff with generous healthcare benefits, educational assistance, and career advancement opportunities. In addition, in order to attract and retain medical staff, leadership has instituted several measures including a

signing and retention bonus for new nursing staff, flexible scheduling, subsidized housing onsite for staff that live a distance away, and subsidized meals provided throughout the day.

Health care staff make up 60% of the workforce ranging from RNs and CNAs, to Rehab Coordinator and Occupational Therapists. The rest are made up of support staff including dietary aids, administrators, prep cooks, maintenance, security, grounds keepers, housekeeping, activity aids and transportation professionals. Starting wages of CNAs range from \$12 - 14.68 an hour; support staff start at \$8 - 10 an hour.

With average employee tenure around five years, the elderly residents have benefited from stable, consistent care. Employee turnover has been historically low, averaging around 7% - an impressive figure given that the average national turnover rate for long term care facilities can be 40% or higher.¹

¹ 2006 report from Better Jobs Better Care, a national research and demonstration program managed by the Institute for the Future of Aging Services.

“We may not be able to pay you as much as another facility, but we make up for it in terms of what we offer in our benefits, education, focus on residents and teamwork. It’s our community that is so special.”

– Caroldene Garcia,
Human Resources



Archie Hendricks Sr. Skilled Nursing Facility Operating Values

All People deserve to live and die in dignity.

Life, death, and dignity are uniquely defined by one's own culture.

Health is more than the absence of disease.

It is a complete combination of intellectual, physical, psychological, social, and spiritual states which form the condition of wellness we call health.

The Tohono O'odham Culture is important to the health and well being of the elderly.

Elderly members of the Nation should maintain contact with their communities rather than being relocated off of the Nation's land to non-O'odham facilities for health care services.

It is essential that health care be delivered in a language the patient understands.

Individual autonomy and self-determination of the resident must be respected.

Health care should be provided in harmony

with the cultural values and customs of the O'odham Himdag.

The Archie Hendricks Sr. Skilled Nursing Facility

shall be resource efficient and where possible, return resources to the Nation.

It Starts With Leadership and A Compelling Mission

The Archie Hendricks Sr. Skilled Nursing Facility is guided by a strong set of values and traditions based upon the indigenous culture of the O'odham Indian community. Their mission, since its founding, is to take a leadership role in providing a continuum of care and services designed to enhance the lives of the Indian elders.

Philosophically, leadership at the Archie Hendricks center believes that in order for its staff to provide a caring environment for its elders, they need to ensure that their employees feel the organization is equally concerned about them. The facility is guided by a committed board of directors made up of subject matter experts and elders from the neighboring reservation. In addition to overseeing the development of the facility, the board makes it

a priority to stay abreast of organizational issues as they impact employees, soliciting their feedback via the Employees' Quality of Work life Committee, and reviewing all employees training and development interests and requests.

So what makes for a great workplace? Lee Olitzky, director of the nursing facility believes it has to do with ***"Respecting employees' individual needs, fostering open communication, encouraging innovative ideas, and providing opportunities for training and education."***

Archie Hendricks leaders work to instill a strong sense of teamwork throughout the agency and continually reiterate their expectation that all minds

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It Starts With Leadership

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are needed to solve organizational problems. Recently, the facility's leaders launched a new "resident-centered" care initiative. This model approach seeks to engage employees – at all levels of the organization – to work with and interact with residents. Residents and staff make decisions together designing activities for the elders and creating weekly dietary menus and care schedules.

"You need to have a workplace where you can grow and make the kind of changes that benefit your team and the way the residents are treated. If you are treated well - the residents know this - they can see it."

– Paula, Social Services

Several years ago when a few residents had taken falls at the facility, leadership brought all staff together to brainstorm around remedies to prevent this from happening in the future – even the dietary and maintenance staff were included. Leadership engaged all staff in order to generate innovative ideas and build a stronger buy-in to the ultimate solutions. In 2009,

as a result of utilizing this new approach coupled with staff training, the agency had reduced falls amongst its patient population by 100%.

While still in its early stages, its leadership has witnessed many other changes as a result of the "resident-centered" approach: institutional hierarchy has diminished, nonmanagers are increasingly stepping up and becoming more engaged in solving organizational problems, are less hesitant to make decisions, and are participating more actively in program development. Most significantly, the elderly residents have benefited from this approach expressing higher levels of satisfaction as evidenced by the scores on the customer satisfaction surveys residents and their family members complete every three months.

Success Story



Chris Jose, Information Technology Coordinator, provides a good example of an employee that has benefited by the facility's tuition and development opportunities. Seven years ago, Chris helped set up the facility's first network, email and resident care-tracking system. The medical field was something entirely new to him when he began as a computer tech, but over the years he has been sent to several trainings, many outside the state, to learn about the medical field, accounting and computer technology.

In addition to nearly doubled wages, Jose was helped immensely by the organization's reimbursement program which paid for his tuition, books and even a computer. "They gave me paid time off

to go to school and also a laptop. I don't think you'd see that kind of support at many other places" he says.

Fostering employee development is a universal value at the organization and Jose took it upon himself to extend the approach to incoming entry-level staff. He discovered through casual conversation that one of the nursing aids also had an interest in website design so Jose asked if he would help improve the organization's website. The nursing aid was thrilled to assist. "This place has been good to me, and I've learned plenty," says Jose. "In 2010, I am also planning to go back for my bachelors' degree. I appreciate all the support I have been given."

Benefits At A Glance

All staff, regardless of position, receives the same benefit package. Part-time employees working a minimum of 20 hours per week are also eligible for the organization's benefits. The subsidized meals, housing and transportation assistance are essential in helping the facility attract and retain staff given the agency's remote location.

- **Health Insurance:** 100% employee premium paid by employer
- **Health Insurance:** 20% dependent premium paid by employer
- **Dental Insurance**
- **Vision Insurance**
- **Employee Assistance Program**
- **Life Insurance**
- **Long Term Disability**
- **401K Program**
- **Pre-tax spending benefits**
- **Paid Time Off:** 18 days plus 13 holidays
- **Tuition reimbursement:** \$2,500 annually, reimburses costs of books, computer and other educational supplies
- **Onsite fitness center**
- **Subsidized meals** offered for breakfast, lunch or dinner
- **Dog-friendly workplace**
- **Flexible scheduling** to support staff commutes
- **Onsite subsidized housing** for staff that live far from facility
- **Monthly staff appreciation dinners**
- **Employees receive a bonus** for successful referrals of new nursing staff and are eligible for a retention bonus after two years

Success Story



Virgil Lewis came in as a maintenance worker two years ago and was shortly thereafter promoted to maintenance supervisor. To increase his abilities, management sent him to several leadership training sessions at a local community college, including one which brought him to San Francisco where he learned about the industry and team building techniques. During this time, leadership was very supportive through their provision

of tuition assistance and the amount of flexibility Virgil was allowed with his schedule in order to help him balance the demands of work and school. Upon completion of school, Virgil taught other co-workers what he learned which ultimately led to several operational improvements. *"At this organization, it really is all about leadership's commitment to our facility, to our co-workers and to the residents"* he says.

Employee Learning & Development

The economy continues to place pressure on health care facilities and Archie Hendricks is no exception. It must ensure it is getting the greatest value from its purchases, make the best use of present resources and eliminate waste and inefficiencies – all while providing high quality care. Possessing a capable, well-rounded workforce, at all levels, is central to its survival. Over time, management has observed that as it has steadily invested in employee development, staff's commitment deepens – they stay longer, are more engaged, creative and open to taking on new and different kinds of responsibilities. The organization develops its staff through a mix of cross-training opportunities, onsite workshops, mentoring and external education.



Cross - Training

Beginning with entry-level associates, cross-training and experimentation with different responsibilities within the organization are always encouraged. It is not uncommon for new associates in housekeeping to be allowed to assist with hosting hands-on activities for the residents or transfer to the dietary department. This is an organizational imperative as it allows the facility to operate with a minimum amount of staff, most of whom are well-versed across functions. For example Jennifer, a recent hire in Accounting, will be trained in payroll, accounts payable and accounts receivable so its three-person accounting staff will be highly efficient and interchangeable. In the near future,

Jennifer intends to pursue her Bachelors in Human Services with tuition support from the Archie Hendricks facility. *"We sit down with each employee and help them identify their interests, what motivates them. Do they like their job or are they just going through the motions? Should we suggest a lateral move? These are the things we need to find out about all of our staff. It takes great patience, flexibility and a lot of listening,"* says Lee Olitzky, Director.

Onsite Training

The organization offers a wide array of in-service trainings to help the hourly employees feel more confident in their position and able to tackle daily issues and challenges associated with the aging population. Some of the trainings are provided by area educational partners, others by internal staff. In addition to the hands-on training provided by individual departments, the agency offers other onsite development activities including:

- Cultural sensitivity classes offered in the Native American language, as well as training in the proper way to handle cultural situations such as a resident's request to receive services from a community medicine man
- First aid training
- Strategies for dealing with people with dementia
- Basic computer training
- First time supervisory development
- Series of online webinars developed by a local hospital on how to identify and manage various types of wounds; the entire staff participated in these sessions.
- Emergency planning

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"We do a really good job of attracting talent who might otherwise leave for bigger cities."

– Lee Olitzky, Director

Employee Learning *continued from page 7*

An example of a particularly effective development activity involved Customer Service training where staff learned strategies for dealing with difficult people. This comprehensive multi-part series was provided to all employees across the facility over a series of several days. The impact of the customer service training was evident in the increased levels of satisfaction survey scores as expressed by the residents and their families.

“Improving their skills and knowledge helps the individual but many also come back and teach their co-workers. It is all about a commitment to the facility. It is inspiring.”

– Caroldene Garcia, Human Resources

External Education

In 2008, the organization formalized its practices around tuition assistance, it now pays up to \$2500 per employee annually to cover expenses for tuition, supplies and, at

times, even a computer. The board of directors oversees tuition reimbursement for employees who want to pursue degrees in nursing, nutrition and other critical trades.

To date, more than 50 employees have taken advantage of this benefit particularly the healthcare staff. Employees have used the tuition to become certified as Nursing Aids, Nursing Aids have become LPNs and LPNs have gone on to be trained as RNs.

The emphasis that the agency places upon employee development benefits the individual and the nursing center but also the larger reservation as it serves as a training ground for many of the other agencies based in the area. For example, when a local hospice opened, some of Archie Hendricks’ trained staff were hired. Another former employee is now head chef of the new Desert Rain Café on the reservation, which features traditional, healthy Tohono O’odham foods. *“We don’t want to lose staff,”* says Caroldene Garcia, HR Manager. *“But if they have opportunities to do something more, we try to encourage them and show support.”*

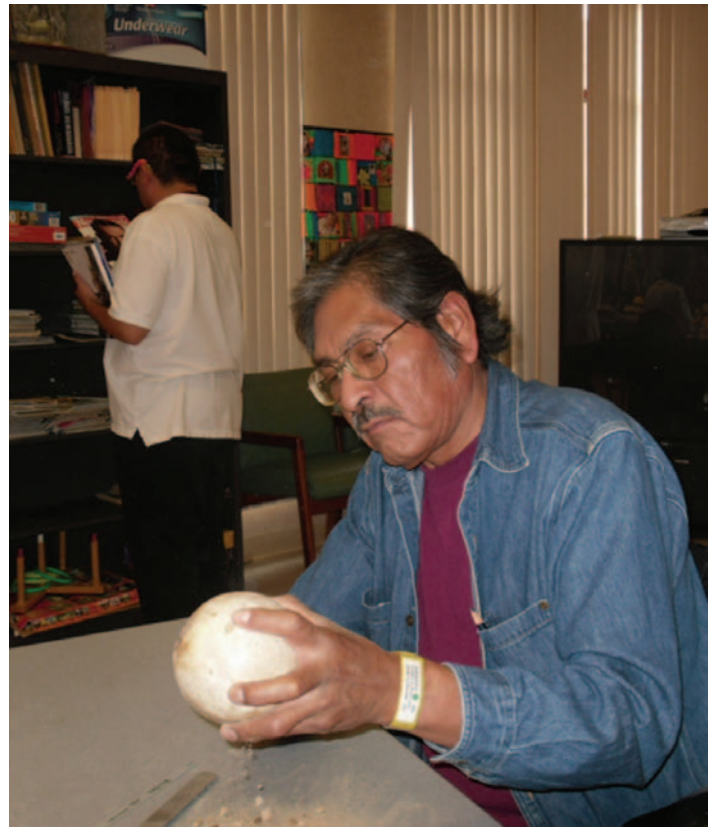


Conclusion

In an industry that is notorious for its high turnover, lower wages and staff burnout, Archie Hendricks provides a compelling example of how one nursing facility, despite its stretched resources and remote location, is able to maintain a stable, productive workforce that consistently delivers quality client care.

They accomplish this through its innovative recruitment and retention practices, generous benefits, paying attention to employees' individualized needs and instilling a strong sense of purpose and community within its organizational culture.

Today, the versatile and cross-trained staff are more willing and able to step into a variety of roles and take on more additional responsibilities. As the agency moves into the future, its leaders, with support from its board of directors, will continue to strengthen the organization while maintaining its culture of collaboration and respect for its workforce and for its resident elders and their tribal traditions.



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