Health workforce planning and optimization

Addressing the workforce planning challenge

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The workforce planning challenge

The COVID-19 pandemic has exposed long-standing challenges related to the supply, mix, and distribution of the health workforce. There is a need for healthcare organizations to think differently about workforce planning to improve access to care, innovate models of care, and create a system-mindset of workforce intelligence.

In KPMG's 2021 Healthcare CEO Future Pulse Survey, healthcare leaders acknowledged that the imperative has shifted – with over two-thirds of leaders agreeing that their approach to workforce design must change. Leaders acknowledged the looming capacity gap between future demand and labour supply – with 56% identifying the lack of needed skillsets as a barrier to change.

In Canada, healthcare organizations are faced with three key pressing needs as they think about the path forward to building a sustainable and thriving health workforce:

1. **Improve workforce intelligence to optimize today's limited resources:** Amid significant challenges in labour supply, ensuring that healthcare workers perform at their optimal scope is critical in maximizing their skills and capabilities and improving role satisfaction. The Organization for Economic Co-Operation and Development (OECD) estimates that 79% of nurses and 76% of physicians perform tasks they are overqualified to complete, indicating an opportunity to examine task suitability.[1]

2. **Understand how new models of care will impact the workforce:** COVID-19 created a burning platform for health systems to adopt innovative care delivery models – such as virtual and team-based care. There is a need for health leaders to explore and visualize the impacts of new care delivery structures and operational impacts (e.g., new roles, staffing ratios) on patients and staff.[2]

3. **Access to data and insights to make informed workforce decisions:** In a KPMG in the UK webinar, 74% of health leader attendees shared that they do not have the capability to predict staff numbers, despite 98% expressing that they would benefit from a workforce planning tool.[3] The imperative for change is clear as suboptimal health workforce planning is costly, risky, and inequitable.[4]

Action to take

Within these challenges and trends lies an imperative for change – to fundamentally rethink and rebuild our health workforce plans. The path forward needs to be a holistic, integrated approach that empowers leaders with the information to forecast and shape a workforce plan which is actionable in the short-term, to deliver the care needs of tomorrow.

How we can help

KPMG is helping healthcare organizations and systems around the world understand, plan, and transform their workforces. We use our proprietary strategic health workforce planning tool to pack, unpack, and predict different aspects of organizational data (i.e., staffing, costs, and activity) and model workforce planning strategies and interventions. This helps inform decisions on the diverse workforce needs of health systems and develop effective strategic workforce plans based on current and emergent needs.

1. OECD: Empowering the Health Workforce
2. Human: Solving the Global Workforce Crisis in Healthcare.
3. KPMG UK: Health and Care Transformation – How to Get Workforce Planning Right
4. CMAJ: Poor Health Workforce Planning is Costly, Risky, and Inequitable

Our Health Workforce Optimization & Planning Modeller

KPMG developed the Health Workforce Optimization & Planning Modeller with health system leaders to meet their current and future workforce needs through by enabling the following customized insights:

1. **Develop a consolidated view of your current workforce** to gain access to accurate and actionable insights on your health workforce profile, including staffing levels, capacity, schedule, cost, and activity. These insights can then be leveraged to quantify the scale of shortfalls in care delivery today, and potential efficiency opportunities in the future. This view leverages real-time data to address both immediate optimization opportunities and long-term planning needs, based on current workforce attributes.

2. **Design, model, and assess interventions** to address the gaps in your current state and develop scenario plans to optimize your workforce – both today, and in the future (exemplar dashboard above).

Questions our Modeller can address include:

– What does the current supply and demand gap across roles/specialties look like at my organization?

– Starting this year, how can my organization plan for what workforce demand will look like over the next 5 years?

– What might be the impact of retirement and attrition on care delivery?

– What could future activity look like across different care settings?

Through this work, health organizations gain access to both high-level and granular insights on supply and demand data on a single platform. We then supplement the highly practical insights with our deep healthcare expertise and global viewpoints to develop workforce plans specific to your organization's current / forecasted needs. Our Modeller is tried and true – having been applied to health systems and organizations alike.

How the Modeller will be used

Based on our findings, we will collaborate with you to design a short-term action plan which is tailored to your organization's results and workforce context, with consideration for the implications on your current and future models of care. We will support you in prioritizing go-forward actions and designing a plan which empowers your productive workforce today, enabling you to prepare for the challenges of tomorrow.

Review available workforce data	Establish baseline workforce position	Determine likely workforce supply and demand	Understand forecasted gap	Model strategic interventions	Develop short-term action plan

Contact us

We're here to help

Every organization deserves an approach to workforce planning which is as unique as the patients they serve. We look forward to discussing your organization's objectives to create an actionable workforce plan – together.

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