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Article

# Engagement and Inclusivity Drive Resilience for Healthcare Organizations

Jack Sheehan • August 02, 2024

Retaining and improving business resilience to risk is an ongoing priority for healthcare executives. One of the best ways our clients have found to achieve this objective is to focus on hiring and retention policies, with an eye toward boosting diversity and inclusion in the workplace. There are several factors at play here – all inextricably tied to the notion of engagement.

## Staffing can drive the success or failure of patient engagement

Staffing shortages are one of the biggest issues currently affecting healthcare organizations. They can lead to increased stress on workers, which leads to increased turnover, which further compounds the issue.

Staffing has particularly significant implications for smaller organizations. Losing just a few employees can move the needle, not just on employee workloads and associated job satisfaction, but also on their ability to maintain revenue levels or even to keep their doors open if state-mandated staff-to-patient ratios are not maintained.

But the most important impact of staffing shortages for smaller organizations can be on their ability to deliver patient care. We see claims coming in, for instance, when home healthcare practices are unable to replace scheduled visits after workers call in sick. The inability to fill patient staffing slots can put both an organization and its clients at risk.

## Prioritizing inclusion and social engagement aids retention

Noting that personally invested employees are less likely to look for alternative employment, our policyholders see hiring, onboarding, and training savings as key benefits of positive social engagement. They recognize that improving workforce morale and cultivating a happier

staff leads to less turnover and less need for contracted workers.

Creating a happier, more engaging environment also decreases the potential for wrongful termination, discrimination, harassment, and other employment practices liability-related issues that can otherwise materialize into an adverse situation for a healthcare or life sciences organization. To that end, organizations are now expanding their benefits and services to support the lifestyles of their employees and foster a sense of belonging and connection to the company. Without these programs, they recognize, they run the risk of losing valuable talent.

Many healthcare and life sciences organizations have used contract labor for a long time, but this has greatly increased their expenses, especially for traveling nurses. When employees are engaged and morale is high, there is less turnover and therefore less need for contracted workers. This in turn reduces expenses and leads to improvements in the bottom line.

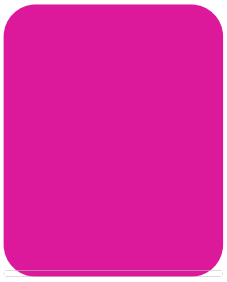
## New talent pipeline engagement must also be prioritized

Equally important to retaining employees is hiring them in the first place. Staffing is a significant issue in the aftermath of COVID, and myriad organizations – from sophisticated healthcare and life sciences organizations to small businesses – are struggling to get employment levels back on track. But mass onboarding of new hires to fill staffing shortages can lead to lax background checks and credentialling, and when background check companies miss something critical, the claim implications can be significant.

There's a particular need in healthcare to pipeline future talent – particularly when it comes to nursing staff. Our policyholders are successfully utilizing local universities and local community leaders to help facilitate a deeper connection and build a network of nurses for the future.

## The power of engagement

Maintaining good engagement with current staff, future staff, and the patients that they serve is integral to the resilience of every healthcare organization. Health organizations which recognize the value of this approach and prioritize it in their practices will reap the benefit – and should improve their business resilience to risk as a result of these best practices.




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