

Guild



Healthcare market trends & insights report

February, 2023

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Healthcare labor market trends to beat

Short-term fixes to the talent crisis are proving unsustainable.

It's no secret that increased demand for healthcare workers is outpacing the supply of qualified talent. Healthcare is projected to add over 2.5 million jobs by 2031 — the largest job growth of any sector.¹ A variety of factors, including a talent shortage that predates the pandemic, point to increasing pressures on a severely stressed industry.

Additionally, the health and wellbeing needs of an aging population will further strain the healthcare system: U.S. Census Bureau projections show that 21% of the population living in the US will be over the age of 65 by 2030.² That includes some of today's healthcare employees who represent significant percentages of the workforce in critical areas. There are multiple RN specialty fields, for example, in which RNs over the age of 50 represent over 40% of the workforce.³

Data from the Bureau of Labor Job Openings and Labor Turnover Survey (JOLTS) show that even before the start of the COVID pandemic, the rate of job openings within healthcare and social services significantly surpassed the sector's ability to successfully hire qualified talent. Since

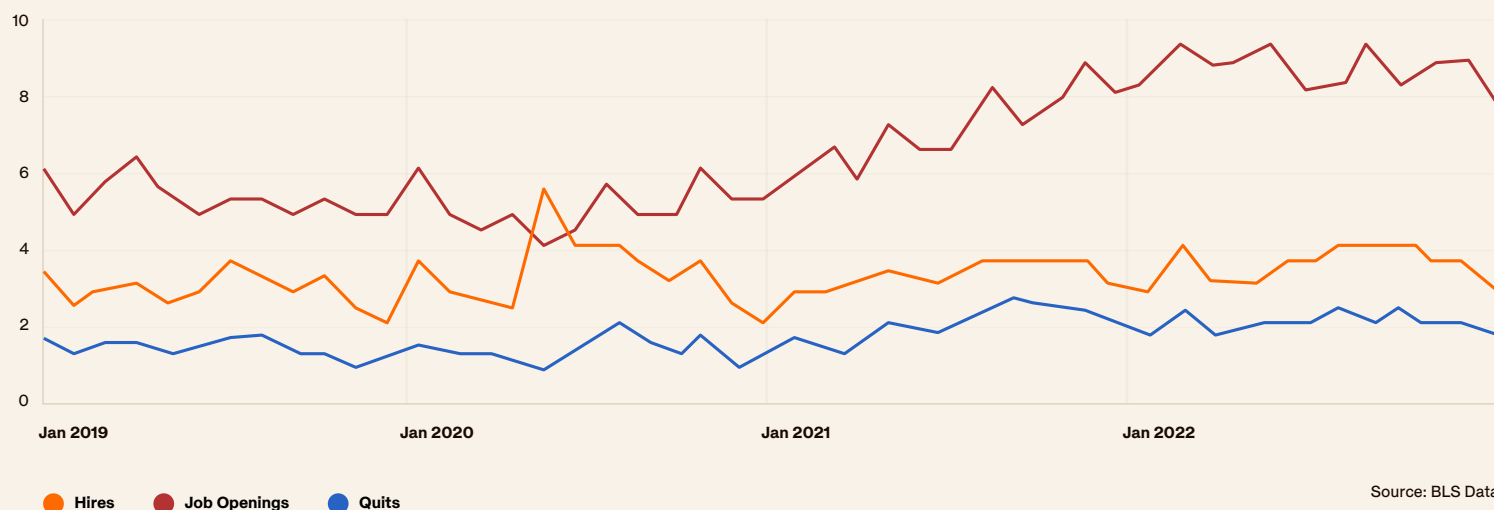
then, the rate of job openings has continued to trend upward — so has the quit rate.⁴

Nowhere is the delta in qualified talent clearer than in nursing. In 2021, the staff RN turnover rate increased by 8% to a national average of 27%, with the average cost of staff RN turnover increasing by 15% from \$40k in 2020 to a staggering \$46k in 2021.⁵ That cost is high and climbing: In Guild's most recent [webinar focused on building talent and career pathways](#), Josh Bersin pointed out that Registered Nurses topped the list for new job postings in 2022 at over 680k, up a staggering 34% over the previous year.⁶ Though the non-economic impacts of high staff turnover are under-researched, studies indicate that it can both damage morale and potentially lead to negative patient outcomes.⁷

But patching talent gaps is costly and fails as a sustainable solution. Within RN roles alone, hospitals could save \$4.2M on average for every 20 travel RN positions eliminated.⁸ Although economic conditions and a tight labor market have made pay raises a necessity, higher pay on its own is not a panacea for the talent challenges healthcare organizations face. The employment market remains incredibly constrained, with unemployment rates continuing to fall despite a recessionary environment.⁹ Ultimately, this means that the talent that employers are chasing have options and expect a stronger value proposition from prospective employers.

Rates of hires, job openings and quits in healthcare & social assistance

Jan 2019 - Nov 2022



Employer-funded learning is common but often lacks the right strategy to make career pathways accessible or clear.

Although many healthcare employers already offer funded learning and skilling opportunities, education benefits on their own aren't enough. [Leading healthcare employers](#) recognize their employees want and expect education opportunities that align with clear mobility pathways. Without clear opportunity pathways before them, employees will go elsewhere: 50% of employees who quit during the pandemic said they left their current employer for a better opportunity.¹⁰ Even when employers do start to make connections between skilling and training opportunities and high-demand roles, poorly-structured policies can be exclusionary, resulting in both low engagement and lackluster retention rates.

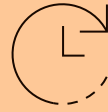
Healthcare workforce insights

There is a large talent pool of healthcare workers who want to stay in the field and gain the skills they need to access new career pathways aligned with high-demand roles.

And they're looking to their employers for the opportunity to do it.

Together, these insights signal that **a healthcare organization's employee value proposition hinges on how well education and training opportunities open up access to well-defined, well-communicated internal mobility pathways.**

Key healthcare workforce insights



Most healthcare workers want to stay in the field.

Guild's recent US worker survey indicates that 3 out of 4 surveyed healthcare employees consider their current healthcare role as their career, compared to 1 in 2 across other industries.¹¹



A lack of formal training and skilling opportunities is blocking career growth.

Over half of healthcare workers [surveyed by Guild](#) reported experiencing career challenges related to a lack of qualifications. Education and training requirements in the healthcare industry mean eligibility for many high-demand roles is limited to those who can access the education needed to become qualified.



Employer-funded learning is valued, but unclear connections between credentials and career opportunity is a sustainability risk.

Nearly half of healthcare workers surveyed by Guild said they would stay at their employer longer if funded learning opportunities were offered.¹² However, having confidence that healthcare employers are truly invested in their growth is a difference-maker: 94% of healthcare workers said having a career path is at least "somewhat important" to them.¹³

Moving beyond tuition reimbursement

Offering Tuition Reimbursement without alternatives excludes talent and overlooks an opportunity to build sustainability.

Offered on its own, Tuition Reimbursement prevents talent from accessing future-aligned skills and career growth. Tuition reimbursement limits access to employees who either have the disposable income to front the cost of tuition, or the ability and willingness to take on debt to access an education. Those who need it the most — individuals in lower-paying, entry-level positions— have the hardest time accessing it.

Funded learning and internal mobility pathways will unlock long-term sustainability when every employee can access them.

Even when funded learning is connected with high-demand roles within healthcare organizations, the ease of access to high-quality training and applied learning, level of employee awareness, and strength of support employees will have throughout their learning and career journeys strongly impact adoption rates and bottom lines.

An important place to start is with re-evaluating Tuition Reimbursement, in which employees pay their own tuition costs upfront and receive reimbursement from their employers later.

Financial barriers can prevent employees from accessing employer-funded education through tuition reimbursement:



Low or no disposable income:

50% of entry-level workers have annual household incomes of less than \$50,000.



Pre-existing debt:

37% of healthcare workers surveyed by Guild reported they already have student debt.

Source: Guild multi-industry worker survey data, 2022. n=1,902.

When siloed from a long-term talent strategy, tuition reimbursement becomes gestural. In Guild's recent webinar focused on [driving business and talent outcomes](#) through career pathways, Josh Bersin recounted two separate research studies that his company conducted on tuition reimbursement. and discovered that **the majority of companies had no idea what ROI they were actually getting from tuition reimbursement.**

“It was more of a benefit they felt that they had to have,” he explained, “than a tool to really help people move the needle.”

Josh Bersin
Founder and CEO
Josh Bersin Company

Healthcare systems across the U.S. are partnering with Guild to provide a pathway to opportunity for their entire workforce.

Innovative healthcare systems know that business challenges are people challenges. Enabling more employees to gain the skills they need to move into high-priority roles is more strategically effective and conscientiously inclusive than competing to hire from without or limiting mobility to those at a higher income threshold.

Creating opportunity for all requires a strategy that prioritizes equity and creates value for a historically-underserved employee population of entry-level employees that traditional Tuition Reimbursement programs fail to reach.

That's why 100% of Guild's employer partners offer some form of Tuition Assistance, in which employers cover tuition costs up-front, removing a critical barrier between employees and upwardly-mobile roles.¹⁴ **Tuition Assistance opens the door to filling the talent gaps and creates opportunity** for employees currently in low-wage, clinical and non-clinical roles.

Tuition assistance drives higher adoption rates than traditional tuition reimbursement.

3 out of 4 employees who do not hold an undergraduate degree select Tuition Assistance over Tuition Reimbursement programs when their employers offer both funding options. That increases to 9 out of 10 for employees with no college experience.¹⁵

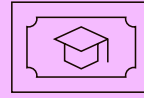
2 out of 3

members without a prior bachelor's degree in Guild's Certified Network select a fully-funded program.¹⁶

3 out of 4

surveyed new hires within the first few months of launch strongly agreed that their education benefit was a factor in their decision to join one healthcare provider.¹⁷

Employer tuition assistance spotlight Advancing diversity, equity, and inclusion goals at UCHealth



UCHealth has pledged \$50 million for employee education programs over four years, removing the education barrier for employees seeking higher-paying healthcare jobs. Its Guild program is seeing outsize engagement among Hispanic and Black employees.



“When we look at the demographics, our Hispanic and Black employees are participating at almost twice the rate of their population within UCHealth. So, it’s been really exciting,” said David Mafe, UCHealth’s Chief Diversity Officer.¹⁸

Aligning Actions with Identity

For equity-minded leaders in healthcare, supporting workforce restoration and enhancing engagement also stems from aligning actions with identity — finding the right ways to meaningfully improve the lives of a workforce that identifies with making the lives of others better.

In a recent interview at **Guild’s Opportunity Summit**, Mafe shares how UCHealth’s investments in accessible career pathways and tuition-free education are improving employee lives through learning, healing, and discovery.

“There’s no better way to demonstrate your employer value proposition,” he says, “or to show that you’re really serious about supporting folks and serious about creating pathways.”

Creating opportunity for the entire healthcare workforce

Innovative healthcare organizations are leveraging Guild’s career mobility platform as an effective talent solution.

More healthcare employers are partnering with Guild to achieve their talent goals. As of February 2023, [17 healthcare organizations have partnered with Guild](#). All are providing access to Guild’s career mobility platform to their full-time and regular part-time employees, as well as rolling over existing Tuition Reimbursement programs under Guild.

Other benefits can complement higher pay which is expected within today’s labor market. Internal training, though important, yields minimal outcomes on healthcare organizations’ most pressing talent goals. Providing employees with opportunities to grow their skill sets and careers, however, yields a better return on investment in internal mobility as well as talent attraction and retention.

Since partnering with Guild, healthcare employers are seeing higher employee engagement and adoption rates. Nearly half a million healthcare employees will be eligible to enroll in Guild learning programs through these 17 employers.

✓ **UCHealth:** Over 2000 employees completed applications in the first 6 months, 700 are enrolled in tuition assistance programs, and 120 have already completed a program.¹⁸

✓ Within just six months after launching, **9%** of eligible employees at a top children’s hospital have enrolled in a learning program through Guild.

Improving Talent Outcomes

Employee Engagement

25% of healthcare employees have become Guild members within 6 months of their company’s partnership launch with Guild.

Guild’s internal data over the last 12 months as of 01.01.2023

Talent Attraction

52% of surveyed new hires at one regional healthcare system cited Guild as a reason for joining the company.

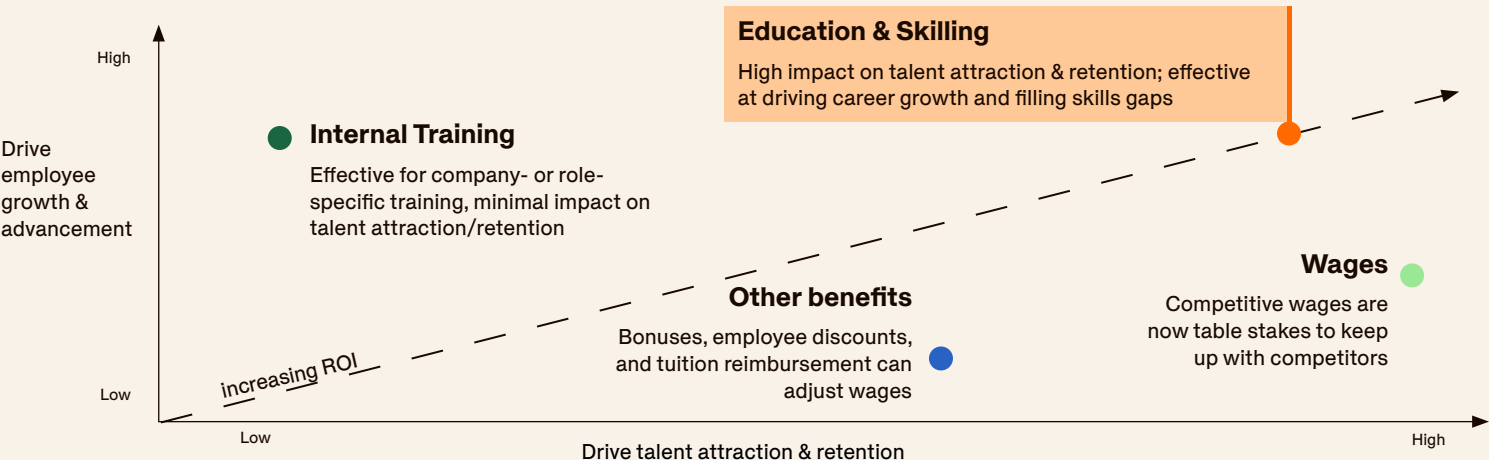
Guild data as of Q1, 2022

Talent Retention

Engaged healthcare employees are 2.8x less likely to leave relative to non-employees in the first year.

Guild data as of December, 2022

Education and skilling opens doors to attract new talent, reduce turnover, fill skills gaps, and provide mobility into hard-to-fill roles



Aligning access with outcomes

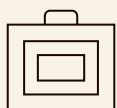
Beyond tuition assistance, employees need access to healthcare programs that are embedded in career pathways and optimized for their success.

As students, employees have unique needs. In addition to work responsibilities, many have caregiving responsibilities, as well as other commitments that require their time and attention. Leaving them without clear guidance on which programs will help them access the skills needed for career opportunity is both an ethical failing and a strategic failing.

On average, Guild members enrolled in Guild Certified Network programs:



76% are **first generation** college students



41% **work more than 40** hours per week



54% have an average **household income below \$50k** ²⁰

There are thousands of accredited healthcare programs. The quality and outcomes of these programs vary by an order of magnitude, yet at first blush, program descriptions can come across as similar. Even for employees with prior postsecondary experience and awareness of institutional red flags, parsing potential outcomes by examining internal job descriptions and attempting to match skills based on program syllabi is a near-impossible undertaking. Instead of hazarding a best guess, employees need access to a catalog of programs approved by their employer and vetted for quality ahead of time, so they can be empowered to choose options that best align with their unique needs, interests, and goals.

We see different trends for learners with a degree vs. no degree when it comes to the in-demand jobs and learning programs they pursue. Although motivations largely remain consistent, with career mobility at the forefront for the majority of employees, first generation learner status, caregiving responsibilities, and prior experiences with education can impact perceptions and how working adults learn best.

Providing the best opportunity for educational attainment means employees need access to programs that are intentionally designed for their unique needs as working adult learners. These programs prioritize **flexibility** (scheduling, start times, delivery modality), **accessibility** to accommodate different learning needs, robust **student supports** to drive outcomes, and well-communicated **learning outcomes** that align with both short- and long-term mobility goals. Together, these characteristics help empower employees to learn when they learn best, and in the way they learn best while maximizing the value their programs bring into their lives and careers.

Programs certified in Guild's Learning Marketplace are vetted for their capacity to serve employees across a number of dimensions, and Guild experts in policy and education work with Guild Certified Partners to deepen impact, and develop learning and training solutions that enable programs to support employee mobility journeys.

Trends in healthcare employee education goals and preferences

	Learners with bachelor's degree	Learners with bachelor's degree or higher
Top Roles	Medical Assistant, Patient Care Specialist, LPN, Nursing Assistant	Acute Care RN, Clinical RN, ICU RN
Educational Needs	Require foundational learning or additional certification to progress into certified clinical roles and advanced patient care	BSN and RN to BSN programs. MSN degrees for those who aspire to become NPs
Motivation	79% to advance or change career 48% to increase earnings potential 40% to earn a degree or diploma	70% to advance or change career 57% to increase earnings potential 41% to make use of the benefit
First Generation Learners	92% first generation bachelor's degree learners	
HH Income	< \$50k: 46% \$50k-\$100k: 38% \$100k+: 8%	< \$50k: 12% \$50k-\$100k: 38% \$100k+: 50%
Caregiving	65% have caregiving responsibilities	59% have caregiving responsibilities
Student Debt	14% have student debt > \$40k	41% have student debt > \$40k <small>Source: Guild survey and internal data, 2022</small>



Peyton Duke (second from right) laughs while taking a question from panel moderator and Guild Senior Vice President of Student Services and Strategy, Terrence Cummings.

Case study: Empowering career mobility at UCHealth

Healthcare work requires commitment and compassion. Equity-centered healthcare employers see the connection between their missions and their responsibility to employees. David Mafe, Chief Diversity Officer and Vice President of Human Resources at UCHealth, shed light on this perspective at Guild's 2022 Opportunity Summit.

Career pathways are not always perfectly linear — nor should they have to be. Obtaining a role at [UCHealth](#) proved to be the doorway to exactly the opportunities Peyton Duke was searching for. After COVID interrupted her prior education journey, she had been hired as a Patient Access Specialist, a role that is more customer service-oriented than the work she was used to performing in her prior role as a CNA. Although she had decided that returning to nursing was not the right career path for her, she realized she missed the feeling of personal impact she was able to effect through clinical work.

"My passion when I was a CNA was you treat those patients like they're your own family. That's the love and desire that I had for healthcare and that's what brought me into it," Duke said. "I knew I needed to look for some resource to get back on the clinical side, to be able to find my passion and my love for caring for people, for providing for them, for being that loved one when their loved ones aren't there for them."

Peyton Duke

Inspired to positively impact patients' experiences in a more clinical role, Duke learned that UCHealth would cover her tuition to earn her phlebotomy technician certification — a role with many onramps to future mobility — and enable her to pursue this position within the company. She moved into her new role as a Certified Phlebotomy Technician just one month after graduating from her program.

"The vision that they're showing is I don't have to leave the company to do better, to be bigger. I can grow inside that company and still be a part of UCHealth while bettering myself, while furthering my education."

Peyton Duke
Certified Phlebotomy Technician
UCHealth

Aligning short-term ROI with sustainability

Healthcare systems aren't just attracting new talent with Guild, they are retaining talent by helping employees grow their skills and access mobility.

Employee retention

Based on just a single healthcare organization

1 in 4 enroll with Guild

1 in 4 employees in the healthcare sector have become Guild members within 6 months of their employers' benefit launch.

Guild's internal data over the last 12 months as of 01.01.2023

2.9x lower separation rate

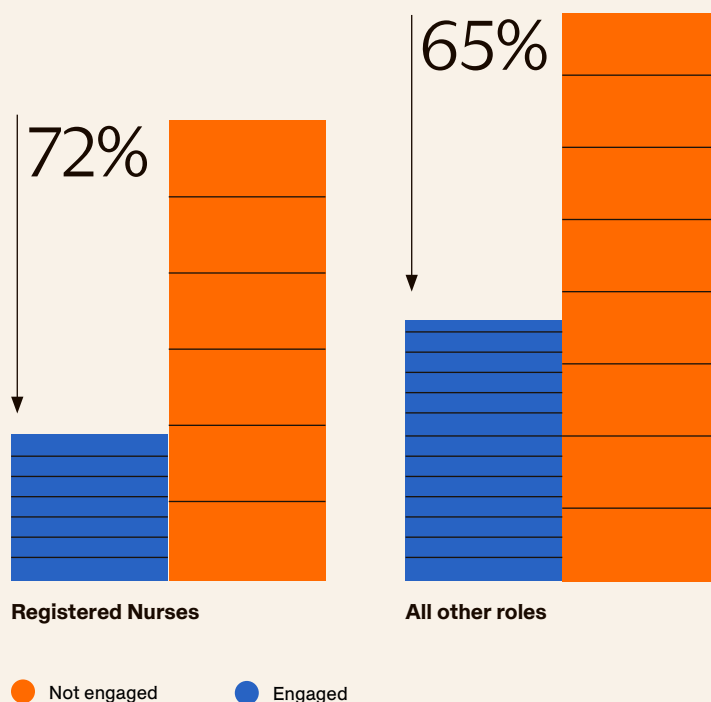
In the first year with Guild, employees of color engaged with Guild at one Healthcare EP were 2.9x less likely to leave relative to non-engaged employees at one healthcare employer.

Guild data as of December, 2022

Mobility outcomes in healthcare. At one healthcare provider, since partnering with Guild, **40% of learners** who completed a 6-month Medical Assistant Certificate have already transitioned into Certified Medical Assistant roles, from starting roles that include Receptionists and Patient Service Representatives. Salary data from the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics show that this mobility represents a 28% increase in projected median salary from \$29k (entry level roles) to \$37k (median Certified Medical Assistant roles) for these recent certificate graduates.²¹

One year separation rate*

For one Healthcare employer



*Separation rate = Number of eligible employees separated from employer in first year of program / Number of eligible employees in first year of program

Guild's Career Opportunity Platform enables forward-thinking employers to invest in their employees, unlocking life-changing opportunities for personal and professional growth through education and learning programs, career development and one-on-one coaching.

→ **Learn More**

Reach out to one of Guild's dedicated healthcare experts to learn more about Guild's unique solution to drive strategic skilling and talent outcomes in healthcare.

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- 5 Becker’s Hospital Review, [“The cost of nursing turnover in 23 numbers,”](#) 2022. The article references research data from NSI Nursing Solutions.
- 6 Guild, [Driving Business and Talent Outcomes with Career Pathways,](#) 2023. Lightcast data as of August, 2022 as cited by The Josh Bersin Company.
- 7 Sung-Heui Bae PhD, MPH, RN, International Nursing Review, [“Noneconomic and economic impacts of nurse turnover in hospitals: A systematic review,”](#) p.401, 2022.
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- 10 Morning Consult, [“Nearly 1 in 5 Health Care Workers Have Quit Their Jobs During the Pandemic,”](#) 2021.
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- 12 Guild US Worker Survey Data, August 2022. Overall base n= 1,867. Respondents were asked if they would change jobs if they had an offer for a similar role at another company that included education and career guidance. Seventy-four percent said they were at least “somewhat likely” to do so. See Guild’s [American Worker Survey Report for more insights from this survey](#).
- 13 Guild, [American Worker Survey Report, 2022, p.8.](#)
- 14 Guild Learning Marketplace data as of 07.01.2022.
- 15 Guild’s internal data over the last 12 months as of 01.01.2023 compared to BLS Occupational Employment and Wage Statistics, 2021.
- 16 Guild data as of 01.25.2023.
- 17 Guild data as of 08.01.2022.
- 18 UCHealth, [“It’s ‘school, school, school’ for nursing assistant now that UCHealth has pledged \\$50 million for employee education program,”](#) 2022.
- 19 UCHealth, 2022, *op. cit.*
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