



2025 HEALTH CARE WORKFORCE SCAN

Executive Summary

The American Hospital Association 2025 Health Care Workforce Scan provides an annual snapshot of America's health care employment, based on a review of reports, studies and other data sources. It offers valuable insights and practical recommendations from experts and your peers to help your organization navigate the field's most pressing workforce-related challenges of today and tomorrow.

As we move into a post-COVID world, financial and staffing challenges remain high among hospitals and health systems, despite some easing in turnover and burnout rates. Meanwhile, several new and ongoing factors are shaping the workforce of the future. Skyrocketing costs are shrinking budgets. An aging population is requiring new care solutions. Care continues to migrate outside hospital walls. Payers have dramatically expanded their influence. Large technology solutions providers are likely to reshape how care is delivered on a larger scale. And ethical standards are beginning to be established in response to the widespread adoption of AI health care.

Challenges Top of Mind for the Field

The 2025 Health Care Workforce Scan focuses on four core challenges that hospitals and health systems must address to thrive in today's environment.

Embracing Technologically Integrated Care Models and Innovations

Health care leaders are increasingly turning to AI and virtual care models to address issues like provider burnout and financial pressures by improving operational efficiency while relieving some of the burdens on front-line team members. Virtual care approaches like telesitting and remote monitoring — along with AI applications like natural language processing, predictive analytics and machine learning — can help hospitals streamline administrative tasks, automate processes, balance workloads and enhance clinical decision-making. They offer promise for enhancing patient care quality while boosting staff satisfaction and retention.

Engaging Clinicians in Tech Strategies

The successful adoption of AI and other technologies requires engaging clinicians in the process. To do so, leaders are focusing on continuous training that emphasizes not just the use of new technologies, but also their value in enhancing patient care and streamlining tasks. Other strategies involve aligning the goals of tech initiatives with those of the broader organization, updating workflows and clarifying roles. Furthermore, when health care organizations involve front-line teams in purchases and vet new technology for patient safety, workflow compatibility and user experience, they can ensure technology initiatives avoid EHR-like burdens on clinical staff while also meeting their practical needs.

Boosting Access Through Partnerships, Training and Upskilling

The health care field faces significant workforce shortages, particularly in primary, maternal, long-term, behavioral health and rural care — impacting patient access and outcomes. In response, hospital leaders are partnering with educational institutions and community organizations to create new pathways into health care careers. They are also expanding training programs and upskilling opportunities to attract new talent and retain existing staff. These initiatives, which include creative approaches and hands-on learning experiences, are focused on developing sustainable career pipelines to meet growing demand with a steady supply of skilled professionals.

Rethinking Engagement to Build a More Flexible, Engaged Workforce

Employee engagement in health care is improving post-pandemic, but still faces issues like staffing shortages, workplace safety and the pandemic's impact on trust between leaders and teams. While meaning and purpose at work are valuable, employee retention also requires trust, support, belonging, recognition and adequate resources. Therefore, organizations are focusing on building an inclusive culture where all team members feel valued, supported and well-represented. These efforts involve integrating diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) strategies with initiatives to enhance well-being, promote work-life balance, and foster a sense of belonging among staff, particularly new employees and those from underrepresented populations.

Act Innovatively to Grow, Retain and Support Our Dedicated Workforce

Hospitals and health systems must continually reevaluate their approaches to workforce management. Traditional models may no longer suffice in the face of challenges like staff burnout and turnover, and the need for a more agile, resilient, engaged and tech-confident workforce. We must act innovatively to support and empower the dedicated team members throughout our health care organizations who are essential to delivering the best possible care to our patients and communities.

