



Cook Children's Raising Its Minimum Wage To \$13.25 Effective Feb. 2, 2020

Fort Worth, Texas (Jan. 21, 2020) – The minimum wage at Cook Children's Health Care System (CCHCS) has been raised to \$13.25 per hour, significantly above the federal minimum wage of \$7.25 per hour.

The new minimum wage, which begins Feb. 2, 2020, will directly impact 200 current employees, who will see their pay immediately increase to \$13.25 per hour next month, from the current Cook Children's minimum wage of \$11 per hour.

“Just as we are committed to improving the health of every child, we are as committed to the well-being of our workforce, who help us fulfill our promise to patient families,” said Rick W. Merrill, President and CEO, for Cook Children's Health Care System.

“As a Tarrant County employer for more than 100 years, we have a responsibility to provide a stronger and more fair living wage for local residents as we strive to remain an employer of choice, and a leader in fair and equitable compensation,” said Keith Holtz, Chief Administrative Officer.

“This decision is aligned with our commitment to attract top talent at all levels, improve the team experience, and foster a culture that allows our employees to bring their best to elevate every experience for the patients and families we are privileged to serve,” Holtz added.

Additional benefits

In addition to addressing the need to increase the organization's minimum wage, Cook Children's regularly finds opportunities to pass along financial rewards to its employees. For example:

- The system paid out two performance and appreciation bonuses in November and December 2019 to all staff members (each valued up to \$500 depending on tenure, and grossed up to cover the estimated taxes). These bonuses were awarded because the system met key quality and safety goals, and leadership wanted to show its appreciation and gratitude to employees for their steadfast commitment throughout 2019, and also during an unusually high census season.

- Similarly, just this month, the system opened a 24/7 complimentary employee-only fitness center called the Cook Children's Wellness Zone. Located on the main campus of the medical center and requested by employees on engagement surveys, the gym is outfitted with cardio and weight equipment, Peloton bikes, treadmills, and offers Wellbeats™ virtual fitness classes, group exercise classes, showers and more.

From employee appreciation events like the spring cookout, a fall picnic at the Fort Worth Zoo, the holiday Jingle Mingle, and annual service awards, to employee engagement activities like engagement surveys, monthly luncheons with administrators, quarterly town hall meetings with senior leaders and more, the organization remains focused on improving the employee experience and the overall workforce journey.

Increasing Cook Children's minimum wage is but one more step in this important journey.

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About Cook Children's

Cook Children's Health Care System embraces an inspiring Promise – to improve the health of every child in our region through the prevention and treatment of illness, disease and injury. Based in Fort Worth, Texas, we're proud of our long and rich tradition of serving our community.

Our not-for-profit organization, which employs more than 7,937 employees across nine companies – a medical center, two surgery centers, a physician network, home health services and a health plan. It also includes Child Study Center at Cook Children's, Cook Children's Health Services Inc., and Cook Children's Health Foundation. With more than 60 primary, specialty and urgent care locations throughout Texas, families can access our top-ranked specialty programs and network of services to meet their unique needs.

We've worked to improve the health of children from across our primary service area of Denton, Hood, Johnson, Parker, Tarrant and Wise counties for more than 100 years. Based on the exceptional care we provide, patients travel to Cook Children's from around the country and the globe to receive life-saving pediatric care built on leading technology, extraordinary collaboration and the art of caring.

For more information, visit cookchildrens.org.

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