



Investing in Technology to Overcome Staffing Challenges

How the healthcare industry can leverage IT solutions to improve workforce management and enhance patient care

Healthcare organizations continue to grapple with staffing-related challenges—including workforce shortages, high burnout rates, scaled back services, and rising labor costs. A recent McKinsey report from March 2023 found that 45% of inpatient nurses (who make up roughly 2 million of the 4.2 million nurses in the U.S.) indicated they are likely to leave their role in the next six months.¹ When indicating why, not feeling valued and not having a manageable workload were the top two reasons cited.

As the healthcare industry deals with these persistent challenges, technology has emerged as a powerful ally, offering innovative solutions to bridge the staffing gap and enhance patient care. Indeed, healthcare IT was listed as a top 5 strategic priority for nearly 80% of providers, according to a new report from Bain & Company and KLAS Research.² And of those who accelerated IT spending in the past year, the overwhelming majority cited labor shortages among the driving factors.

Here are some of the key ways healthcare organizations are investing in technology to address these challenges:

Telehealth: Breaking Down Barriers to Reduce On-Site Staff

Telehealth has proven to be a game-changer the past few years, enabling healthcare providers to reach patients regardless of their location. The \$50 billion telemedicine global market is expected to continue growing at a significant pace, reaching a projected value of \$460 billion by 2030, according to a recent Statista study.³

By leveraging telehealth tools like video conferencing and remote monitoring technologies, medical professionals can connect with patients, diagnose illnesses, provide consultations, and monitor chronic conditions from a distance. This approach not only expands access to care for patients in remote areas but also allows healthcare organizations to extend their reach without the need for additional on-site staff. Telehealth promotes efficiency and flexibility, enabling medical professionals to effectively manage patient loads and allocate resources more effectively.

Robotics and Automation: Enhancing Efficiency and Precision

Robotic systems and automation technologies are transforming healthcare delivery by enhancing efficiency and precision. Examples of using robots in medicine range from simple laboratory assistance to highly competitive surgical procedures. By taking over repetitive and time-consuming tasks, robots not only reduce the workload on healthcare professionals but also minimize the risk of human error. This technology enables medical staff to allocate their expertise where it is most needed, improving overall patient outcomes.

Artificial Intelligence (AI): Augmenting Healthcare Workforce

Artificial Intelligence (AI) is increasingly being integrated into various aspects of healthcare, effectively augmenting the capabilities of healthcare professionals. Findings from a leading research firm predict the global market for AI in healthcare will grow by 37% annually, topping \$20 billion in 2023 and exceeding \$187 billion by 2030.⁴

AI-powered tools can assist in diagnosing diseases, analyzing medical images, and interpreting patient data, leading to faster and more accurate diagnoses. Additionally, AI algorithms can help healthcare providers streamline administrative

tasks, such as scheduling appointments and managing electronic health records. By automating these processes, AI frees up valuable time for healthcare professionals, allowing them to focus on more critical aspects of patient care.

Data Analytics: Optimizing Resource Allocation and Workflow Management

Data analytics plays a pivotal role in optimizing resource allocation within healthcare organizations. By leveraging advanced analytics tools, healthcare providers can identify trends, forecast demand, and allocate resources more efficiently. This approach ensures that staffing levels are aligned with patient needs, preventing understaffing or overstaffing situations. Additionally, data analytics enables healthcare organizations to identify opportunities for process improvement, leading to better workflow management and increased productivity.

Remote Monitoring and Wearable Devices: Lessening the Workload

Remote monitoring and wearable devices empower patients to actively participate in their healthcare journey while reducing the burden on healthcare staff. These devices can continuously track vital signs, collect health data, and alert healthcare professionals in case of any abnormalities. By remotely monitoring patients' conditions, healthcare providers can intervene in a timely manner, preventing hospital readmissions and reducing the need for constant in-person monitoring. This technology enables healthcare professionals to allocate their resources more effectively, focusing on critical cases while still providing personalized care to a broader patient population.

Technology's impact on the healthcare industry goes beyond addressing staffing challenges. It has the potential to revolutionize patient care, enhance efficiency, and improve overall healthcare outcomes. Telehealth, AI, robotics, data analytics, and remote monitoring are just a few examples of how technology is reshaping the healthcare landscape.

By investing in and embracing these innovations, healthcare providers can optimize resources, alleviate staffing pressures, and deliver higher quality care to patients—ultimately creating a more sustainable and patient-centric healthcare system.

Sources:

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