
Rebuilding the post-acute workforce

key takeaways

Staffing challenges are not new to post-acute provider organizations. However, Covid-19 has greatly exacerbated the existing difficulties. Low wages, low frontline staff-to-patient ratios, high levels of colleague turnover, increased personal and family exposure to Covid-19 risks, and negative media coverage from the pandemic have all worked in tandem to create a feedback cycle of short staffing, burnout, turnover, and difficulty recruiting, leading to more short staffing. To break this cycle, post-acute providers must both support the staff they currently have and create a stronger pipeline for future staffing needs.

Key takeaways



Building staff resilience needs to be a top priority for post-acute providers

The Covid-19 pandemic has put unprecedented pressure on post-acute staff at work and at home. Post-acute staff are treating the most vulnerable patient population while experiencing negative publicity and short staffing. These challenges result in an exhausted and burned out workforce, which is likely to have a high turnover rate. Even now that many staff are vaccinated and case counts are lowering, workforce challenges like burnout and turnover are still just as relevant.

Post-acute providers need to provide psychosocial and practical support to help staff build resilience. Support offerings should be targeted, but do not need to break the bank.

Organization can leverage existing staff, or split costs between multiple providers. Ultimately, resilience support is necessary to prevent burnout and build a stable workforce.



Post-acute providers must take an active and proactive approach to recruitment

Post-acute providers can no longer assume the market will organically meet their staffing needs. To fill gaps in staffing, post-acute providers need to drum up interest, in the short and long-term. Short-term, post-acute providers should recruit out-of-industry workers, and seek support from acute care partners. Long-term strategy should focus on creating a pipeline of staff, whether through increasing student exposure to potential post-acute careers, providing on-the-job training, or partnering with education programs to offer a path from school into the post-acute workforce.

Resources to address immediate and ongoing staffing challenges



Action step

Regularly check the pulse on staff morale

▶ **How to create effective staff 'feedback loops' amid Covid-19**

Learn three ways organizations can regularly check-in on staffs' emotional well-being, and investigate the root causes of challenges.



Action step

Implement emotional and physical well-being supports

▶ **Moral Resilience Rounds': Johns Hopkins' secret to help staff navigate moral distress**

Learn how to implement resilience rounds to support staff during challenging times.

▶ **Why stories matter so much right now (and how to tell one in 90 seconds)**

Review how 90-second story telling can build resilience by grounding staff in your mission.

▶ **Rebuild the Foundation for a Resilient Workforce**

Learn strategies for building a more resilient nursing workforce by repairing four cracks in the foundation of the health care environment..



Action step

Find novel opportunities to source new hires

▶ **How Long-Term Care Providers are Recruiting Displaced Workers**

Learn how to fill positions in long-term care by recruiting out-of-industry workers.



Action step

Rethink staff engagement and retention strategy

▶ **The Guide to Reducing Turnover in Post-Acute Care**

View our tools and strategies to reduce staff turnover, from hiring the right people to identifying and re-recruiting staff ready to depart.