

# What workers want, why it matters, and what's working



Finding and keeping talent remains a top priority for healthcare leaders. While progress has been made, strategies are falling short of the sweeping change organizations seek to transform their workforces.

To better define the widening gap between leadership strategies and results, Huron interviewed 718 healthcare leaders and workers. Our longitudinal research pinpoints:

- What physicians, nurses, and non-clinical staff value most from their workplaces
- Where leadership is missing the mark
- How organizations can respond to meet employee needs

## Inside the report

What workers want

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## What workers want

This year, staff members' top six most important factors shifted slightly, with paid time off (PTO) moving up in importance and professional growth opportunities and role alignment exiting the list. Economic uncertainty has employees prioritizing their financial needs over "softer" elements of work satisfaction.

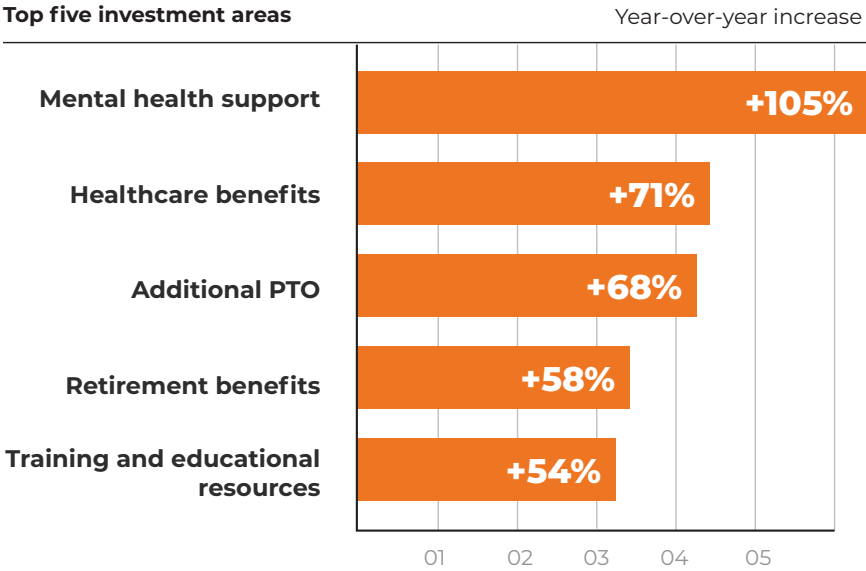
Clinical staff	Non-clinical staff
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Retirement package</li> <li>• Transportation benefits</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Organization's environmental sustainability</li> <li>• Role alignment</li> </ul>

Previous research	Today
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Health insurance and coverage</li> <li>2. Professional growth opportunities</li> <li>3. Digital, technology, and analytics (DTA)</li> <li>4. Diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI)</li> <li>5. Competitive salary</li> <li>6. Workload</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Competitive salary</li> <li>2. Health insurance and coverage</li> <li><b>3. Paid time-off (PTO)</b></li> <li>4. Diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI)</li> <li>5. Digital, technology, and analytics (DTA)</li> <li>6. Workload</li> </ol>

\***Bold** = increased importance

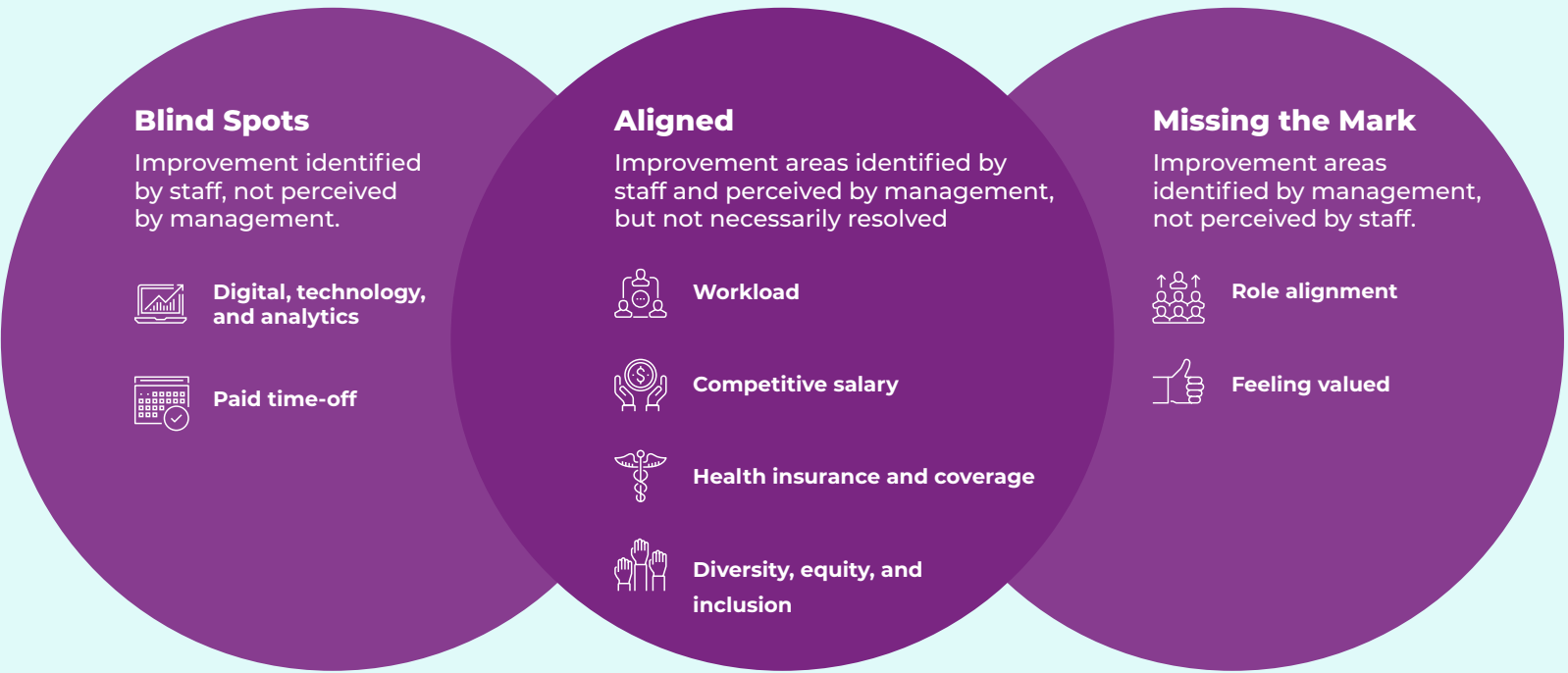
# Talent investments require tighter focus

Organizations are investing significantly more than last year in recruitment and retention strategies—in some cases as much as 105%—but to little effect. Driving quality outcomes across recruitment and retention should start with organizations narrowing their focus and investing in top opportunity areas identified by workers.



## What are leaders getting right?

Our survey measured staff-management agreement regarding important workplace elements. While leaders correctly identified four out of six factors that mattered most to staff, alignment doesn't imply action or progress—it simply means that both groups agree on where opportunities for improvement lie.



# Employee satisfaction trends toward tech

Our research shows that all staff members are more satisfied with digital, tech, and analytics, professional growth opportunities, and team rapport—areas that organizations have embraced and invested in.

Integrating technology into a work environment can reduce administrative burden and increase efficiencies, lessening strain on staff members. Talent strategy should embrace organization-specific methods for decreasing workload and adding workplace flexibility.

Satisfied	Dissatisfied
Health insurance and coverage	Workload
DEI	Competitive annual bonus and financial incentives
Team rapport	Child and elder support
Digital technology and analytics (DTA)	Work-life balance
Professional growth opportunities	Workplace variability

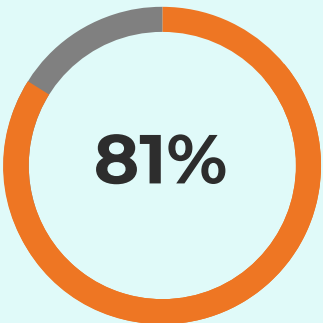
Green = increase in satisfaction from last year  
 Red = decrease in satisfaction from last year

# Improving persistent burnout

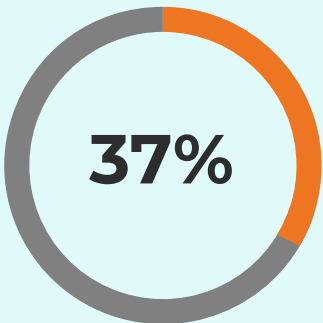
Burnout increased 17% across all levels of staff compared to the previous year. Physicians, nurses, and front-line staff alike are seeking:

- A more balanced workload
- Greater schedule flexibility
- Healthier work-life balance

As organizations look to minimize burnout, it's essential that they prioritize flexibility and curate a work environment that contributes to staff satisfaction.



of respondents report feeling **burned out more than a few times a month** over the past six months.



of burned-out respondents are **considering leaving their current position** in the next 12 months.

## Top factors contributing to burnout 2023

**Lack of work-life balance**  
 (+10%)

**Long hours**  
 (+8%)

**Emotional exhaustion or stress**  
 (+5%)

**Unmanageable workload and unreasonable time pressures**  
 (+5%)



## Top opportunities for organizational investment

When asked, employees will provide a long list of workplace factors that matter.

The gap between what staff rank as important and how satisfied they are in those same areas help us understand what matters most to them.

Huron's prior research highlighted workers' concern for higher-level priorities such as role alignment and feeling valued. Today, employees care more about pay, time off, and workload, signaling that their fundamental safety and security needs require attention.

These shifts reveal where leaders should focus their investments with urgency, while building more holistic plans.

Prior research	Today
Competitive salary	Competitive salary
Health insurance and coverage	Health insurance and coverage
Digital, technology, and analytics	Digital, technology, and analytics
DEI	DEI
Professional growth opportunities	<b>Paid time off</b>
Transportation benefits	<b>Workload</b>
Feeling valued	<b>Work-life balance</b>
Leadership experience	<b>Scheduling flexibility</b>
Role alignment	<b>Competitive annual bonus and financial incentives</b>

Gray text = no longer highly important to staff

**Bold** = new factor highly important to staff

## What's working for recruitment and retention

We asked leaders to rank their most effective organizational investments in recruitment and retention year-over-year.

Acquiring new technology has proven to be a successful initiative—doubly so given that technology also ranked as highly important to staff. Evaluating the efficacy of investment strategies presents an opportunity for organizations to find what works on role-by-role basis.

### Top 7 recruitment and retention initiatives

1. **Investment in new technology**
2. **Mental health support**
3. **Invested in new work equipment**
4. **Healthcare benefits**
5. **Higher compensation**
6. **Additional safety measures and precautions**
7. **Additional PTO**

## Technology and talent converge

### Improve recruitment and retention

Organizations' investments in digital, technology, and analytics (DTA) rose 34% with a focus on recruitment and retention tools.

#### 6 talent-focused tools leaders are using:

- Predictive shift management tools
- Cloud-based talent management applications
- Self-service automation for talent management
- Advanced analytics for engagement and retention
- Productivity and worker utilization tools
- Advanced analytics for talent management



### Review benefits packages

Alongside DTA initiatives, organizations should consider a holistic review of their benefits packages. New benefits can invigorate enthusiasm and encourage staffers to stay in their positions.

#### New benefits could include:

- Removing seniority as a factor for PTO.
- Implementing benefits that directly address work-life balance.
- Enhancing train-the-trainer opportunities for new middle managers.
- Offering recharge leave and other life-stage-based support.



**Organizations now have to focus on attracting innovative, digital-first team members while also providing employees with the tools to operate more efficiently.”**

*David Devine, Healthcare Technology Leader, Huron*

## Talk to an expert

Want to find the right strategy for keeping your staff satisfied?  
Connect with a Huron expert today and find what works for your organization.



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