Finding and keeping talent remains a top priority for healthcare leaders. While progress has been made, strategies are falling short of the sweeping change organizations seek to transform their workforces.

To better define the widening gap between leadership strategies and results, Huron interviewed 718 healthcare leaders and workers. Our longitudinal research pinpoints:

- What physicians, nurses, and non-clinical staff value most from their workplaces
- Where leadership is missing the mark
- How organizations can respond to meet employee needs

**What workers want**

This year, staff members’ top six most important factors shifted slightly, with paid time off (PTO) moving up in importance and professional growth opportunities and role alignment exiting the list. Economic uncertainty has employees prioritizing their financial needs over “softer” elements of work satisfaction.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Clinical staff</th>
<th>Non-clinical staff</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Retirement package</td>
<td>• Organization's environmental sustainability</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Transportation benefits</td>
<td>• Role alignment</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Previous research

1. Health insurance and coverage
2. Professional growth opportunities
3. Digital, technology, and analytics (DTA)
4. Diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI)
5. Competitive salary
6. Workload

### Today

1. Competitive salary
2. Health insurance and coverage
3. **Paid time-off (PTO)**
4. Diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI)
5. Digital, technology, and analytics (DTA)
6. Workload

*Bold = increased importance*
Talent investments require tighter focus

Organizations are investing significantly more than last year in recruitment and retention strategies—in some cases as much as 105%—but to little effect. Driving quality outcomes across recruitment and retention should start with organizations narrowing their focus and investing in top opportunity areas identified by workers.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Top five investment areas</th>
<th>Year-over-year increase</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mental health support</td>
<td>+105%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Healthcare benefits</td>
<td>+71%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Additional PTO</td>
<td>+68%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retirement benefits</td>
<td>+58%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Training and educational resources</td>
<td>+54%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

What are leaders getting right?

Our survey measured staff-management agreement regarding important workplace elements. While leaders correctly identified four out of six factors that mattered most to staff, alignment doesn’t imply action or progress—it simply means that both groups agree on where opportunities for improvement lie.
Employee satisfaction trends toward tech

Our research shows that all staff members are more satisfied with digital, tech, and analytics, professional growth opportunities, and team rapport—areas that organizations have embraced and invested in.

Integrating technology into a work environment can reduce administrative burden and increase efficiencies, lessening strain on staff members. Talent strategy should embrace organization-specific methods for decreasing workload and adding workplace flexibility.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Satisfied</th>
<th>Dissatisfied</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Health insurance and coverage</td>
<td>Workload</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DEI</td>
<td>Competitive annual bonus and financial incentives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Team rapport</td>
<td>Child and elder support</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Digital technology and analytics (DTA)</td>
<td>Work-life balance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional growth opportunities</td>
<td>Workplace variability</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Green = increase in satisfaction from last year
Red = decrease in satisfaction from last year

Improving persistent burnout

Burnout increased 17% across all levels of staff compared to the previous year. Physicians, nurses, and front-line staff alike are seeking:
- A more balanced workload
- Greater schedule flexibility
- Healthier work-life balance

As organizations look to minimize burnout, it’s essential that they prioritize flexibility and curate a work environment that contributes to staff satisfaction.

81% of respondents report feeling burned out more than a few times a month over the past six months.

37% of burned-out respondents are considering leaving their current position in the next 12 months.

Top factors contributing to burnout 2023

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Lack of work-life balance (+10%)</th>
<th>Long hours (+8%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Emotional exhaustion or stress (+5%)</td>
<td>Unmanageable workload and unreasonable time pressures (+5%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Top opportunities for organizational investment

When asked, employees will provide a long list of workplace factors that matter.

The gap between what staff rank as important and how satisfied they are in those same areas help us understand what matters most to them.

Huron’s prior research highlighted workers’ concern for higher-level priorities such as role alignment and feeling valued. Today, employees care more about pay, time off, and workload, signaling that their fundamental safety and security needs require attention.

These shifts reveal where leaders should focus their investments with urgency, while building more holistic plans.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Prior research</th>
<th>Today</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Competitive salary</td>
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<tr>
<td>Health insurance and coverage</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>DEI</td>
<td>DEI</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional growth opportunities</td>
<td>Paid time off</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transportation benefits</td>
<td>Workload</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feeling valued</td>
<td>Work-life balance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leadership experience</td>
<td>Scheduling flexibility</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Role alignment</td>
<td>Competitive annual bonus and financial incentives</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Gray text = no longer highly important to staff
Bold = new factor highly important to staff

What’s working for recruitment and retention

We asked leaders to rank their most effective organizational investments in recruitment and retention year-over-year.

Acquiring new technology has proven to be a successful initiative—doubly so given that technology also ranked as highly important to staff. Evaluating the efficacy of investment strategies presents an opportunity for organizations to find what works on role-by-role basis.

Top 7 recruitment and retention initiatives

1. Investment in new technology
2. Mental health support
3. Invested in new work equipment
4. Healthcare benefits
5. Higher compensation
6. Additional safety measures and precautions
7. Additional PTO
Technology and talent converge

**Improve recruitment and retention**

Organizations’ investments in digital, technology, and analytics (DTA) rose 34% with a focus on recruitment and retention tools.

**6 talent-focused tools leaders are using:**

- Predictive shift management tools
- Cloud-based talent management applications
- Self-service automation for talent management
- Advanced analytics for engagement and retention
- Productivity and worker utilization tools
- Advanced analytics for talent management

**Review benefits packages**

Alongside DTA initiatives, organizations should consider a holistic review of their benefits packages. New benefits can invigorate enthusiasm and encourage staffers to stay in their positions.

**New benefits could include:**

- Removing seniority as a factor for PTO.
- Implementing benefits that directly address work-life balance.
- Enhancing train-the-trainer opportunities for new middle managers.
- Offering recharge leave and other life-stage-based support.

"Organizations now have to focus on attracting innovative, digital-first team members while also providing employees with the tools to operate more efficiently."

David Devine, Healthcare Technology Leader, Huron
Talk to an expert

Want to find the right strategy for keeping your staff satisfied? Connect with a Huron expert today and find what works for your organization.