



University of Phoenix
Workforce Solutions



Nurturing Internal Talent

Building a resilient healthcare
workforce with skills intelligence

Executive Summary

Over the last several years, industries worldwide have been disrupted by a cascade of blows: the COVID-19 pandemic, economic instabilities, rapid shifts in technology, and more. Few industries have felt these challenges more acutely than healthcare. Healthcare leaders are struggling with staff shortages, burnout, skill gaps, and the added complexities of AI technology integration.

Addressing these challenges will not be a simple process, but the answer lies in a hybrid approach of nurturing internal talent while leveraging skills intelligence to build a more resilient workforce – one better equipped to adapt to the ever-evolving needs of the healthcare sector. Healthcare leaders must invest in career development programs that nurture their internal talent with personalized career pathways.

These programs can boost employee engagement and retention while playing a significant role in driving organizational performance. By investing now, leaders position their workforce to better respond to future challenges while continuing to deliver vital programs to the community and ensuring the long-term sustainability of healthcare services.



Laying the Foundation for Healthcare's Future Success

Across industries, leaders are grappling with skilled labor shortages amidst rapidly evolving technologies, economic instabilities, and unprecedented global events. In the healthcare sector, these issues are particularly serious as they directly impact life-and-death situations in the communities they serve.

According to the American College of Healthcare Executives (ACHE), workforce challenges¹ topped the list of hospital CEOs' worries – even surpassing financial issues as their immediate concern. Staff burnout, high turnover, high patient-to-provider ratios, and fears for on-the-job safety have exacerbated healthcare talent shortages.²

Additionally, 67% healthcare CEOs identify labor and skills shortages as a significant threat to profitability over the next ten years³ – considerably higher than the global industry average of 52%. The accelerated rate of healthcare AI technology integration, combined with workforce challenges, has stretched the system in so many directions that cracks are inevitable.⁴

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Source: *PwC (2023) How to solve healthcare's
workforce shortage*

Of course, the demands on our healthcare system show no signs of slowing down. To develop a workforce that can bend and adapt without breaking under constant stress, healthcare organizations must invest in building resilience. Leadership can start with strengthening the foundation of their organization – their internal talent – by prioritizing personalized career development programs.

¹ American College of Healthcare Executives. Top Issues Confronting Hospitals. [ache.org, https://www.ache.org/learning-center/research/about-the-field/top-issues-confronting-hospitals](https://www.ache.org/learning-center/research/about-the-field/top-issues-confronting-hospitals). Accessed 31 Dec. 2024

² American Hospital Association. "Workforce Shortages and Violence Are Rising Concerns: State Nursing Poll." [aha.org, 26 Mar. 2024, https://www.aha.org/aha-center-health-innovation-market-scan/2024-03-26-workforce-shortages-and-violence-are-rising-concerns-state-nursing-poll](https://www.aha.org/aha-center-health-innovation-market-scan/2024-03-26-workforce-shortages-and-violence-are-rising-concerns-state-nursing-poll). Accessed 31 Dec. 2024

³ PwC. "The Leadership Agenda: The Talent Required for Healthcare Shortages". [pwc.com, https://www.pwc.com/gx/en/issues/c-suite-insights/the-leadership-agenda/talent-required-for-healthcare-shortages.html](https://www.pwc.com/gx/en/issues/c-suite-insights/the-leadership-agenda/talent-required-for-healthcare-shortages.html). Accessed 31 Dec. 2024.

⁴ World Economic Forum. "AI in Healthcare Could Bridge a Significant Capacity Gap." [weforum.org, 24 Jan. 2024, https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2024/01/ai-in-healthcare-could-bridge-a-significant-capacity-gap/](https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2024/01/ai-in-healthcare-could-bridge-a-significant-capacity-gap/). Accessed 31 Dec. 2024.

Why Career Development in Healthcare Is Crucial Now

While some improvement in healthcare well-being has been observed since the peak pandemic, the system is still fragile. In this era of rapid and certain change, immediate action to support internal talent is crucial as essential new technologies can overwhelm a system trying to recover

Consider that nursing turnover rates remain stubbornly high at pre-pandemic levels, with over half (56%) of nurses experiencing symptoms of burnout – and less-experienced nurses suffer at higher rates than their more experienced colleagues.⁵ This trend is not limited to nurse practitioners; high levels of burnout are seen across the industry, including among physicians⁶ and healthcare leadership.⁷

According to Nurses in the United States:

56%

reported experiencing symptoms of burnout, such as emotional exhaustion.

64%

indicated feeling “great deals of stress” because of their jobs.

While the pandemic overloaded the healthcare system, it also dramatically changed how patients interact with it – acting as the catalyst for a massive push into digital healthcare. While the technology improvements have been significant, the rapid integration has also brought new challenges, such as a skills gap at all levels. Nurses might now be required to be fluent in AI diagnostic tools, while leadership requires familiarity with data analytics and the ethics of big data, to name a few, and still be ready for what’s coming next.

⁵ American Nurses Association. Understanding and Prioritizing Nurses’ Mental Health and Well-Being. [nursingworld.org, https://www.nursingworld.org/practice-policy/work-environment/health-safety/disaster-preparedness/coronavirus/what-you-need-to-know/survey-4/contentassets/understanding-and-prioritizing-nurses-mental-health-and-well-being.pdf](https://www.nursingworld.org/practice-policy/work-environment/health-safety/disaster-preparedness/coronavirus/what-you-need-to-know/survey-4/contentassets/understanding-and-prioritizing-nurses-mental-health-and-well-being.pdf). Accessed 31 Dec. 2024.

⁶ The Chief Healthcare Executive. “Nearly Half of Doctors Report Burnout, But There Is Some Progress, Survey Finds.” [chiefhealthcareexecutive.com, https://www.chiefhealthcareexecutive.com/view/nearly-half-of-doctors-report-burnout-but-there-is-some-progress-survey-finds](https://www.chiefhealthcareexecutive.com/view/nearly-half-of-doctors-report-burnout-but-there-is-some-progress-survey-finds). Accessed 31 Dec. 2024.

⁷ Healthcare Executive. “Factors Affecting Burnout Among Healthcare Leaders”. [healthcareexecutive.org, https://healthcareexecutive.org/archives/november-december-2022/factors-affecting-burnout-among-healthcare-leaders](https://healthcareexecutive.org/archives/november-december-2022/factors-affecting-burnout-among-healthcare-leaders). Accessed 31 Dec. 2024

Leveraging Skills Intelligence for Personalized Career Pathways

By leveraging skills intelligence, healthcare organizations can create personalized career pathways that greatly enhance employee engagement and retention. These programs not only meet the urgent need for upskilling internal talent, but significantly contribute to organizational performance by anticipating and meeting future needs as they evolve.

Skills Intelligence:

The ability to identify and develop workplace skills in demand today while predicting those needed in the future.



Skills intelligence, powered by AI, refers to the use of data and analytics to recognize, develop, and apply workforce skills that are in demand today and predict which will be essential in tomorrow's job market. The value of anticipating future skill requirements in an industry where the rapid adoption of new technologies is both a competitive necessity and a potential lifesaver cannot be overstated.

Consider the emerging technologies of telemedicine and AI-assisted diagnostics: AI-based skills intelligence programs could recommend specific training programs for a nurse who is deemed to lack sufficient expertise in AI diagnostic tools, whereas another nurse would be recommended additional training in diabetes management, based on the increasing number of diabetic patients in their care. This approach delivers the most relevant and timely training to each worker, efficiently improving their individual skills and the overall quality of patient care.

Impact of Skills Intelligence on Organizational Performance

The integration of AI-driven skills intelligence within the healthcare industry has profound implications for workforce challenges, overall organizational performance, and the quality of patient care. Not only can targeted personalized learning address individual skill gaps, but it can play a pivotal role in mitigating healthcare worker turnover and retention rates. It's not surprising that organizations that have invested in tailored learning opportunities see a significant reduction in turnover – employees are more likely to stay when their employer supports their professional growth.⁸

Zooming out, the broader impact of skills intelligence on an organization, even the entire healthcare industry, is increased agility. Healthcare providers who can quickly recognize and develop relevant skills are better positioned to adapt to rapid industry changes, emerging technologies, and evolving patient care needs. Why is this crucial? Because staying competitive isn't just a goal for those in the C-suite – it's necessary for the organization sustainability.

Healthcare providers must deliver excellent care consistently, especially as our population ages⁹ and the shortage of skilled workers continues to loom. AI-driven skills intelligence isn't just a tool; it's the foundation for building a resilient healthcare workforce that can adapt within a rapidly changing industry.



⁸ Taylor, Joy. "Psychological Capital: Impact of Hope, Efficacy, Resilience, and Optimism on Employee Retention." 2024 University of Phoenix Career Optimism Index, Aug. 2024, <https://www.phoenix.edu/content/dam/edu/research/doc/white-papers/workplace-diversity-inclusion/2024/082024-psychological-capital-impact-j-taylor.pdf>
⁹ United Nations Population Fund. "Ageing." UNFPA, <https://www.unfpa.org/ageing#:~:text=The%20world%20is%20ageing%20rapidly,to%20United%20Nations%20population%20projections>. Accessed 31 Dec. 2024.

Conclusion

After navigating a barrage of challenges, the healthcare sector's workforce continues to be stretched and strained. Staff shortages, high burnout rates, rapid technological change and the lingering impacts of COVID-19 have created a bend-or-break situation.

By implementing personalized career development programs and AI tools, healthcare organizations can turn these challenges into catalysts for growth. Healthcare organizations that invest in nurturing their internal talent through personalized learning will be able to deliver high-quality care more efficiently, even as economic and technological factors continue to shift. The future of healthcare – and the well-being of the communities it serves – depends on this investment.

Join Forces for Skills-Driven Success

Organizations looking to implement effective career development programs can gain significant advantages by working with educational institutions that offer tailored, industry-specific learning solutions.

University of Phoenix Workforce Solutions

helps organizations address critical talent challenges and build future-ready, skills-based workforces. Backed by decades of experience in online adult learning, we provide HR and learning leaders with tools to close skills gaps, engage employees, and support talent agility.



Take the first step towards a resilient healthcare workforce by working with the University of Phoenix. Explore how **AI Skills Intelligence** can unlock the potential of your internal talent.



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