

ARTICLE

Health systems are leveraging technology-driven solutions for better talent acquisition and staffing

| MAY 10, 2024

<https://www.chartis.com/insights/health-systems-are-leveraging-technology-driven-solutions-better-talent-acquisition-and>

What's trending: New tech-based approaches are improving staff recruitment, deployment, and retention

Faced with ongoing staffing shortages, many hospitals and health systems have felt hamstrung in building an engaged and aligned workforce. But organizations are increasingly augmenting their existing talent acquisition approach with tech solutions that are helping them build a strong and sustainable workforce.

Why it matters:

While healthcare staffing shortages are improving from the crisis levels during the pandemic, addressing workforce challenges remains a top priority. To better secure staff who are the right fit, organizations should evaluate their current strategy and consider new pathways. That includes supplementing more traditional recruiting and staffing activities with technology and vendor solutions.

Many of today's workers, especially younger ones, have different expectations of how they learn about job opportunities and apply for them. They seek greater mobility and flexibility. Technology-driven solutions, like those in the table below, can provide opportunities for organizations to optimize their strategy.

Each staffing augmentation solution can help access different labor market segments, multiplying the pathways through which prospective staff can match with the organization.

However, these solutions are not replacements for an organization's existing talent acquisition platform. Organizations need to take a planful approach to procuring technology and vendor staffing augmentation. Solutions should support defined use cases, such as managing ongoing staffing gaps, known short- vs. long-term staff leaves, and volume variation.

Once a health system has assessed its existing talent acquisition and augmentation strategies, it can determine the gaps and solutions to support them.

Staffing optimization and augmentation solutions to consider	
Optimize existing in-house processes and tools	
Talent acquisition system optimization	Many healthcare organizations have cobbled together their human capital management (HCM) system with bolt-on applications (e.g., applicant tracking system and background checks). Doing so often means leveraging clunky interfaces or manual processes that result in inefficient workflows, slower processing, and poor reporting and visibility to information. Organizations must thoroughly review their technology solution map to ensure their technology efficiently optimizes workflows. Artificial intelligence (AI)-powered tools can automate resume screening by matching skills, education, and experience. They can also assist with verifying candidates' licenses and certifications.
Recruitment process outsourcing (RPO)	RPO vendors provide a range of options—from extra hands to support the recruitment process to transformational technology capabilities. These capabilities include deploying hiring campaigns across many platforms, targeting outreach to specific talent segments (e.g., role type and experience or tenure), and providing data-based insights into the success or failures of deployed strategies.
Explore supporting technologies and solutions	
Traditional agency	Traditional 13-week contract labor remains an effective staffing source for known leaves of absence or ongoing shortages. Many traditional agencies have significantly increased technology to support matchmaking capabilities that establish strong connections with both staff and prospective health systems.
International agency	These vendors recruit international staff, typically providing longer-term staffing assignments than traditional agencies. They also typically offer support navigating the visa and credentialing process.
Managed services provider (MSP) or vendor management system (VMS)	These vendors and systems support the entire recruitment and deployment lifecycle of contract staff across many agencies. They employ technology to manage procurement operational tasks, such as scheduling staff and billing.

Private label staffing agency	Health systems increasingly are setting up their own staffing agencies to provide new avenues for recruitment or developing alternative contracting models to convert external agency staff to internally contracted staff (e.g., higher hourly rates and travel stipends). Doing so can simultaneously reduce expense by cutting out the cost of a vendor partner's margin.
Local float pool	Vendors can help stand up a float pool, including staff curation. Local float pool staff can then use vendor or hospital technology as a flexible solution to manage last-minute shift cancellations, census fluctuations, and ongoing scheduling gaps.
Marketplace	Digital platforms can serve as direct-booking tools through which credentialed per-diem staff sign up for available shifts. Typically, the vendor vets these staff for credentialing using the provider organization's parameters. Some people refer to this model as the "Uber for nursing."
Virtual care	Organizations can use virtual care platforms to transform the inpatient care delivery model, with remote nurses supporting bedside staff. This is especially helpful for supporting a less experienced nurse who is on site or new staff who may be unfamiliar with certain patient care delivery processes. Virtual nurses can be on site or operate from home or an alternative site. Vendor services range from only technology only to both technology and remote clinician staffing.

What's next:

While most health systems use multiple technologies and vendors to acquire talent, many are not aware of their own limitations or the full spectrum of options. We recommend the following steps:

1. **Assess in-house technology and processes for talent acquisition and staff deployment.** Organizations must understand their recruiting yield and return on investment for related activities. They should also understand how effectively each talent acquisition approach reflects their mission and values and commitment to a positive employee experience.
2. **Optimize utilization and workflows.** Organizations should identify any remaining gaps or areas to optimize. For example, an organization may attract a sizeable pool of candidates for each job opening but lose a significant number during the recruiting process. This could be the result of a flawed electronic application processing system, poor handoffs between recruiting team members, or a prolonged process during which some candidates accept other offers. The organization should identify root causes for key obstacles and outline solutions. If in-house technologies and processes cannot close the gap, it is worth considering additional augmentation solutions.
3. **Select solutions after assessing the spectrum of augmentation options.** All solutions should add value to talent acquisition activities and align with the organization's value proposition as an employer. For example, an organization may pride itself on a close-knit culture and strong personal connections. An augmentation solution that is highly digitally oriented and is not paired with significant personal

interaction until the late stages of the recruiting process may convey a contradictory cultural dynamic to potential applicants. Regardless of whether the solution increases the number of applicants, it may be the wrong fit for that organization.

4. **Regularly evaluate solution performance against goals.** Organizations should analyze data against quantitative key performance indicators. They should also assess their staff's end-to-end experience, starting before they enter the organization, then through their day-to-day experience on the job and their exit.

Organizations should assess how to optimize their current state by asking the following questions:

- How do we access labor (W-2, travelers, temporary labor, float pools, and per diems)? What are the pieces of that process? Who is involved?
- Do we have an effective applicant tracking system embedded in our enterprise resource planning system?
- How well do we access labor for known and predictable staffing gaps?
- How successful are we at acquiring and retaining talent? Which pathways are more likely to maintain the staff we are hiring?
- How successful are we at converting outside contract or per diem staff into W-2 employees based on the pathway deployed?
- Do our onboarding, training, and competency requirements cultivate our organization's mission and values to advance the employee and patient experiences?

After current-state evaluation, organizations can build parameters for their future staffing strategy. To ensure the most effective augmentations, organizations should ask the following questions:

- What technology-based augmentation solutions could fill gaps in our own processes and capabilities? How would they interface with what we currently do?
- How will we regularly evaluate our in-house processes and any technologies we employ to augment our approaches?
- What are the parameters for “turning on” new staff augmentation pathways?
- How will we define and measure success?

Finally, the solutions and vendors in this space likely will evolve substantially in the next 5 years, given the rapid pace of technological advancement, growth of AI, private equity investments, and market consolidation. Regularly assessing the portfolio of augmentative tools will be essential for organizations to avoid holding on to solutions that may become obsolete, take advantage of new capabilities, and enable continual improvement.

Our services

[STRATEGIC TRANSFORMATION](#)

[PERFORMANCE TRANSFORMATION](#)

[DIGITAL & TECHNOLOGY TRANSFORMATION](#)

[CHARTIS CENTERS FOR AI & STRATEGIC INTELLIGENCE](#)

[PAYER TRANSFORMATION](#)

[STRATEGIC COMMUNICATIONS & CHANGE MANAGEMENT](#)

LEARN MORE ABOUT THE AUTHORS



Alexandra Schumm

Partner and Vice President of Research



Jon List

Senior Partner



Steven Glawe

Partner