

More healthcare workers could jump ship amid vaccine mandates

Article

The news: US hospitals report their inpatient admissions have returned to 2019 levels.

- **Most hospital execs anticipate a 4% increase in admissions by 2022, per an October 2021 survey of 100 US hospitals execs by McKinsey & Company.**

Digging deeper into the survey data: Healthcare staffing is still a major challenge, especially when contending with increases in patient capacities.

- **59% of hospital execs** plan to hire additional healthcare workers to increase outpatient volumes, while 60% of leaders want to hire more staff to increase the volume of elective procedures.
- Meanwhile, **56% of hospital leaders** say they'll handle their outpatient capacity challenges by extending typical daily hours of operation.

The trend: Hospital staffing shortages will likely get worse throughout the next year for two key reasons: vaccine mandates and worker burnout.

The CMS is requiring healthcare facilities to vaccinate their workers by January 4, 2022.

- As a result, large health systems like Cleveland Clinic have already mandated their employees get the vaccine to remain employed at their organization.
- But workers who refuse to get the vaccine are preemptively quitting at some health systems, compounding already short-staffed facilities.
- The state of Washington has already **lost 2% of its hospital staff** due to its state-wide vaccine mandate, for instance.

Healthcare workers who remain on board will likely be assigned longer hours to mitigate the staff shortage, which could exacerbate COVID-19-related burnout.

- About **19% of healthcare workers** who have stayed in their jobs since February 2020 have considered leaving the healthcare industry altogether due to reasons like burnout, per a September 2021 survey by Morning Consult.

What's next? Some hospitals are deploying AI solutions for tasks like patient intake to fill in healthcare worker gaps, which could temporarily provide some relief to short-staffed health systems.

For example, AI-powered tools like **Notable** help health systems automate patient intake by automatically uploading documents into the EHR and populating patient responses for providers prior to their visits—and it's already partnered up with health systems like **Intermountain Health** and **CommonSpirit**.

Other digital health companies are directly addressing health systems' staffing barriers by providing new manpower:

- Startups like **Trusted Health** and **ShiftMed** connect nurses and healthcare workers to vacant hospital positions across the US.
- ShiftMed claims it connects more 60,000 healthcare workers to hospital partners that need additional workforce support, for instance.

