Why hiring is no longer your biggest workforce challenge

Explore how healthcare organizations can shift from merely hiring to achieving workforce stability, enhancing employee experience and operational efficiency.

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For years, healthcare organizations have been asked to solve a profoundly difficult problem with one primary lever: hire more people. As staffing shortages intensified and the U.S. population continued to age, recruitment became the center of gravity for many workforce strategies. Leaders invested in applicant pipelines, interview speed, job board visibility, onboarding processes, and every other touchpoint that could help bring new caregivers, nurses, aides, and support staff through the door.

That focus made sense. Open roles create immediate pressure, and in healthcare, that pressure is felt quickly by employees, residents, families, and leadership teams alike. When a shift is uncovered or a unit is short-staffed, the need feels urgent and visible. Hiring becomes the most obvious answer because it promises relief.

But filling jobs is only the beginning of workforce management. The larger goal is to build a workforce that can support consistent care, steady operations, manageable labor costs, and a better employee experience over time.

In other words, the end goal is workforce stability.

Filling jobs is only the beginning

There's a natural moment of celebration when a role is filled. A recruiter has moved quickly, a hiring manager has made a decision, and a new employee is ready to begin. For organizations that have been operating under constant staffing strain, every accepted offer matters.

Still, the story does not end when the position is filled. In many ways, that's where the next chapter begins. The employee now has to be scheduled effectively, introduced to the rhythm of the organization, supported by managers, paid accurately, and placed in an environment where they can realistically continue doing good work. If any of those pieces are missing, the same organization that successfully hired may soon find itself back where it started – trying to refill the role.

This is why workforce management has to be viewed as a continuous cycle rather than a sequence of disconnected milestones. Recruitment matters, but so does what happens after the new hire says yes. Scheduling, time tracking, communication, compliance, payroll, and retention all shape whether that hire becomes a long-term contributor or another data point in the turnover cycle.

When organizations broaden their focus from hiring alone to workforce stability, the conversation becomes more hopeful and more actionable. Leaders are no longer limited to asking, "How do we find more people?" They can also ask, "How do we make better use of the people we already have, support them more consistently, and understand what our staffing patterns are trying to tell us?"

Why shortages persist (even after positions are filled)

A schedule can look stable on paper while individual shifts continue to feel difficult in practice. One facility may have enough employees overall but still struggle with weekend coverage. Another may be fully staffed in certain departments and consistently strained in others.

This is where workforce instability can be easy to misread. If the response to every coverage gap is to hire again, organizations may miss the operational patterns underneath the surface. A persistent shortage on a particular shift might point to scheduling preferences that are not being captured, communication gaps that make it hard to fill open shifts quickly, or burnout among employees who are frequently asked to cover too much. A recurring reliance on overtime may signal that the staffing model needs to be revisited, not simply that another job posting needs to go live.

Hiring adds capacity, but workforce stability depends on how that capacity is managed. Without a connected view of day-to-day operations, leaders may have a harder time seeing whether their

staffing challenges are driven by true headcount shortages, scheduling friction, location-specific gaps, employee availability, call-off trends, or a combination of all these factors.

The good news is that each of these gives leaders another lever to pull. Instead of treating instability as an unavoidable condition of healthcare staffing, organizations can begin to identify the patterns that are within their control and make more confident decisions from there.

How scheduling impacts satisfaction and retention

Scheduling is sometimes viewed as an administrative task, but employees experience it as something much more personal. A schedule shapes the predictability of someone's week, the way they plan child care or transportation, the amount of rest they can rely on, the fairness they perceive across the team, and their sense of whether the organization understands the realities of their life outside work.

For healthcare employees who are already doing demanding work, the schedule can either provide steady support or add another layer of stress. Last-minute changes, unclear communication, inconsistent shift distribution, frequent overtime requests, and a lack of visibility into open shifts can quietly affect morale. Over time, those experiences can influence whether employees feel committed to staying or begin looking for a workplace that feels more manageable.

That does not mean every employee will always get their ideal schedule, nor does it mean staffing healthcare will ever be simple. But it does mean scheduling deserves strategic attention. When employees have clearer communication, more visibility, and a stronger sense that scheduling decisions are being made thoughtfully, the work experience can feel more stable even in a high-pressure environment.

For leaders, this is an opportunity to influence retention from inside the organization. Recruitment brings people in, but scheduling is one of the everyday experiences that can help encourage them to stay. Small improvements in how shifts are created, communicated, filled, and adjusted can have a meaningful impact because they impact employees again and again throughout their tenure.

Connecting hiring outcomes to staffing outcomes

One of the most important shifts healthcare organizations can make is connecting hiring outcomes to staffing outcomes. It is helpful to know how many applications came in, how quickly candidates moved through the process, and how many offers were accepted. But those metrics become even more valuable when they're connected to what happens after hire.

For example, if a facility hires several new employees but still struggles to fill evening shifts, the organization may need to look beyond the hiring funnel.

- Were candidates hired for the shifts that were truly needed?
- Were availability expectations clear from the start?

- Are new employees being scheduled in a way that helps them ramp up successfully?
- Are managers able to see coverage gaps early enough to respond proactively?

When hiring and staffing data work together, organizations can begin to see whether their recruitment strategy is creating the coverage they need. This helps leaders move from activity-based success to outcome-based success. The goal is to build staffing patterns that support care delivery, employee wellbeing, and operational consistency.

Informing hiring needs with scheduling data

A schedule is a record of workforce demand, employee availability, coverage patterns, call-offs, overtime, open shifts, and the places where operations consistently feel strain. When that information is captured and analyzed, it can become one of the strongest inputs into future hiring decisions.

Without that visibility, hiring plans can rely too heavily on assumptions. Leaders may know that a team feels short-staffed, but they may not know whether the real need is for more part-time weekend employees, additional night-shift coverage, different credentials in a specific location, or a stronger pool of employees available for last-minute openings. Scheduling data helps turn those impressions into clearer workforce signals.

Over time, organizations can use scheduling patterns to identify:

- Shifts that are repeatedly difficult to fill
- Locations that regularly rely on overtime or temporary support
- Departments where call-offs create the greatest disruption
- Roles where demand is growing faster than hiring plans anticipated

These insights can help talent teams recruit with greater precision. Instead of opening broad requisitions and hoping they solve the problem, organizations can focus on the specific staffing needs that are showing up in day-to-day operations. That creates a stronger connection between today's schedule and tomorrow's workforce plan.

Take reactive staffing to proactive stability

Many healthcare leaders know what reactive staffing feels like. A call-off comes in, and the day immediately changes. Managers begin calling, texting, and asking around. Employees are asked to cover extra hours. Agency support may be brought in when internal options run out. Everyone does their best to protect care quality, but the process can be draining when it happens again and again.

Proactive staffing doesn't eliminate every surprise, but it can reduce how often surprises become emergencies. When organizations understand where gaps are most likely to appear, they can plan earlier and communicate more clearly. When scheduling and time data are connected, leaders can

monitor labor patterns with more confidence. When hiring plans reflect operational reality, new employees are brought in to solve the right problems.

This is where technology can play an important role, especially when it brings workforce processes together rather than leaving teams to manage information across separate systems, spreadsheets, whiteboards, emails, and one-off messages. A more connected approach gives healthcare organizations a clearer line of sight from hiring to scheduling to time tracking and payroll. More importantly, it gives leaders the information they need to act before instability becomes the norm.

That clarity can make workforce management feel less like constant firefighting and more like steady leadership. It helps teams define what success looks like beyond filling roles, and it creates space for more thoughtful decisions about coverage, employee experience, and long-term planning.

Start with the employees you already have

The healthcare workforce conversation will continue to include recruitment, and rightly so. Organizations still need strong applicant pipelines, efficient hiring processes, and compelling candidate experiences. But hiring should not carry the entire weight of workforce strategy on its own.

Viventium + Apploi helps healthcare organizations connect the moments that matter most across the employee lifecycle, from attracting and hiring the right candidates to managing scheduling, time, payroll, and the day-to-day workforce operations that influence whether employees stay.

Hiring may open the door, but workforce stability is what helps healthcare organizations keep moving forward. By connecting hiring, onboarding, scheduling, and payroll with Viventium + Apploi, leaders gain a clearer, more sustainable way to support the people who make care possible every day.

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