

Fran Lusk

From: Kristen Brookshire <brookshirekris13@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, January 31, 2022 1:32 PM
To: Fran Lusk
Subject: Concerned nurse

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Fran, I hope this email finds you well.

Hello, my name is Kristen Brookshire and I am a licensed practical nurse in Kansas, with a Compact State license as well. I recently got my Compact State Nurse license last year because I needed to branch out to try to make a better income for myself and my children.

I have been a single mom for 10+ years now and working a normal nursing home job, or the clinic setting, or even the hospital setting, it's not enough for me to survive with a family of three. I only have two children and I had to quit my clinic job because I was barely making \$600 a week, after taxes and my 401(k). This is me not even having insurance, nor does my daughter. My son only has insurance because of my ex-husband. Most of my nursing jobs, I can't even afford to get the health insurance, so I have been uninsured for about eight years now.

I recently joined a agency job, because my full-time long-term care nursing job, did not pay well nor did they care that I wasn't making much money. Most of the other nursing staff, couldn't afford the insurance either but we're below poverty level and could get state insurance. I am neither one of those categories for I make just a little bit more than that to even qualify. The staffing agency does not offer insurance but they did send out some programs in our area, that allow discounted rates to see the doctor, because we are agency staff. My other full-time long-term care position, never provided any information like this before. I also picked this Agency job because my ex-husband will not help out with my son if he gets sick. I have always had to be the one to miss work or miss school, if something was to arise. Normal nursing homes will not understand this even if they do have children. I have gotten written up in the past, when working at a long-term care, because my son had many illnesses growing up. The agency nursing stuff gives me the freedom to be able to pick up when I can and the freedom to be able to take a day off when he is sick.

I'm currently in the state of Oregon because I had to take a travel nursing position to try to get ahead. This is a sacrifice that I have to make, because the normal nursing positions do not pay enough money to survive. The travel positions I have taken have all been for Covid and crisis emergency pay so it's all government funded.

I am writing this email today and hopes that it will enlighten you on the sacrifices that some of us nurses have to make in order to survive and the agency staffing positions are only here to help the other facilities. I was the assistant director of nursing in a nursing home, in Hutchinson Kansas, and most of our staff was agency because our regular staff was burnt out and underpaid. Our agency and travel nurses, were the only saviors that we had. If we had to beg them to even come because they were already working so many other positions.

Thank you for your time,

Kristen Brookshire