

# Healthcare Workforce Stability May Be Hiding Growing Retention Risk, New Research Finds

*2026 Healthcare Retention Report Supplement reveals delayed disengagement, schedule strain, and career sustainability concerns threaten workforce stability.*

FRANKLIN, TN, UNITED STATES, June 16, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Work Institute released its 2026 Healthcare Retention Report Supplement, a comprehensive analysis of healthcare workforce turnover based on 8,347 healthcare exit interviews conducted in 2025 across more than 60 healthcare organizations.

While healthcare turnover has moderated from the historic highs experienced during the pandemic and Great Resignation, the report finds that many of the conditions driving employee exits remain firmly in place. Rather than signaling a fully recovered workforce, the data suggest healthcare organizations may be experiencing a period of workforce stability that masks deeper retention challenges.

The central risk facing healthcare in 2026 is not mass resignation. It is delayed disengagement," said Danny Nelms, CEO of Work Institute. "Employees are staying longer, but not necessarily because workplace conditions have improved. Many are staying because uncertainty, fatigue, and constrained mobility have replaced confidence."

The Healthcare Supplement examines turnover timing, Reasons for Leaving, and employee sentiment among healthcare workers, uncovering several key trends shaping retention risk across the industry.

Among the findings:

- Nearly two-thirds of healthcare turnover occurs within the first three years of employment.
- More than one in ten healthcare employees leave within their first 90 days.
- Work-Life Balance is the leading driver of turnover during the first year, with scheduling and shift-related challenges accounting for a significant share of exits.
- Career becomes the primary driver of turnover after the first year, reflecting concerns around long-term sustainability, advancement opportunities, and professional development.
- Healthcare employees report stronger commitment to their teams and the work itself than to their organizations, signaling potential engagement challenges beneath otherwise stable staffing levels.

The report also highlights meaningful differences between healthcare and the broader workforce. Work-Life Balance concerns account for 14.3% of healthcare exits compared to 9.7% outside healthcare, while shift and schedule-related turnover occurs at substantially higher rates in healthcare settings.

"Healthcare organizations operate with far less margin for error than most industries," Nelms said. "Patient care depends on workforce stability. Small misalignments in scheduling, management practices, career development, or workload distribution can quickly become operational challenges that impact both employees and the people they serve."

According to the report, healthcare retention challenges evolve throughout an employee's lifecycle. Scheduling and work-life pressures dominate early exits, while career development opportunities and workforce mobility become increasingly important as tenure grows.

The findings reinforce the need for healthcare leaders to move beyond traditional turnover metrics and focus on understanding the root causes behind employee decisions. While turnover data can reveal what happened, Work Institute's research is designed to uncover why employees leave and where organizations can intervene before disengagement becomes turnover.

"Many healthcare organizations are monitoring turnover and measuring engagement," Nelms said. "The opportunity now is turning that insight into action. The organizations that strengthen retention will be the ones that identify pressure points early and respond before workforce strain becomes workforce loss."

The 2026 Healthcare Retention Report Supplement is available for download at [workinstitute.com/retention-reports](https://workinstitute.com/retention-reports).

Work Institute will also host a complimentary webcast reviewing the report's findings and practical retention strategies for healthcare leaders.

About Work Institute

Work Institute is a leading authority on employee retention and engagement, providing data-driven insights, exit interview analysis, engagement assessments, workforce research, and consulting services to organizations across industries. Its annual Retention Report is widely recognized for identifying workforce trends and actionable strategies that reduce preventable turnover and strengthen organizational performance.

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