



Infor WFM for Health Care

Building next-level WFM in health care

Crises can be tough teachers, and the COVID-19 pandemic underscored key challenges in managing and supporting the health care workforce to deliver the best patient care. Today, health care providers are seeing some staff burnout as a result of the enormous challenges faced during the heights of the pandemic. This challenge comes as an aging population creates the need for an ever-larger health care workforce, adding some 2.6 million new jobs by 2030, [according to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics](#).

It follows then that for health care leaders today, some of the highest priorities for workforce management are efficiency, stability, and better planning. To elevate patient care while optimizing labor costs, what's needed is a way to more efficiently adjust staffing while also better forecasting for future staffing needs. Addressing these priorities can help organizations thrive in periods of calm and adapt when conditions change. And fortunately, there are new solutions that can deliver these capabilities.

Workforce challenges in operational efficiency

In a [recent survey of registered nurses](#), 26.5 percent of respondents reported being floated or reassigned to care for patients in a clinical care area that either required new skills or was outside of their primary competencies. This points to a need for a smarter allocation of human capital, and it also raises considerations for staff learning management, as nurses regularly working in new clinical care areas may require ongoing education and training.

Meanwhile, 64.5 percent of hospital nurses reported that their facilities relied on excessive overtime to staff units in response to workload increases. Part of the challenge is accounting not just for patient census but also the amount of time each patient will require for care. Relying on overtime hours to balance patient needs with available resources is potentially unsustainable and in any case stresses a workforce that is already contending with burnout.

These trends come alongside the need to efficiently manage enterprise assets. As many care providers have seen firsthand, having the correct machines, equipment, and other resources in the right place at the right time can have life and death implications, to say nothing of the impact on hospital workflows and overall efficiency.

Trends impacting planning effectiveness

Planning for the future takes a clear view of the past and the present. Historical and real-time data are fuel for accurate forecasts in the health care industry. The volume and nature of the data, as well as the speed with which conditions and circumstances can change, can challenge the organization to cut through the fog and achieve the necessary level of planning effectiveness.

The impacts stretch beyond day-to-day operations. For example, in 2022, many union contracts will expire and recent reporting shows that nurses want better staff-to-patient ratios, something that had been exacerbated by the pandemic. This is not just a consideration for contract negotiations. The effectiveness with which staff are allocated and the volume of their work can impact burnout, morale, and turnover.

One of the challenges in enhancing planning effectiveness is the variety of data that must be considered. Areas that impact planning include logistics, headcount, and budget, which are in turn influenced by shifts in traffic, appointments, and special events (whether it is a planned mass gathering or the unforeseeable arrival of a pandemic). Capturing this data, making sense of it, and using the insights to make granular planning decisions (and do so at the speed needed to meet patient census and care workload fluctuations) demands technology solutions that elevate the capacity for planning effectiveness.

Solutions for workforce management in the ERP ecosystem

Facing these trends and challenges in operational efficiency and planning effectiveness, health care organizations have an opportunity to bring in new technology solutions built for today's data-rich health care settings. Across the enterprise resource planning (ERP) ecosystem, there are areas ripe for improvement, where better harnessing and using your data can optimize costs, allocate staff, and best plan for the future.

One path forward is with Infor's integrated WFM solution. For health care organizations, two vital tools include Multi-View Scheduler (MVS) and Clinical Science (formerly GRASP). MVS is an industry-specific scheduling tool that permits multiple scheduling modalities that can be viewed, edited, and maintained in one location. Clinical Science delivers patient specific, data-driven staffing and assignment recommendations, ensuring fair and equitable nurse-patient assignments to optimize patient care. Let's look at how these tools provide the capabilities health care organizations need today.

Real-time insight for labor decision-making

Key data streams that inform operational efficiency include clinical operations data (census and patient workloads), operational data (traffic, appointments, events), and logistical data (shipping, tracking, picking, and routing). Bringing MVS to bear, you can leverage clinical data to provide insight into planned staffing levels versus what staffing is actually needed. As the clinical volume changes, MVS can be used to book off employees during lower census, gain visibility of needs across multiple units to float employees, and maximize productivity of scheduled staff. It is also valuable for relief management, dynamically changing staffing levels as needed. Additionally, by staffing based on actual patient care requirements, you can ensure your nurses and other healthcare professionals are practicing at top of licensure.

When used together with Infor Time and Attendance, MVS and Clinical Science provide decision makers with all necessary data, in a single system, to make fiscally responsible labor planning decisions without compromising the quality of patient care. These solutions help unburden supervisors and managers, as well as end-user employees. Employees achieve greater control over their own schedule with the ability to self-schedule, trade shifts with colleagues, and post shifts to or claim shifts from the shift billboard. They can also validate that their timecards (and therefore their paychecks) are accurate, decreasing the number of payroll edits and ensuring accurate, on-time pay. Managers can spend less time building and modifying schedules by automating remedial tasks and focusing on exceptions through proactive alerts within the WFM system.

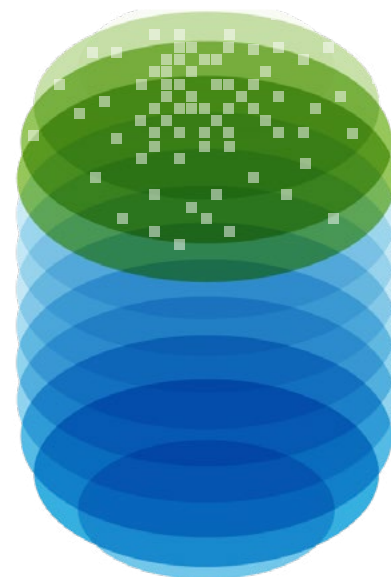
The tools can help reduce the time required to find the next available and qualified practitioner, fostering a better patient experience. By optimizing labor costs with fair distribution of overtime across the workforce, you can help balance workloads and potentially mitigate employee burnout.

Operational awareness for budgetary and labor planning

Effective planning depends on forecast and demand data, as well as historical staffing data, including surplus and deficit per skill and variance period. By looking at clinical data and patient care workload requirements, you can plan from a patient needs perspective, which makes the forecast more accurate and the planning more efficient.

MVS provides actual staffing data for variance tracking, such as book offs or ad hoc new shifts as a result of operational labor decisions. This helps match staffing level with census and clinical science. Clinical Science for its part provides actual staffing variance overlay based on forecasted and actual demand, allowing you to review surplus and deficit in as small as 15 minute intervals for each area.

Outcomes include improved accuracy in the labor budget, reaching higher accuracy in forecast and demand. In addition, improved effectiveness in labor planning helps resolve and mitigate skillset surplus or deficits. And you can also better prepare for contingency workforce demand and productivity management with actual insight on when staff are needed, how many people are needed, and with which skillsets. One point of cascading value is that data can be extrapolated from forecasts and plans and fed back into budgeting and recruiting plans.



Taking the next steps

By virtue of this approach to managing for efficiency and effectiveness, you can work toward having the right people in the right place providing the highest level of care while optimizing costs and resources. Ready to learn more from Deloitte Consulting's award winning Infor WFM team? Please reach out for more information.

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