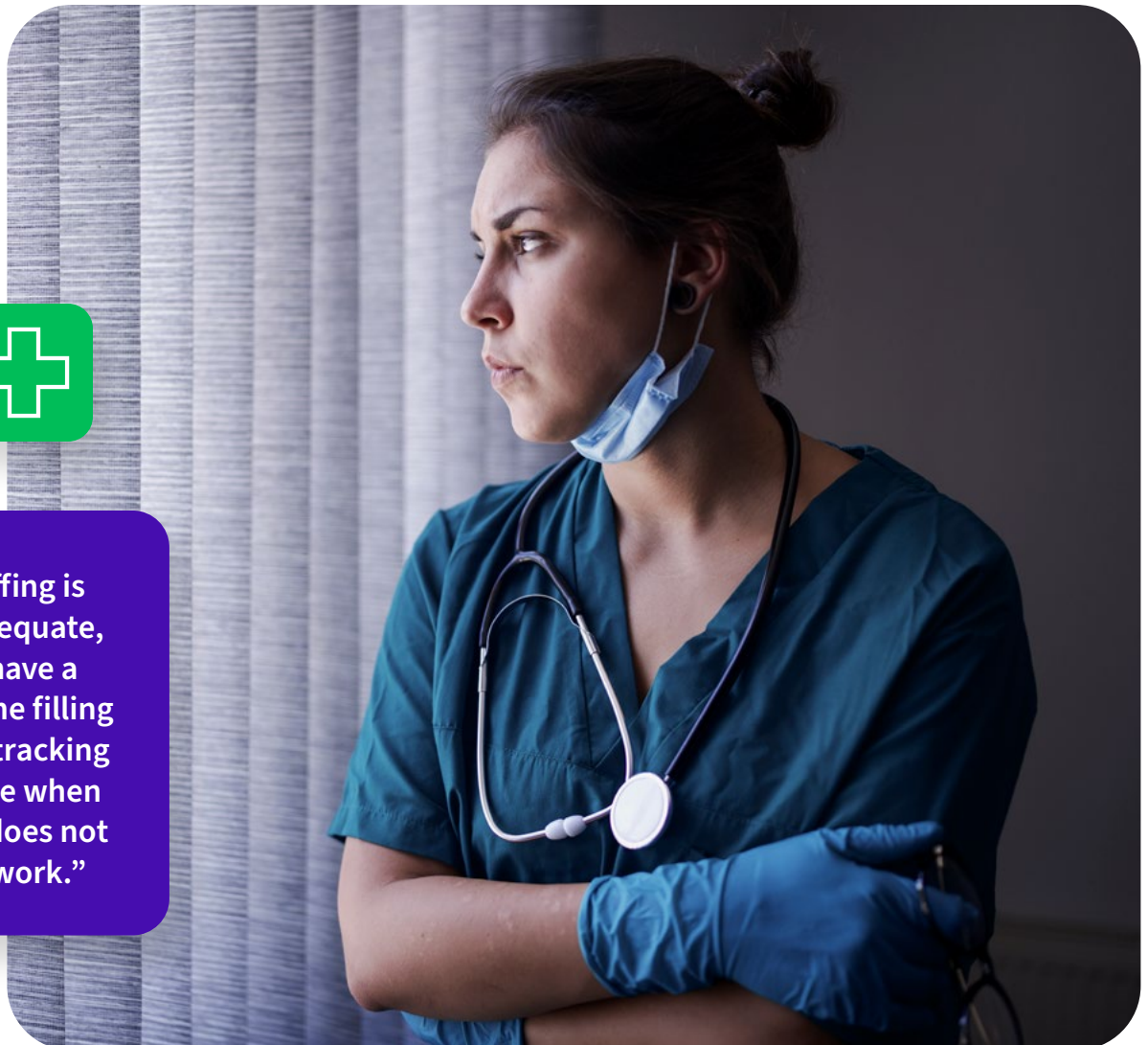


# Behind the curtains: Healthcare's quiet battle with burnout and technology lag

Employee happiness and operational efficiency seem like conflicting priorities, but what if workforce management (WFM) technology is the answer to aligning executive vision with frontline execution?



“Our staffing is often inadequate, and we have a difficult time filling shifts and tracking attendance when someone does not come to work.”



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# Introduction

In an era where advanced workforce management (WFM) trends are revolutionizing industries, the healthcare sector faces paradoxical challenges. Despite technological advancements, the industry struggles with dwindling staff resources, jeopardizing the vital care patients depend on—from routine checkups to life-saving procedures. This unexpected trend highlights the unique and pressing workforce issues that healthcare must address.

Healthcare organizations are feeling the pain of critical talent shortages and fighting to recruit, engage, and retain employees. They're turning to technology for support. Organizations must learn how to successfully manage this balancing act to create the best possible experience for both employees and patients.

**Infor®**, in partnership with **CMSWire Insights**, surveyed more than 400 executives in hospitals and managed care institutions with more than 1,000 employees about the state of their current workforce management function. Burnout and turnover are common challenges in the industry, and these leaders' critical workforce management priorities include engagement/retention, staffing and recruitment, and technology integration.

New technology adoption is not happening fast enough, and people management-related issues continue to challenge healthcare organizations. How can these organizations make smarter scheduling decisions, improve the employee experience, and take advantage of the latest technology solutions?

## Key findings



**Healthcare organizations are shifting focus from compliance to people-related priorities:**

This change signals a new approach to workforce management, emphasizing the importance of managing people effectively.



**Manual processes persist despite technological adoption:** Many healthcare organizations still rely on manual processes for time and attendance tasks, revealing a gap in fully leveraging technology for labor forecasting and scheduling.



**Accurate labor analytics are key to driving change:** Despite reported use of AI and automation, healthcare organizations still need to improve their WFM analytics.

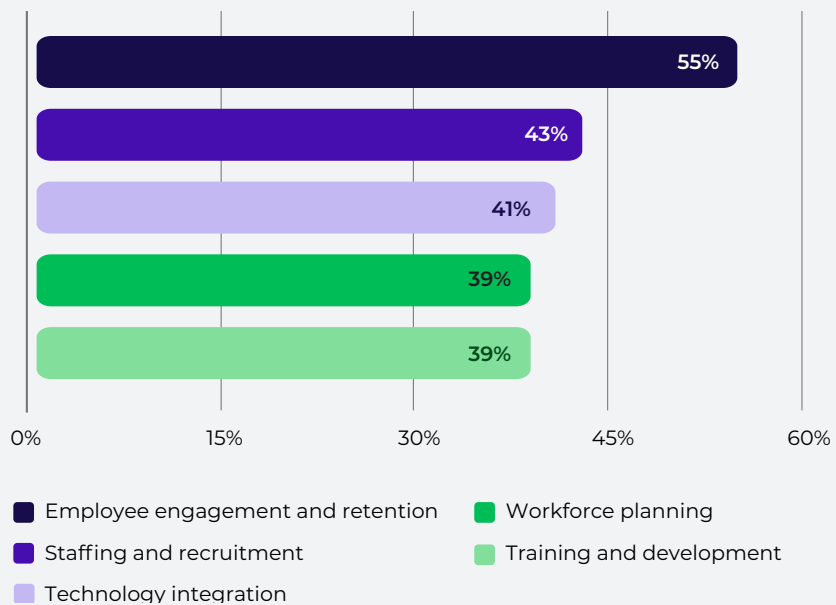
# Current findings/Challenges



## Inside healthcare organizations' current workforce management environment

Improving employee engagement and retention is a critical priority for healthcare organizations. This priority exceeded the next most common priority (staffing and recruitment) by 12 percentage points (Figure 1)—a significant gap.

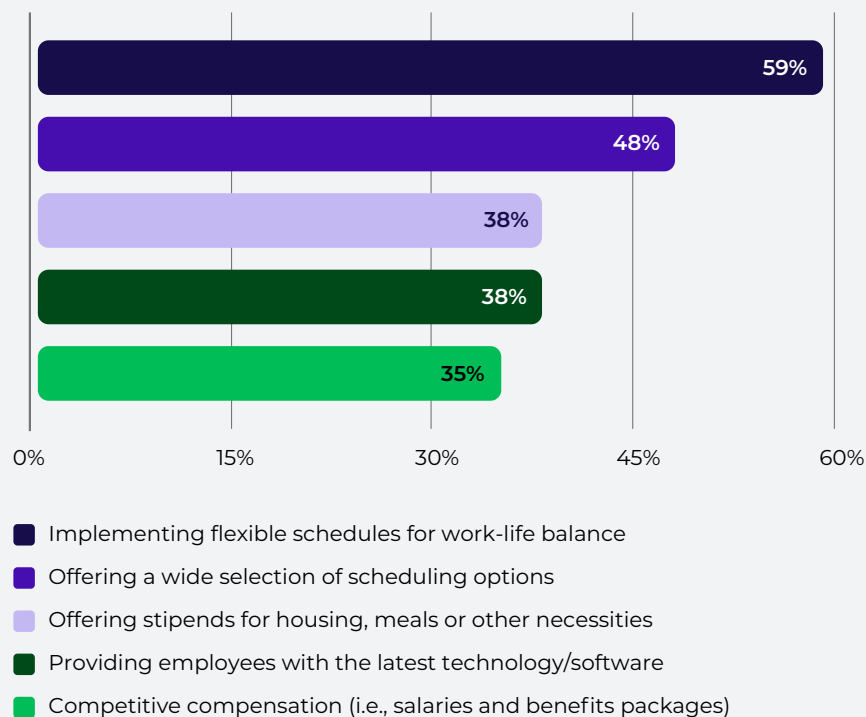
**Figure 1: What are your organization's critical workforce management priorities in the coming year?**



It's surprising that healthcare organizations now prioritize people-related issues over compliance, traditionally a dominant focus. While compliance remains critical, the heightened emphasis on workforce management underscores the severe labor challenges the industry faces. This shift likely stems from acute labor shortages, revealing the urgent need to address workforce concerns to ensure quality care.

Hospitals are doing what they can to retain and recruit talent in a challenging market where the skills they need are in short supply. To retain employees, healthcare organizations are looking at scheduling-related strategies. More than half (59%), for example, have implemented flexible schedules for work-life balance, and 48% offer a wide selection of scheduling options to appeal to a wide variety of employee preferences (Figure 2). Healthcare employees want more control over their work, so having a workforce management strategy that gives them more flexibility can help increase engagement. Giving employees the ability to bid, swap, and manage their shifts makes them feel more empowered.

**Figure 2: What does your organization do to retain employees?**



Despite these efforts, burnout among healthcare workers persists. Almost half (46%) of healthcare leaders reported burnout as a challenge, and many are trying to keep employees engaged in their jobs by using scheduling perks to give employees a better work-life balance.

It's not clear that these organizations have improved burnout, engagement, or retention yet with these strategies.

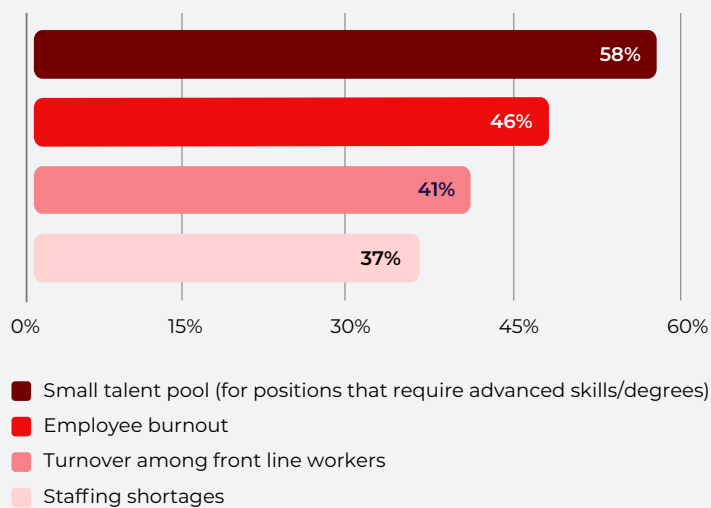
What is clear, however, is that smarter scheduling is high on the list of strategies to give employees a better experience and keep them engaged in their jobs. Making schedules better for everyone can improve work-life balance, decrease burnout, reduce turnover, and allow healthcare organizations to focus more on other workforce management priorities, like compliance.



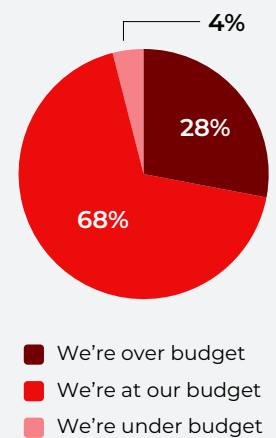
## Common workforce management challenges

More than half (58%) of respondents cited “small talent pool (for positions that require advanced skills/degrees)” as a challenge, a statistic that could help explain why “staffing and recruitment” is the second most common workforce management priority. It also helps explain why healthcare institutions are so critically focused on engagement and retention as their top priority (Figure 3). With so many organizations facing skill shortages and employee burnout, it’s vital that they acquire the resources needed to make smart scheduling and staffing decisions. For example, solutions that help organizations better understand both workforce demand and available employee skill sets can help them improve burnout, as well as challenges related to the need for specific skills in a role.

**Figure 3: What workforce management challenges do you experience at your organization?**



**Figure 4: How much is your organization spending on extra shift bonuses?**



Unsurprisingly, budget is another significant workforce management challenge for healthcare organizations. Many leaders in the survey indicated that overtime pay is an issue, with 28% saying they’re over budget when asked how much their organization spends on extra shift bonuses (Figure 4).

The scarcity of specialized talent pools—coupled with budgetary constraints—poses significant hurdles for healthcare organizations. The lack of effective tools that leaders can use to manage staffing levels and schedules exacerbates inefficiencies and increases the risk of errors. Not only do trends like small talent pools, burnout, and turnover impact how many employees are available to take shifts, but the survey data tells us that scheduling is not done efficiently in many healthcare institutions. The next section of this paper will dig deeper into scheduling and what challenges healthcare leaders face in this arena.

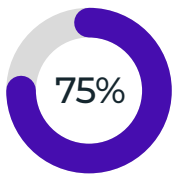
# Manual practices weighing down the workforce



## Insufficient practices in scheduling, time, and attendance

Despite the abundance of technology solutions designed to streamline scheduling, time, and attendance, healthcare organizations surprisingly continue to rely heavily on manual processes. This reliance highlights a significant inefficiency in workforce management, revealing a gap between available tech and its actual implementation.

For example, nearly half (48%) of respondents report that open shift management is mostly done manually. Another 45% use a combination of manual methods and technology solutions, while only 7% rely mostly on technology for open shift management.



75% of healthcare organizations say that managers spend more time than anticipated on schedule adjustments due to inaccurate labor forecasting or planning.



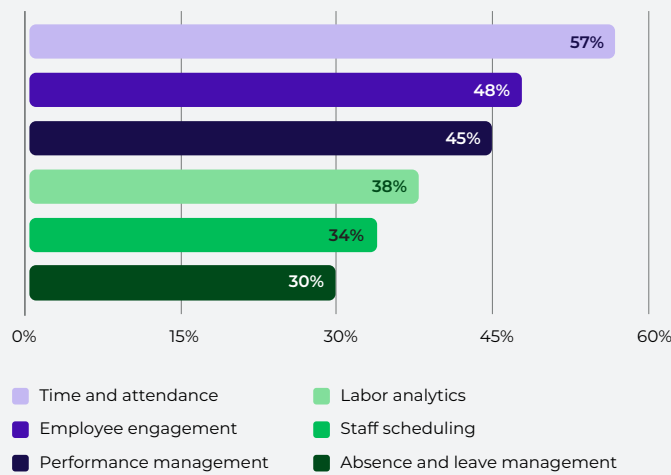
It remains unclear whether this reliance on manual processes is due to a lack of adoption of available tools or the inadequate selection of tools designed to streamline scheduling, time, and attendance. In either case, the next step for healthcare institutions seeking improvement is to explore more modern and effective solutions that automate these areas, allowing employees to focus more on patient care.



## Inside the prevalence of manual processes

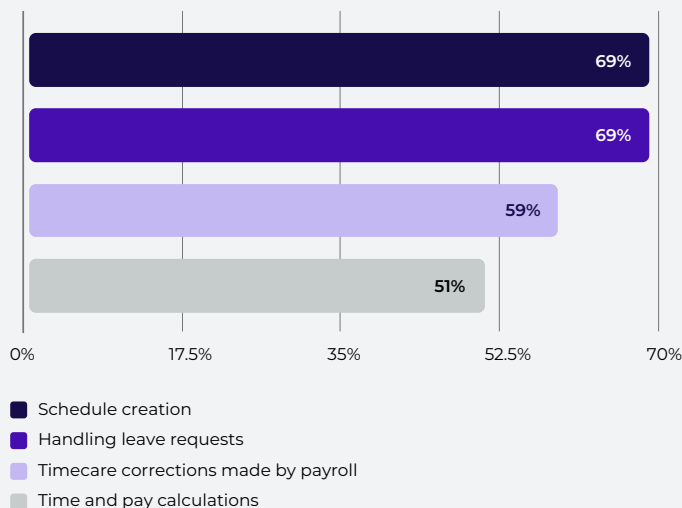
Despite the widespread availability of WFM technology, many functions remain manual at healthcare organizations. “Time and attendance” tops the list, with 57% of leaders stating it is still manual (Figure 5), while leaders also said that processes such as employee engagement (48%), performance management (45%) and labor analytics (38%) are still done manually.

**Figure 5: Percentage of organizations stating WFM processes are still manual**



The degree to which labor analytics are conducted manually is particularly concerning, especially as many healthcare organizations transition to value-based care. This type of revenue model requires a robust analytics function to consider data from a large variety of sources, and manual processes just don't cut it.

**Figure 6: Workforce management areas in which managers use 3 or more manual touchpoints**



Meanwhile, for many time and attendance functions, over half of respondents report using at least three manual touchpoints (Figure 6). This poses challenges, as each manual touchpoint increases the risk of errors. A majority of leaders (69%) indicated using three or more manual touchpoints for schedule creation and handling leave requests—a concerning statistic given the importance of smart, flexible scheduling in engaging and retaining employees.

Survey respondents revealed that the biggest challenges in managing employee schedules and time and attendance stem from outdated manual processes. Buddy punching, which thrives under manual systems, tops the list of time and attendance issues (Figure 7). Additionally, 57% of leaders struggle with manually processing scheduling requests. These persistent problems highlight a critical need for stronger technology solutions to reduce manual touchpoints and enhance efficiency.

**Figure 7: Top workforce management challenges for healthcare organizations**



### Top challenges for managing time and attendance

- Buddy punching **(53%)**
- Automating manual processes **(50%)**
- Seamless integration to core HR/payroll **(39%)**
- Accurately tracking and recording attendance **(35%)**
- Communicating schedule changes among staff **(34%)**



### Top challenges for managing employee schedules

- Manually processing employee scheduling requests **(57%)**
- Managing budgets (overtime) **(52%)**
- Employee complaints about fairness **(38%)**
- Filling shifts when unplanned absences occur **(35%)**
- Preventing employee fatigue/burnout **(35%)**



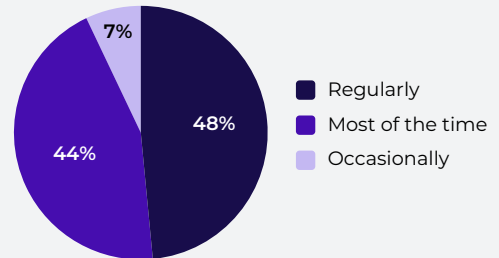


## Insufficient resource sharing

Manual workflows impede seamless resource sharing across departments, hindering organizational agility and cohesion. The reliance on manual tasks accentuates the complexity of workforce management, necessitating a shift toward streamlined processes and enhanced collaboration.

It is plausible that healthcare organizations' reliance on manual tasks contributes to resource sharing issues identified in this survey. Less than half of the healthcare organizations surveyed (48%) indicate that resources are effectively shared across teams and departments regularly (Figure 8).

**Figure 8: Are resources at your healthcare organization effectively shared across teams and departments?**



## Balancing efficiency and engagement

Despite the influx of technology, manual processes persist in healthcare, highlighting a need for simpler, more efficient workforce management. Paradoxically, while streamlining these processes, organizations must also enhance employee engagement to boost retention and productivity. Juggling these dual priorities is challenging, demanding significant focus, time, and effort.

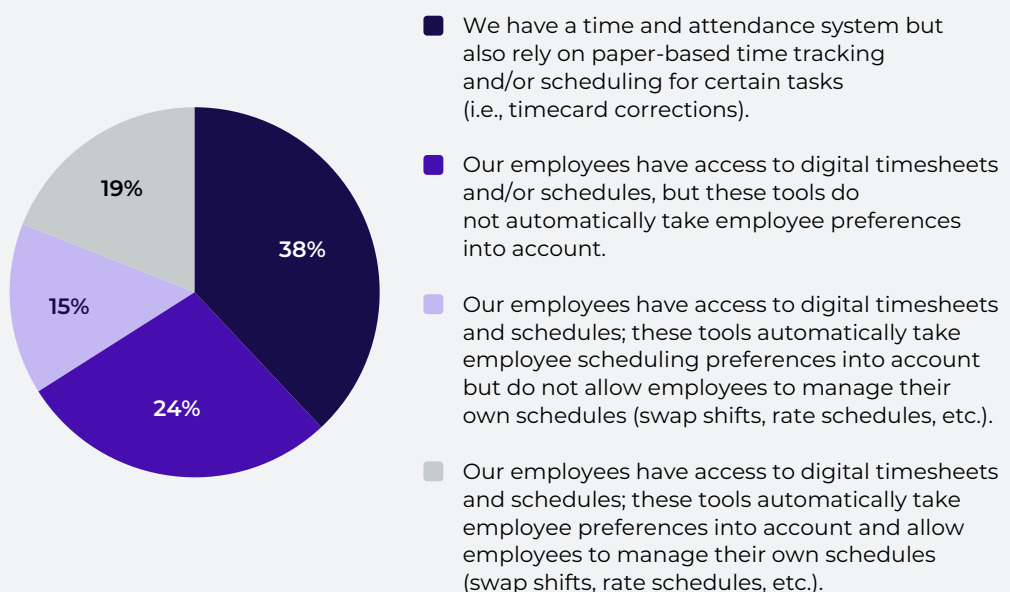
The push and pull between better people practices and better technology is a balancing act that organizations are struggling with, all while trying to be strategic. However, the right tools and technology can help them achieve this balance.



# Exploring the right workforce management tools for healthcare

Healthcare leaders provided insights into how their employees typically interact with existing workforce management tools, revealing an industry that has yet to fully mature or innovate in its toolset. Only 19% of healthcare organizations indicate that their employees can access digital timesheets and schedules that consider employee preferences and allow self-management of schedules (Figure 9). In contrast, 38% report having a time and attendance system but also rely on paper-based time tracking and/or scheduling for certain tasks.

**Figure 9: Which of the following best describes how employees at your organization generally interact with your existing workforce management tools?**



There is clearly a lot of room for improvement in these areas. Relying on manual processes heightens the risk of errors, making secure and efficient technology essential for effective workforce management functions.



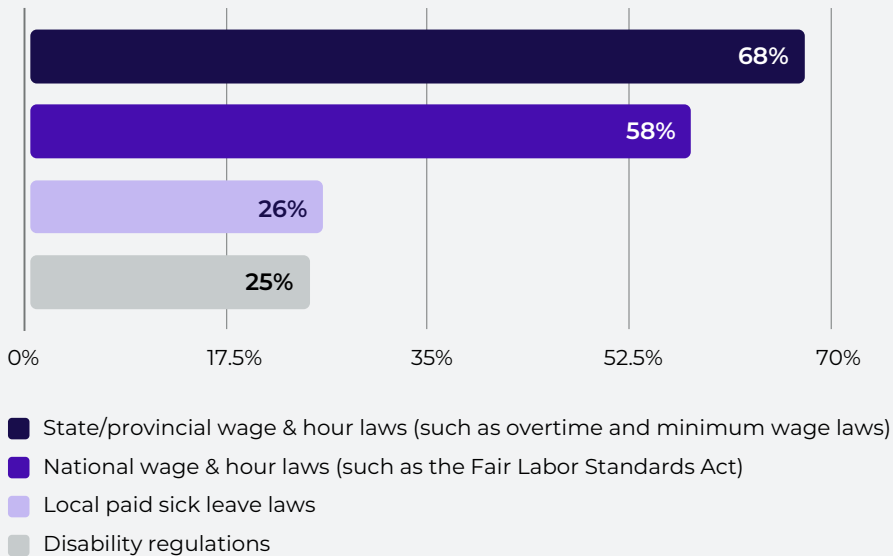
## Wage and hour compliance

Even though people-related concerns are currently a top priority in healthcare, compliance remains paramount. Wage and hour laws, specifically, are major compliance concerns for healthcare organizations, significantly outweighing other types of labor regulations such as those governing paid sick leave, break times, and disability. Two-thirds (68%) of respondents selected “state/provincial wage & hour laws” and 58% selected “national wage & hour laws”, compared to about a quarter or less who chose all other labor compliance areas (Figure 10).

Given that healthcare organizations are most concerned about these state and national laws, relying on manual processes for many time and attendance functions only increases their risk.

Furthermore, managers in healthcare often oversee larger spans of control than in other industries, heightening the likelihood of compliance issues when manual actions are involved. Implementing a technology solution with robust compliance features could help mitigate these risks.

**Figure 10: What types of labor compliance are most difficult for your organization to manage?**





## AI, automation, and workforce analytics

The current challenges in workforce management present a unique opportunity for healthcare organizations to leverage AI, automation, and labor analytics. Surprisingly, 50% of respondents are already using generative AI extensively to enhance WFM and hospital operations, and 52% are employing automation to capture labor analytics. Yet, despite these investments, manual processes still dominate many workforce management tasks.

It is paradoxical that while healthcare organizations are clearly interested in and investing in advanced technologies, they continue to rely heavily on outdated manual methods.



AI and automation promise significant improvements in workforce management, but these benefits remain untapped unless fully integrated and utilized.

Moreover, labor analytics in many healthcare institutions are not as robust as they need to be. A staggering 79% of organizations prioritize improving workforce management analytics in the coming year. Despite capturing substantial workforce management data, these organizations seem to struggle to integrate, analyze, or utilize it effectively, highlighting a critical gap between data collection and actionable insights.



## The unwanted outcomes of poor analytics functions

Limitations in analytics capabilities lead to various challenges. In an open-ended question about these pain points, respondents mentioned concerns such as security threats, communication barriers, staffing difficulties, and interoperability issues—all impacting patient care.



“Our staffing is often inadequate, and we have a difficult time filling shifts and tracking attendance when someone does not come to work.”

Another leader emphasized, “The lack of interoperability leads to redundant, disorganized, and inaccessible medical information, affecting patient care quality and wasting financial resources.”

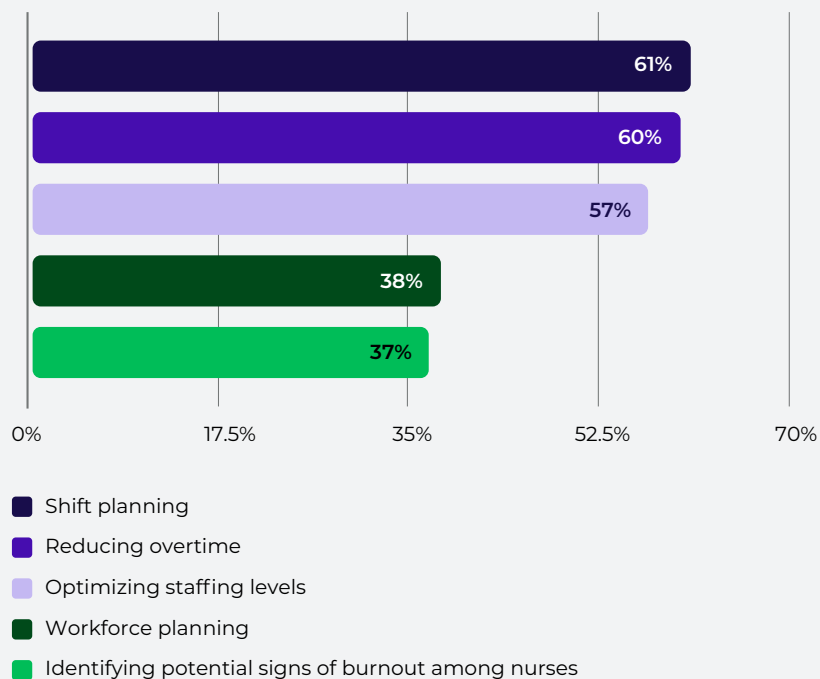
Leaders also underscored concerns about inaccurate data. “Traditional analytics may struggle to offer accurate predictions or forecasts,” noted one respondent, highlighting the need for modern analytics solutions. Another respondent warned, “Biases in data or models can result in unfair or inaccurate analytics outcomes,” emphasizing the potential negative impacts on specific patient demographics.



## Positive forward momentum

Healthcare organizations face a multitude of challenges in workforce management, yet signs of progress are evident. They are increasingly leveraging analytics to improve areas such as shift planning (61%) and reducing overtime (60%) (Figure 11). These are areas where they have previously identified issues, as noted earlier in the survey. For instance, 96% of hospitals and managed care institutions are either at or over their budget for extra shift bonuses. This gap between intention and outcome highlights a clear opportunity for growth.

**Figure 11: For what purposes does your organization use labor analytics to drive value for workforce management?**



Recognizing the potential of automation and analytics to enhance operations, healthcare organizations are prioritizing analytics for several key purposes. Their primary motivations include “better scheduling” (71%), “better enabling the use of ML/AI in the workplace” (61%) and “driving operational efficiency” (57%). While the right objectives have been identified, effective execution strategies are crucial.

To achieve these goals and more, healthcare organizations must adopt modern workforce management solutions that directly address current challenges. Traditional approaches are no longer sufficient. With innovations in AI, automation, and analytics transforming the landscape of complex people management tasks, the healthcare industry will benefit from more sophisticated and innovative solutions.

# Conclusion

The way that work gets done in the healthcare industry has evolved, driven by people-related concerns that force organizations to rethink their staffing and scheduling approaches. Workforce management tasks such as recruitment, staffing, and schedule creation are often labor-intensive and complex. Addressing these challenges effectively allows organizations to prioritize patient care and employee well-being. For example, solutions that help hospitals align staff with patient care requirements contribute to ensuring high-quality and safe patient care.

However, while many healthcare institutions claim to have adopted AI, automation, and some form of time and attendance system, there is still much progress to be made. They still often rely on manual tasks for time and attendance, which is not helping them ease their workforce management challenges. To achieve true success, healthcare organizations must reduce their dependence on manual processes that increase risk and inaccuracies in workforce management functions.

Adopting the right workforce management solution and ensuring both employees and managers can use it effectively is crucial. This solution should be tailored to the organization and its employees, preventing a return to outdated manual practices. Healthcare organizations can benefit from configurable and extensible solutions, such as Infor® Workforce Management (WFM). These tools offer flexibility to integrate seamlessly with existing systems.

Infor Workforce Management helps users create and manage complex staff schedules, including automating complex pay and scheduling rules to ensure accurate and timely payments. Leaders gain visibility into organizational needs and can efficiently utilize qualified staff, ensuring proper coverage and offering employees greater schedule flexibility and control. Role-based dashboards provide quick access to relevant data, enabling informed decision-making. Users can rely on self-service reporting capabilities and a unified system for enterprise resource planning, human resources, and workforce management, preventing data silos that affect workforce management.

Avoiding burnout and retaining top talent are critical for healthcare organizations and for all of us as potential patients. Learn more about how Infor Workforce Management can streamline people-related duties and enhance effectiveness through the link below.

[Discover how to revolutionize your healthcare!](#)

# Appendix

## Demographics

### Title

“State of Workforce Management in Healthcare”

### Survey dates

February 2024

### Respondents

407

### Organizational size

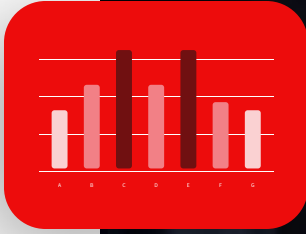
1,000-5,000: 75%  
5,000+: 25%

### Career level

C-Suite, Owner, Partner: 86%  
Senior Vice President: 6%  
Vice President: 4%  
Director: 4%

*Statistics may not total 100% due to rounding.*





## About

### Infor

Infor is a global leader in business cloud software products for companies in industry-specific markets. Infor builds complete industry suites in the cloud and efficiently deploys technology that puts the user experience first, leverages data science, and integrates easily into existing systems. Over 67,000 organizations worldwide rely on Infor to help overcome market disruptions and achieve business-wide digital transformation.

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