

2024 HEALTH CARE WORKFORCE SCAN EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



The AHA's [2024 Health Care Workforce Talent Scan](#) provides an annual snapshot of America's hospital and health system employment, based on a review of the latest reports, studies and other data sources. It offers valuable insights and practical recommendations from experts and your peers to help your organization navigate both familiar and uncharted workforce-related challenges during this time of rapid transformation in health care.

The COVID-19 pandemic introduced new challenges, accelerated existing trends and compounded the need for fundamental changes in how patient care is delivered and managed, including who delivers it and where it is provided. Several factors are propelling core changes in the health care workforce. Traditional staffing models need astute reexamination and comprehensive modernization. Emerging and existing technology continues to be a game changer. Expanding care beyond hospital walls to clinics, patient homes and the wider community reduces cost, increases access and helps to improve health equity. Hybrid workforce policies are gaining traction for administrative work and, increasingly, for care delivery.

Reimagine / Redesign / Transform

Hospitals and health systems must have the vision and commitment to creatively reimagine workforce roles and responsibilities, strategically redesign care delivery and practices, and successfully transform workforce culture and patient care, all while managing ongoing financial pressures.

The [2024 Health Care Workforce Scan](#) focuses on three front-burner challenges that hospitals and health systems need to tackle to thrive in today's environment.



On the Front Burner: Providing High-quality Care with a Changing Clinical Workforce

The aging U.S. population is steadily increasing, requiring more care from fewer, younger workers. Yet recruiting, training and retaining health care workers has become increasingly difficult. Nearly 800,000 registered nurses have expressed their intention to exit the workforce by 2027, citing reasons such as stress, burnout and retirement. Additionally, one-third of physicians are considering early retirement, compounding the workforce challenges in the health care field.

To increase flexibility and agility, improve care quality and patient safety, and boost staff productivity and satisfaction, it has become imperative to reexamine and redesign clinical care delivery and staffing strategies. Hospitals have been implementing and scaling up a wide variety of models and approaches, including team-based care, flexible resource pools, internal staffing agencies, gig shifts and virtual nursing.



On the Front Burner: Building a Sustainable and Adaptable Talent Pipeline

Although health care employment has rebounded to pre-pandemic levels, clinical and nonclinical staffing remains a top concern, exacerbated by uneven employment across the care continuum. Hospitals and health systems must pursue a multipronged approach to grow and retain their workforce and ensure a sustainable talent pipeline.

This approach should involve collaborative efforts with government agencies, community colleges and other academic institutions to recruit, train and support workers from historically underserved communities. It should also encompass innovative strategies for reconfiguring clinical training; active engagement with teenagers to spark an interest in health care careers; upskilling through one-on-one coaching, mentoring and educational benefits; and investing in nurse residency programs.



On the Front Burner: Supporting Well-being, Satisfaction and Safety

Our shared goal is to build a health care system where health workers as well as patients thrive. Unfortunately, burnout and disengagement, along with increased incivility and violence, continue to take a toll on our health care workers. To improve worker well-being, health care systems must nurture positive work environments and cultures that increase feelings of value, foster resiliency, create safe psychological and physical environments, and capitalize on automation and artificial intelligence (AI) to reduce time-consuming administrative burdens.

Effective strategies include addressing staff trauma and well-being needs through a structured framework, implementing data-driven, personalized approaches to onboarding, investing in operational and policy initiatives to improve workplace safety and using AI to streamline clinical documentation.

Act Innovatively to Grow, Retain and Support our Dedicated Workforce

In the face of unprecedented labor shortages and financial pressures, hospitals and health systems must dramatically reimagine care delivery models, workflows and workforce roles to ensure that our field attracts, retains and inspires the dedicated health care workers essential to serving our patients and communities. We must work together to understand what people want and need, act innovatively to embrace new opportunities and commit to supporting, empowering and protecting the health care workers who put patient needs front and center, every day at every level of our organizations.

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