FORRESTER®

Streamline Healthcare Background Screening To Win Top Talent

Leading Edge Technology And White Glove Customer Service Drive The Success Of Healthcare Recruitment

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In Healthcare, Organizational Success Hinges On Hiring And Retaining Top Talent

The COVID-19 pandemic, an aging population, and the increased prevalence of chronic diseases are stretching the healthcare ecosystem thin. The healthcare industry has never experienced this level of disruption, which is leading to a staffing shortage. By 2026, there will be a staffing shortage of 3.2 million healthcare workers, namely in hospitals and health systems.[1] Healthcare HR leaders must address this talent gap to achieve broader strategic goals, including growth, patient care, and cost savings — and that starts by improving talent acquisition processes and increasing employee retention. A survey of 157 healthcare staffing decision-makers at large US organizations found that efficiently acquiring top talent to build a reliable employee base is critical to persevere as a healthcare organization. Failure to address this talent shortage crisis prevents organizations from thriving and, for some, surviving.

Key Findings

In healthcare, organizational success starts with hiring the right employees. However, recruiting, screening, and onboarding top talent in today's pandemic-plagued environment is hard to do.

Healthcare organizations are revamping their hiring strategies and looking for external help to make the process easier, smarter, and more efficient.

Healthcare organizations seek tech-enabled partners that offer a great candidate experience to augment their hiring practices and yield fruitful benefits for HR and the organization at large.

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High Demand Coupled With Limited Hiring Resources Equals A Talent Catch-22

Healthcare organizations are in dire need of talent. Massive clinician turnover, long recruitment cycles, and increasing industry competition for talent are crippling acquisition and retention in the healthcare workforce.[2] However, many healthcare organizations lack the proper resources to win, serve, and retain the best candidates.

Healthcare hiring professionals require a range of screening and background checks for new staff (e.g., COVID-19 vaccine status, medical clearances, medical credentialing, etc.). For the most part, surveyed decision-makers noted they are moderately satisfied with the tools they have in their arsenal but, alarmingly, they are least satisfied with those that support critical business functions, such as employee retention, employee screening, and onboarding.
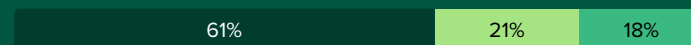
Level Of Satisfaction With Current Management Tools And Capabilities

● Somewhat satisfied to very satisfied

● Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied

● Somewhat dissatisfied to very dissatisfied

Talent acquisition

65%	17%	18%

Learning and development

61%	21%	18%

Employee screening post-hire

61%	18%	21%

Candidate screening and onboarding

57%	20%	24%

Employee retention

50%	24%	26%

Talent pros are least satisfied with technologies supporting these efforts.

The Impact Of The Pandemic Is Still Felt Far And Wide In Healthcare

Survey data suggests that COVID-19 is causing a medical surge capacity problem in healthcare, resulting in a talent shortage, greater industry competition for talent, and employee burnout. Eighteen percent of healthcare workers — nearly one in five — have quit their jobs since February 2020, while another 12% have been laid off.[3]

The biggest drivers of the exodus were the COVID-19 pandemic, burnout, and insufficient pay. An inability to keep recruitment on pace with demand further compounded these challenges. Our study found that roughly one-third of healthcare staffing decision-makers reported struggling with lengthy, complex recruitment cycles, while a similar number struggled with the increasing demand for long-term care.

> ! One-third of survey respondents reported struggling with lengthy, complex recruitment cycles.
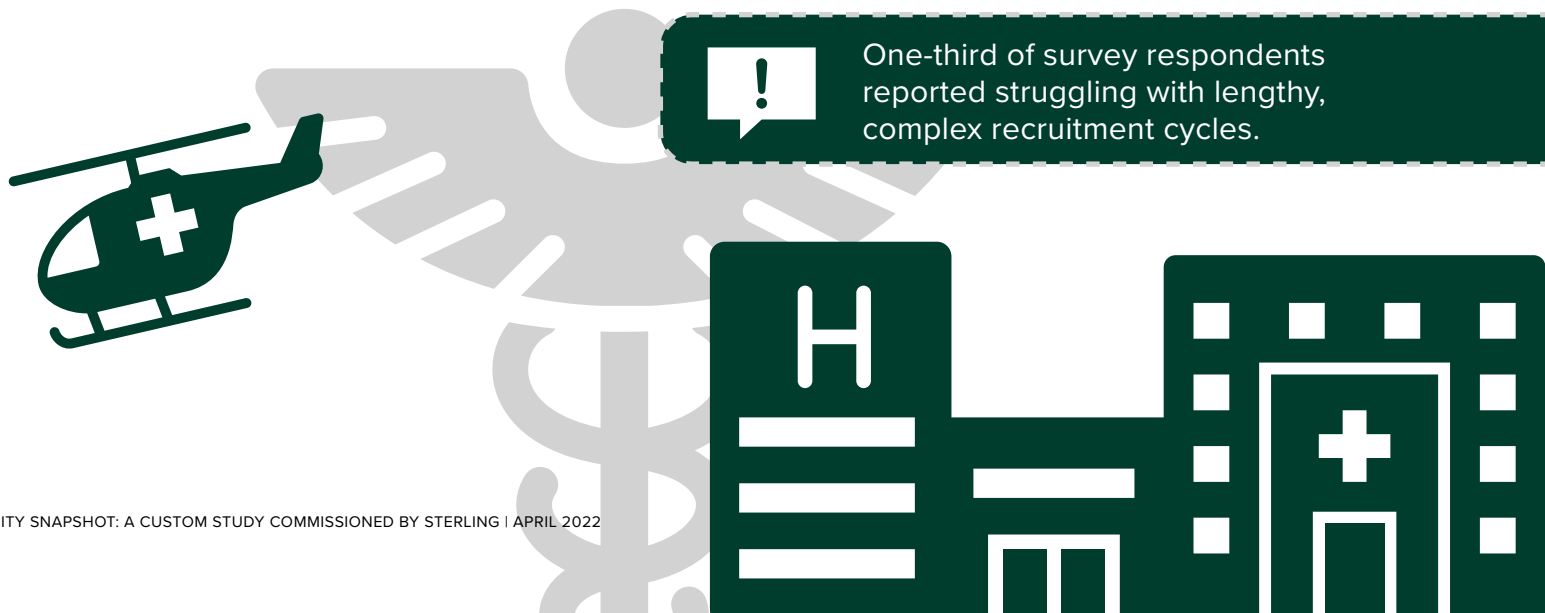
Not All Healthcare Organizations Effectively Manage Medical Surge Capacity Challenges

The inability to manage challenges prohibits healthcare organizations from proficiently dealing with employee burnout and industry competition. These challenges are magnified by complex, inefficient, inaccurate, and expensive hiring processes. Respondents noted needing to rely on multiple outside firms vs. one to manage the screening, background, and onboarding processes was the greatest hindrance for organizations looking to hire candidates in a timely manner. This was amplified by the complexity of state-by-state regulatory requirements.

Trust is also an issue. Roughly half of surveyed decision-makers lacked confidence in screening outcomes and accuracy. These challenges put the cost to hire candidates in a timely manner under a microscope as it becomes expensive for firms to weed out poor candidates and bring in top talent.

"Which of the following hinder your ability to hire candidates in a timely manner?"

54% Reliance on multiple outside firms to manage the screening, background check, and onboarding process

51% Lack of accurate information

49% Lack of confidence in the screening outcomes

49% High cost

49% Complexity of state-by-state regulatory requirements

Base: 157 healthcare staffing decision-makers at large US companies
Source: A commissioned study conducted by Forrester Consulting on behalf of Sterling, December 2021

Doing Nothing About Inefficient Processes Is Not An Option

Inefficient hiring and onboarding practices have significant ramifications. More than two-thirds of respondents indicated that their organizations have insufficient people, process, and technology strategies in place, hurting recruitment and retention.

Furthermore, roughly 60% of respondents agreed that missed opportunities to streamline, scale, and accelerate hiring results in a decline in patient care and higher operating expenses. Even more concerning, nearly six in 10 also agreed that staffing pressures have caused the quality of patient care at their organization to decline. They also noted that dated systems and manual processes complicate and elongate the hiring process, holding talent acquisition and onboarding teams back.

Nearly 60% of respondents noted the quality of patient care has declined because of staffing pressures.

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At least two-thirds of respondents agreed that:

1. We own multiple talent acquisition technologies that don't integrate and, as a result, our candidate experience is disjointed.

2. Primitive, disjointed processes force candidates to struggle with onboarding experiences and put them at a disadvantage.
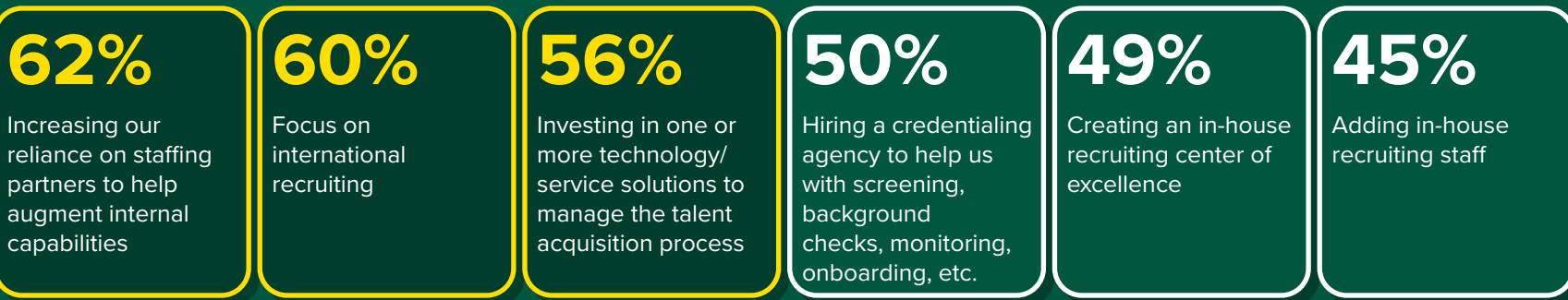
3. Large hiring bonuses demotivate current staff and encourage them to seek other opportunities.

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Healthcare Organizations Aren't Taking These Challenges Lightly

Most healthcare organizations are taking action to combat hiring challenges. Needing to rely on multiple outside firms to provide point hiring solutions can be a hindrance. However, many respondents noted their organizations are increasing their reliance on staffing partners that offer comprehensive solutions to help augment internal capabilities. Other respondents noted their organizations are recruiting international candidates and investing in technology and service solutions to manage talent acquisition processes.

Investing in screening and onboarding solutions is a key part of scaling a fast and seamless recruitment process. Respondents reported their organizations plan to invest in a mix of solutions from general screening technologies to those that will help their organizations gather more detailed information.

Top Actions Healthcare Organizations Take To Address Staffing And Onboarding Issues

62%
Increasing our reliance on staffing partners to help augment internal capabilities

60%
Focus on international recruiting

56%
Investing in one or more technology/ service solutions to manage the talent acquisition process

50%
Hiring a credentialing agency to help us with screening, background checks, monitoring, onboarding, etc.

49%
Creating an in-house recruiting center of excellence

45%
Adding in-house recruiting staff

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Most Seek Innovative Solutions To Current Problems

Healthcare staffing leaders reported that screening is a critical component of the hiring process and believed that the speed-to-hire metric is a strategic imperative that enables competitive challenge. The majority of those surveyed indicated their organizations are seeking innovative solutions to attract, screen, hire, and onboard critical talent as quickly as possible — a fundamental first step to a greater experience.

Additionally, healthcare respondents stated that their organizations are fishing for talent overseas as well as recruiting and hiring out-of-state candidates before they graduate to address talent needs. These innovative approaches require a scalable, flexible, and automated screening process to make sure all investments to proactively recruit talent are maximized.

Over two-thirds of respondents agreed that:

1. Screening is a critical component of the hiring process.

2. The speed-to-hire metric is a strategic imperative that enables a competitive advantage.

3. Our organization seeks innovative solutions to attract, screen, hire, and onboard critical talent as quickly as possible.

4. We are seeking to attract talent from overseas or recruit and hire out-of-state candidates before they graduate due to the talent shortage.

Benefits Of A Screening And Onboarding Partner Extend Beyond HR

Hiring partners tapped to screen and onboard candidates should offer practical utility. Healthcare staffing leaders want a partner with comprehensive screening services and deep healthcare expertise. Partners should also offer an enhanced candidate experience with advanced technologies (e.g., mobile-first user experience, robust and customizable notifications, enhanced reporting and analytics).

While many of the expected partner benefits would directly impact HR, they would also be felt across the organization. Over 40% of respondents expected to achieve faster start times for new employees through a background check and screening partner, while nearly 40% desired improved efficiency of their talent acquisition teams.

> [!] Over 40% of respondents expected to achieve faster start times for new employees with a partner.

Most Important Characteristics In A Screening And Onboarding Partner
(Showing "Critical" and "Important")

- Healthcare expertise
- Proactive customer support
- Comprehensive screening services
- Mobile-first user experience
- Robust and customizable notifications
- White glove/ concierge candidate support model
- Reporting and analytics

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A prosperous recruitment cycle is contingent on advantageous employee screening and onboarding processes. Healthcare organizations battling the everyday stress and volatility of their industry environment must prioritize their talent acquisition strategies and technologies to help alleviate the pressures of recruiting and hiring.

Getting top talent in the door swiftly with an experienced partner that offers healthcare-specific background screening solutions streamlines onboarding workflows and optimizes organizational performance.

Solutions that offer deep healthcare expertise, strong candidate experiences, and advanced technologies can take the pain out of the talent acquisition process, benefiting both the candidates and organization.

To realize these benefits, healthcare organizations must first evaluate their processes to identify their most significant recruitment vulnerabilities and then operationalize a winning strategy.

Project Director:

Brett Chase,
Senior Market Impact Consultant

Contributing Research:

Forrester's Future Of Work and Healthcare research groups

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Methodology

This Opportunity Snapshot was commissioned by Sterling. To create this profile, Forrester Consulting supplemented this research with custom survey questions asked of healthcare staffing decision-makers at large US companies. The custom survey began and was completed in December 2021.

ENDNOTES

[1] Source: "US Healthcare Labor Market," Mercer, 2021.

[2] Source: "Predictions 2022: Healthcare," Forrester Research, Inc., November 3, 2021.

[3] Source: Gaby Galvin, "Nearly 1 in 5 Health Care Workers Have Quit Their Jobs During the Pandemic," Morning Consult, October 4, 2021 (https://morningconsult.com/2021/10/04/health-care-workers-series-part-2-workforce/).

ABOUT FORRESTER CONSULTING

Forrester Consulting provides independent and objective research-based consulting to help leaders succeed in their organizations. Ranging in scope from a short strategy session to custom projects, Forrester's Consulting services connect you directly with research analysts who apply expert insight to your specific business challenges. For more information, visit forrester.com/consulting.

Demographics

COMPANY SIZE	
1,000 to 4,999 employees	**34%**
5,000 to 9,999 employees	**24%**
10,000 to 19,000 employees	**27%**
20,000+ employees	**15%**

DEPARTMENT	
Human resources	**31%**
Medical staffing/ credentialling	**32%**
Compliance	**21%**
Executive leadership	**16%**

TITLE	
C-level executive	**10%**
Vice president	**21%**
Director	**39%**
Manager	**29%**

LEVEL OF RESPONSIBILITY	
Final decision-maker for TA and onboarding	**18%**
Part of a team making decisions about TA and onboarding	**32%**
Influence decisions related to TA and onboarding	**49%**

Note: Percentages may not total 100 because of rounding.