

**GIFTED Healthcare's
Immediate & Effective Response
to Coronavirus in Louisiana**



Case Study: GIFTED's Immediate & Effective Response to Coronavirus in Louisiana

Summary

The abrupt and disruptive nature of the coronavirus pandemic has forced governments, organizations, and individuals to quickly change their notions of "business as usual," rewarding those who are agile and resourceful. Nowhere is this more apparent than in healthcare systems, where standard operating procedures have gone by the wayside as hospitals struggle to keep pace with an influx of thousands of COVID-19 patients.

Since the novel coronavirus arrived in Louisiana, a sharp increase in COVID-19 patients has placed a significant strain on Louisiana's healthcare system, creating unmanageable staffing shortages that require quick workforce management solutions.

This study examines GIFTED Healthcare's immediate and effective response to COVID-19 in Louisiana, made possible by innovative workforce solutions and a commitment to serve our clients during an unprecedented public health crisis. Below, we evaluate our initial 7-week response to the needs of Louisiana's largest health system.

Background: Client A

GIFTED Healthcare provides contingent labor for Louisiana's largest health system (Client A). Client A currently owns 40 managed and affiliated hospitals and more than 100 health centers in the state, and employs nearly 25,000 people, including 1,300 physicians in more than 90 medical specialties and subspecialties.

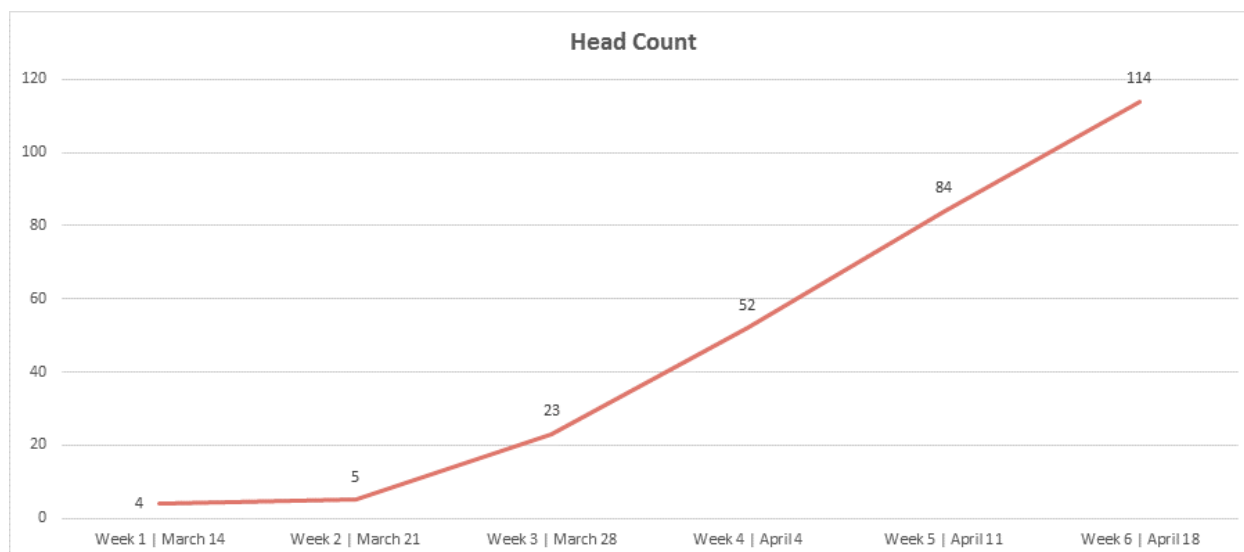
Client A is a pervasive and essential presence in our state's healthcare system, and its experience accurately reflects the severity and magnitude of the coronavirus crisis throughout the entire state of Louisiana.

COVID-19 Response

The coronavirus pandemic reached Louisiana on March 9, 2020. By March 24, Louisiana had exceeded 1,000 cases of COVID-19, many of which were located in its largest cities. Since then, Louisiana and its major cities have consistently ranked in nation's top 5 locations regarding cases and deaths per 100,000 residents. As of April 16, 2020, Louisiana has over 21,000 recorded cases of COVID-19 and 1,013 deaths as a result of the virus.

On March 11, Client A began experiencing a coronavirus-related increase in patient volume at facilities across Louisiana. Client A's COVID-19 contingent labor needs dramatically increased over the next 14 days, reaching its peak around March 28 with a steady decline until April 18.

The chart below shows the upward trajectory of GIFTED clinician headcount in Client A's facilities from March 14 to April 18:



Client A submitted an order for 33 clinicians in Week 1. GIFTED's team began working around the clock to meet the request, submitting 42 clinicians by March 14.

By Week 3, a new workflow was established in collaboration with the client to expedite the submission process. As the client's contingent labor needs reached their peak, GIFTED was able to nearly double its number of submissions, providing much-needed workforce support for Client A's facilities as the coronavirus crisis reached its apex.

Over the course of the crisis, Client A ordered an average of 85 clinicians per week, and GIFTED submitted an average of 89 clinicians per week in response.

Historically, Louisiana has seen a seasonal decrease in Registered Nurse contingent labor during this time. On the first day of the COVID-19 response, only 4 GIFTED clinicians were working at Client A's facilities.

GIFTED's new communication and recruiting strategies proved very effective. By Week 5, GIFTED was providing nearly 60% of the contingent labor for Client A, recording head counts of 114 and 125 for Weeks 6 and 7, respectively. That percentage continued to increase in the following weeks as Client A relied on GIFTED's ability to deliver potential nursing candidates in record time.

Factors for Success

Two primary factors were responsible for our successful response to Client A's COVID-19 needs:

- GIFTED immediately created a response team, adjusting its workflow to adapt to Client A's massive order counts.
- GIFTED established a fluid line of communication with Client A, and maintained a relationship of trust and reliability with both Client A and its clinicians.

Client A's needs were not only large but time sensitive; clinicians were needed as soon as possible. In order to meet Client A's needs, recruiters and account executives began working around the clock to fill Client A's orders.

We collaborated with Client A to create and implement a variety of innovative processes. In collaboration with the client, we developed a highly streamlined process for screening, submitting, interviewing, and onboarding clinicians. We focused on maintaining excellent communication with both Client A and our clinicians, establishing trust on both ends.

Screening & Submission

Client needs were assessed on an **hourly basis**. GIFTED teammates screened candidate profiles throughout the day, grouping them for submission. During the peak of the crisis, contingent labor orders were so large that GIFTED submitted groups of candidates between four and six times per day.

Because of the nature of the crisis, GIFTED anticipated Client A's high patient ratios and need for clinicians with a wide range of skillsets who were comfortable floating between units, prioritizing them for submission.

Interviewing & Processing Times

To evaluate and process GIFTED's submissions in a timely manner, Client A worked with GIFTED to develop a new hiring process. The client assembled a small team of experts to evaluate GIFTED's candidate profiles and conduct expedited interviews.

During the peak of the crisis, GIFTED clinicians hired by Client A at this time were assessed, interviewed, and provided with an offer in 1-2 hours. Under normal circumstances, GIFTED requests turnaround times of 24 - 48 hours.

Debriefing & Transparency

The unprecedented landscape of the COVID-19 crisis presented a unique challenge that GIFTED had not encountered prior to the pandemic. Due to continual media coverage and an environment of uncertainty, many nurses who were exceptionally clinically qualified, screened, and committed to scheduled start dates began experiencing hesitation to present to assignments as conflicting reports of the effects of the virus and available resources emerged.

In response, GIFTED added an additional step to the screening process in which its Clinical Directors spoke to each interested candidate to evaluate and assess the “emotional readiness” of the clinicians assigned to Client A’s facilities. In these conversations, GIFTED provided concrete information about the COVID-19 landscape, set expectations for the candidate, and shared essential information about the candidate’s upcoming assignments on behalf of Client A.

Many of the otherwise viable candidates were screened out of this process to ensure that those that were deployed to the front lines were able to perform well in the face of increased risk and uncertainty.

Conclusion

GIFTED’s innovative service, paired with our collaboration to create new communication and workflow processes with Client A, was an essential catalyst for a successful COVID-19 response in major healthcare facilities in Louisiana.

Client A’s access to adequate contingent labor relied upon GIFTED’s ability to improvise new approaches to service delivery and transparent communication, along with our commitment to provide excellent service regardless of circumstance.

Regarding GIFTED’s response and level of service, a key member of Client A’s COVID-19 response team states:

“When we started recognizing the need to increase our clinical staff to meet the patient care demand, I immediately reached out to our partner, GIFTED Healthcare. Without any hesitation, their team jumped on it right away and produced over 130 staff for us over the next few weeks. Their response blew me away – it was so strong and fast. We used other agencies as well, both local, regional, and national providers, but GIFTED was the fastest and most robust in the first few weeks, by far. I am extremely grateful to work with an organization that truly functions like a partner and not a vendor.”