

## Thoughtfully Responding to the Needs of the Workforce



Personnel shortages emerged as the chief concern of healthcare executives responding to the American College of Healthcare Executive's (ACHE) annual survey in [2021](#).<sup>1</sup> Understanding the significance of this finding, ACHE subsequently expanded the survey category from solely focusing on staff numbers to include additional factors contributing to workforce challenges, which remained healthcare executives' primary focus in [2022](#).<sup>2</sup>

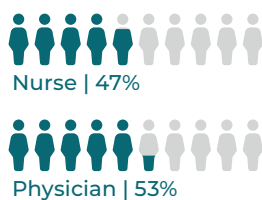
Beyond labor numbers, **the mental and emotional health of an entire industry's workforce is in danger.** In 2019, the [National Academy of Medicine](#) (NAM) warned that levels of clinician burnout were nearing critical highs.<sup>3</sup> Since then, repeated surveys underscore how the pandemic further worsened clinicians' mental health. Though rates of burnout among healthcare workers vary by study and time frame, they consistently demonstrate how pervasive this condition remains, even as the pandemic abates. As of the end of 2022, 47% of all nurse respondents to a survey by the [American Nurses Foundation](#) reported some degree of burnout,<sup>4</sup> as did 53% of physicians responding to a survey by [Medscape](#).<sup>5</sup> Even if burnout rates were to show improvements, the chronic nature of it has already taken a toll on the industry. The impact of unsustainable external pressures, pre-dating and exacerbated by the pandemic, has prompted many clinicians to consider taking a [step back](#) from the workforce.<sup>4,6,7</sup>

**It is clear that we need to better support our healthcare providers,** who are faced with navigating a return to normal operations amidst continued staffing shortages and the growing care needs of the community. In its analysis of the healthcare workforce's needs, the [American Hospital Association](#) (AHA) highlights the importance of feeling a sense of purpose

in one's work, and describes a need "to reinspire workers to find the joy, satisfaction and purpose that drew them to health care in the first place."<sup>8</sup>

Creating a "mission-driven" culture that helps employees feel valued is an important strategy according to the AHA.<sup>8</sup> Findings from survey studies published in [JAMA Health Forum](#)<sup>6</sup> and [Mayo Clinic Proceedings](#)<sup>7</sup> reinforce the positive correlation between feeling valued by an organization and intent to remain in the workforce. Building a culture that values employees starts with creating a supportive infrastructure — one that ensures alignment between an organization's workflows, expectations regarding clinicians' use of time, and what matters most to clinicians.

### Burnout Rates



[Positive relationships](#) with patients could help to abate some, though not all, of the factors contributing to burnout by **enabling providers to connect and fulfill the mission that drew them to healthcare in the first place.**<sup>9</sup> According to a study in the [Annals of Family Medicine](#), "Most clinicians noted that when patients' social needs were effectively met, their own morale improved."<sup>10</sup>

Authors of a separate study in the [Annals of Family Medicine](#) on finding "joy in practice" identified various processes that contribute to organizational success, including efficient communication practices, "proactive planned care," and a commitment to interdisciplinary collaboration.<sup>11</sup> These practices align with other findings from the previously referenced study in JAMA Health Forum that **empowering a sense of control at work, fostering less "chaotic" environments, and enabling a team approach** can help organizations promote a more positive work environment and improve workforce retention.<sup>6</sup>

## How can the industry (providers and vendors alike) reduce the strain on the healthcare workforce?

By joining the American Medical Informatics Association's (AMIA) [25x5](#) initiative to decrease clinicians' documentation burden by 75% within five years;<sup>12</sup> by initiating candid conversations with clinicians about operational pain points, and turning feedback into action and process redesign; by taking a system-wide approach to give clinicians back time in their day to build meaningful patient-clinician relationships; and by leveraging technology to establish more meaningful ways for clinicians to address patients' challenges.

### 25x5 Initiative

Decrease clinicians' documentation burden by **75%** within **five years**



The NAM's [National Plan for Health Workforce Well-Being](#), issued in October 2022, identifies the use of "effective technology tools" as one of several priority areas.<sup>13</sup> This points to the **opportunity for EHR innovations to help clinicians more fully engage in work that mirrors their skill set and professional passion**, and in turn derive more meaning from their careers.

Following the lead of NAM, AMIA, and AHA, **two objectives stand out: Reduce documentation burden and make work more meaningful**. Technology is not a panacea; underlying people and process needs still need to be addressed. However, optimizing current technology and tapping into the newest digital advancements can help to temper some of the immediate issues leading to cognitive overload and diverting staff's attention from the aspects of work that matter most to them.

MEDITECH is committed to the ongoing development and delivery of thoughtful technology that supports the clinicians of today and tomorrow.

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# How MEDITECH Expanse Addresses Needs of the Workforce

While there are many factors at play, strong partnerships and technology can support overburdened clinicians in providing the best care possible. Here are a few ways MEDITECH supports workflow improvement initiatives.



## 1 Reduce documentation burden

Critical Success Factors	How MEDITECH Is Addressing
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>→ Access to relevant patient health information at the point of care</li><li>→ More efficient decision-making and real-time treatment planning with patients</li><li>→ Uninterrupted continuity of care</li><li>→ Simpler and more efficient review and completion of documentation and secondary care tasks</li><li>→ Flexibility to access information whenever and wherever needed</li></ul>	<p>MEDITECH's <a href="#">Virtual Assistant</a> solution, collaboratively developed with Nuance, allows providers to use verbal commands to surface needed health information directly at the point of care. This means a hands-free experience that allows providers to keep their focus on patients. In addition to bringing necessary health information to the forefront, Expanse Virtual Assistant facilitates uninterrupted continuity of care through a provider's ability to verbally dictate orders, including medications, seamlessly as the need arises.</p> <p>MEDITECH's partnership with Google to offer <a href="#">search and summarization</a> capabilities within the Expanse platform recently entered a pilot phase. The search and summarization feature will create a longitudinal view of a patient's health history, accessing relevant health information from Expanse and MEDITECH legacy platforms. The benefits will be threefold: A more natural flow of information, a wider-angle view of patients' health history and needs, and enhanced efficiency and time-savings for clinicians.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>→ Fully optimized EHR</li><li>→ Reduction in unnecessary over-documentation and duplicative documentation</li><li>→ Widespread adoption of EHR best practices, features, and tools</li></ul>	<p>MEDITECH's partnership with MedPower allows organizations to track EHR end-users' onboarding progress, and offer flexible learning opportunities and smart tips that support end users, from newer staff to those more experienced simply seeking a refresher or information about EHR updates. Each MedPower learning module breaks the topic into manageable learning sections, allowing clinicians to engage in training wherever they are, and whenever it works best for them.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>→ Collaborative industry-wide commitment to reducing documentation burden through dissemination and adoption of EHR tools and services that improve documentation efficiency</li></ul>	<p>MEDITECH has joined the AMIA task force as a vendor participant.</p>

## ② Make work more meaningful

Critical Success Factors	How MEDITECH Is Addressing
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>→ Better control of individual workloads</li> <li>→ Individualized task prioritization</li> <li>→ Reduced disruption, increased flexibility</li> <li>→ Elimination of workflows and tasks that detract from top-of-license practice</li> </ul>	<p><a href="#">Expanse Point of Care</a> enables efficient workload management and prioritization for nurses through: immediate access to real-time patient health information, notifications of new information and tasks, and patient lists that can be sorted by due and overdue interventions.</p> <p>Expanse Point of Care eliminates the need for disruptive workstations that get in the way of the task at hand, allowing nurses to document patient assessments and interventions as they happen, with the agility, speed, and unobtrusiveness of a handheld device.</p> <p><a href="#">Expanse Now</a> for physicians leverages the mobility of an app to facilitate secure remote access to key components of the Expanse EHR. Physicians can use Expanse Now to organize and prioritize their workload and notifications received — when, where, and how it works best for them.</p> <p>With Expanse Now, on-call and covering physicians can more quickly access patient information, address patient needs, and complete necessary documentation wherever they are, without the added time burden of logging into the full EHR.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>→ Team-based approach to care delivery</li> <li>→ Proactively planned care</li> <li>→ Continuity of care</li> <li>→ Efficient communication practices</li> </ul>	<p>MEDITECH's <a href="#">Care Compass</a> solution facilitates efficient workflows and interactions between an organization's care management team and direct care providers, enabling them to leverage all internal resources to approach care coordination as a unified team.</p> <p>The creation of registries and use of worklists to track progress of care coordination tasks within Care Compass empowers clinicians to collaboratively create and follow a cohesive plan of care.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>→ Strong connections with patients</li> <li>→ Better understanding of patients' individualized needs</li> <li>→ Flexibility to meet patients when and where it is most convenient and safe for them</li> </ul>	<p>MEDITECH's <a href="#">Case Management Remote Monitoring Desktop</a> and <a href="#">Expanse Virtual Care</a> help clinicians maintain strong connections with their patients. Case Management Remote Monitoring Desktop enables the ongoing collection and review of patient-generated health data, facilitating timely follow-up to changes in a patient's health condition. Clinicians have the opportunity to initiate a Case Management Call to gain further insight into related patient circumstances impacting health closer to the moment they occur. Expanse Virtual Care includes both scheduled and on-demand virtual visits, ensuring high-quality care even when in-person visits aren't possible.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>→ Better understanding of the needs of an organization's patient population</li> <li>→ Identification and strategic alignment of resources to meet patients' comprehensive needs</li> <li>→ Thoughtfully designed interventions and programs</li> </ul>	<p>MEDITECH's <a href="#">Business and Clinical Analytics</a> solution helps to find patterns across different patient populations, including the prevalence of chronic conditions, opportunities for risk and care gap closure, and measure quality performance. Care teams can effectively prioritize outreach efforts and deploy interventions for more accurate and meaningful patient visits.</p>