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The Role that Leadership Can Take to Improve the Healthcare Staffing Shortage

May 9, 2023 2 Minute Read Joni Noel

When in crisis, healthcare workers look to their leadership for guidance and direction. So it's imperative that leaders be confident in their approach to managing their organizations and addressing the issues that have resulted from staffing shortages.

Fortunately, there are a lot of ways for healthcare executives to minimize the pain of staffing shortages while directing their organizations to more normalized operations.

Competitive Salaries, Retention and Hiring Bonuses

The last two years have been difficult on healthcare staff, particularly front-line workers like physicians and nurses. While appreciation is appreciated, it's money that talks. Offering competitive salaries and retention bonuses can foster a positive work culture and build a foundation of trust.

The California Department of Healthcare Services is trying to do just that. In March, they began sending \$1 billion in one-time retention payments to the state's healthcare workers in an attempt to keep them in their jobs. More than 832,000 employees who work in skilled nursing and hospital facilities will receive the money. Time will tell if it works, but appreciation shown with money is always valued.

Training and Development

Changes in healthcare processes, procedures and technology have undergone massive change in the last few years. Those that work in the field must stay up-to-date on the latest technologies and best practices. Invest in your employees by providing the funds necessary and access to educational and training opportunities like classes, workshops, certifications and conferences.

These value-adds will keep your employees highly skilled, motivated and competent in their roles, which benefits them and the organization.

Workload Management

Healthcare workers already had too much on their plates before the pandemic. COVID-19 made workloads even heavier. Lessen and streamline the work by investing in additional staff. Also, consider hiring outside consultants to even out critical deliverables. Global consulting firm, RGP, recently surveyed 404 companies with \$1 billion or more in revenue. The survey revealed that healthcare providers are failing at their mission-critical projects, with 25 percent saying less than half of these projects met key goals.

The survey further revealed that with 20 percent of hospitals reporting acute staffing shortages, many healthcare organizations increased the number of consultants on their critical project teams. This trend continues as providers are seeing a growing reliance on staffing and consulting firms to fill the staffing shortage in their organizations. The average percentage of project team members who are not employees increased from 38 percent in early 2020 to 42 percent in 2022. The short-term hiring of these experts can result in long-term gain.

Now is the time to invest in adding and upgrading new technology to streamline processes and free your employees from repetitive and mundane operational work.

Many healthcare organizations are automating accounting and revenue cycle management processes to deliver better outcomes. Liberated from the tedium, your staff can address more meaningful and rewarding issues, especially those that are tied directly to patient care.

Healthcare staffing shortages are complex and certainly have multi-dimensional elements. By prioritizing compensation, training and development, and workload management, executive leadership will be at the forefront of fostering a positive company culture that will greatly support a happier and more retained workforce.

These research findings are based on RGP's fall 2022 survey of more than 400 large companies with \$1 billion or more in revenue, including over 100 healthcare executives throughout North America, Europe and Asia-Pacific.

Read the full report, [The Systemic Impact of Growing Staffing Shortages on All Areas of the Healthcare Ecosystem](#).



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