THE VOICE OF THE FRONTLINE HEALTHCARE WORKER

PROVIDED BY

healthcare innovation
PEOPLE. PROCESS. TECHNOLOGY TRANSFORMATION.
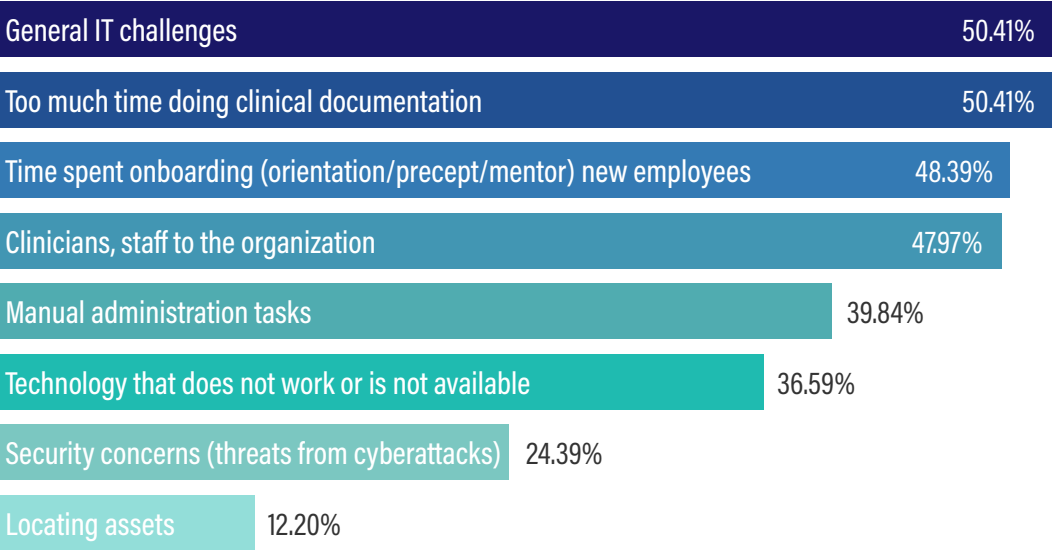
IN COLLABORATION WITH

servicenow.

The frontline healthcare worker is experiencing more challenges today than ever before. Healthcare Innovation collaborated with ServiceNow to conduct a survey of these workers to understand their biggest pain points and what their organizations could do to help make their day-to-day lives easier. The survey was conducted in February 2023 and March 2023 with the goal of understanding the pain points and opportunities to reduce the burden of our frontline healthcare workers.
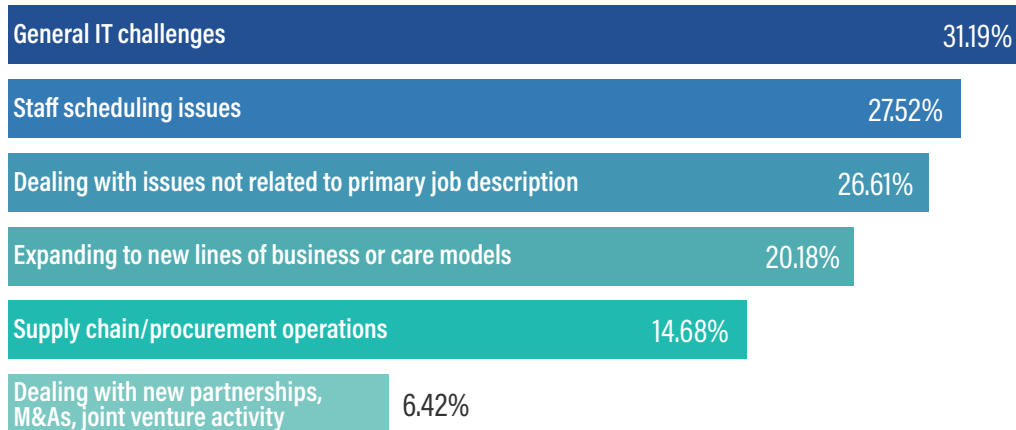
There has been an increasing cost shift with hospitals consistently operating at razor-thin margins. Many organizations receive a large percentage of their revenue from Medicare and Medicaid, which often is, at best, a breakeven business and, at worst, a loss-making proposition. The average incentives enable operating off a 2% margin from the insured patient population. At a macro level, the rising costs of healthcare coupled with slim operating margins result in the ongoing constraints within the industry right now.

To further exacerbate the issue, specifically in U.S.-based hospitals, there has been a massive shortage in staffing with nurses and doctors. This will continue to persist due to a shortage of people entering the industry over the next five to 10 years. Labor costs continue to be the top line item of operation budgets and have seen a continued increase as many organizations are paying a premium to hire traveling nurses in an effort to offset their workforce shortages. The healthcare industry has the potential for a big crisis in years to come if the demand for care outpaces the supply of resources to deliver that care. While also, importantly, maintaining the life/work balance required for healthcare workers to ensure they are able to provide quality care.

When asked what challenges frontline healthcare workers face daily, survey respondents named **lack of resources (70.73%) as the number one challenge**. Other top challenges include:

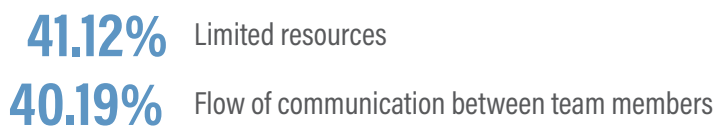| Challenge	Percentage
General IT challenges	50.41%
Too much time doing clinical documentation	50.41%
Time spent onboarding (orientation/precept/mentor) new employees	48.39%
Clinicians, staff to the organization	47.97%
Manual administration tasks	39.84%
Technology that does not work or is not available	36.59%
Security concerns (threats from cyberattacks)	24.39%
Locating assets	12.20%

When asked what the top most challenging workflow or process was, survey respondents named budget concerns as the most challenging at **33.03%**. Other top challenges include:

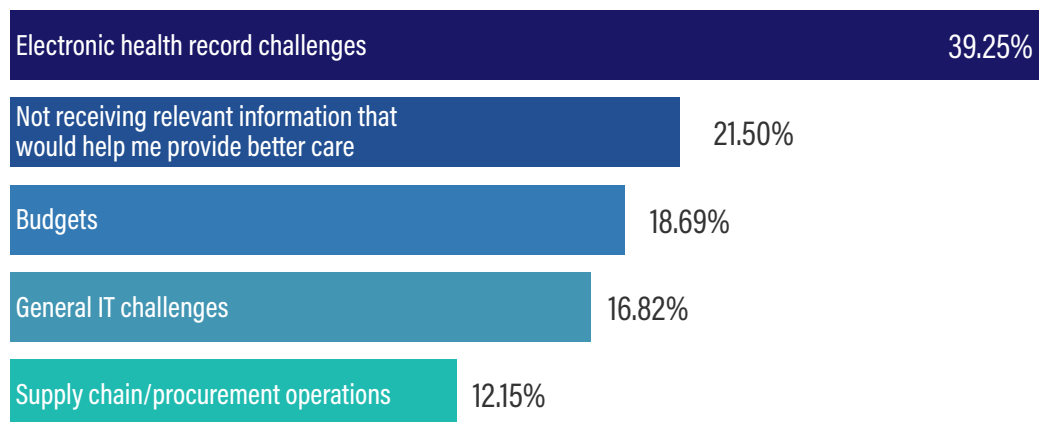|	
General IT challenges	31.19%
Staff scheduling issues	27.52%
Dealing with issues not related to primary job description	26.61%
Expanding to new lines of business or care models	20.18%
Supply chain/procurement operations	14.68%
Dealing with new partnerships, M&As, joint venture activity	6.42%

Both lack of resources—including staffing—and budget concerns are top of mind right now for those on the frontline. Additionally, productivity is being lost, causing major frustrations for workers.

Health system and hospital teams' biggest aggravations

When asked what the two biggest frustrations experienced by their teams or coworkers are, it should come as no surprise that the top complaints between coworkers are:

41.12% Limited resources

40.19% Flow of communication between team members

Other notable responses include:

Electronic health record challenges	39.25%
Not receiving relevant information that would help me provide better care	21.50%
Budgets	18.69%
General IT challenges	16.82%
Supply chain/procurement operations	12.15%

healthcare innovation
PEOPLE. PROCESS. TECHNOLOGY TRANSFORMATION.
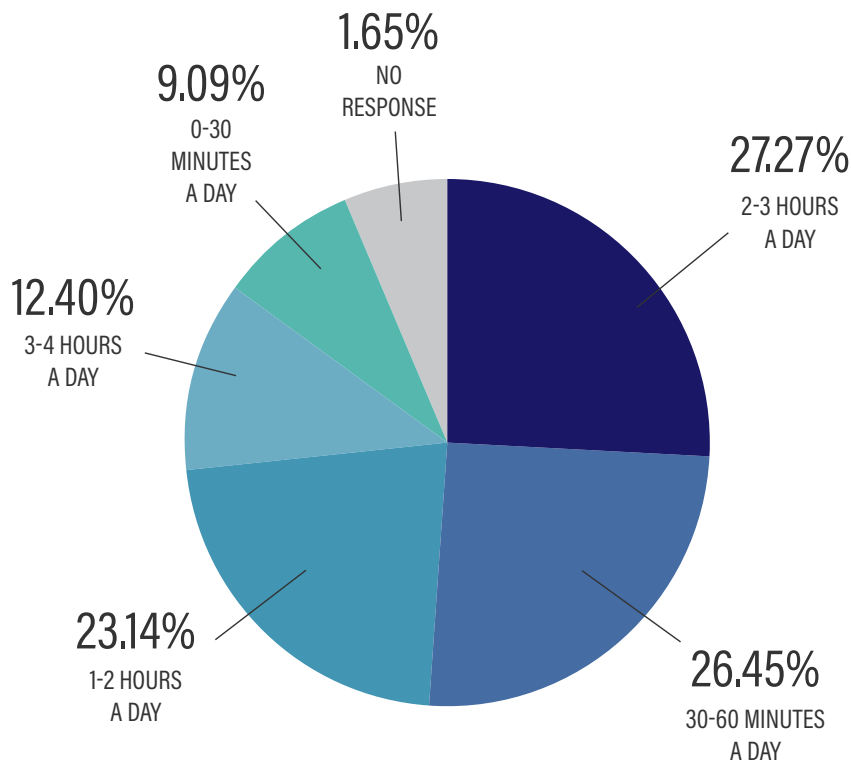
servicenow.

Even before the COVID-19 pandemic, the implementation of electronic medical record systems was pushed by the federal government. Passed in 2016, the 21st Century Cures Act was intended to modernize siloed medical records and improve the healthcare system. But even when data is digital, and this is something everyone is striving for globally, it doesn't mean data is no longer siloed.

Wasted time

Additionally, nurses have had other tasks thrown on their plates, some a result of COVID-19, such as N95 mask fittings and an increase in volume. Those aren't the only non-patient-facing, time-consuming tasks nurses or staff must deal with on a daily basis. When survey respondents were asked how much of their time per day, on average, is spent tracking down data, devices, or information (e.g., to answer a patient or co-worker's request, update a record, create a business report, find an IV pump), **63% of respondents said they spend more than an hour per day tracking down data, devices or information they need to do their job.**
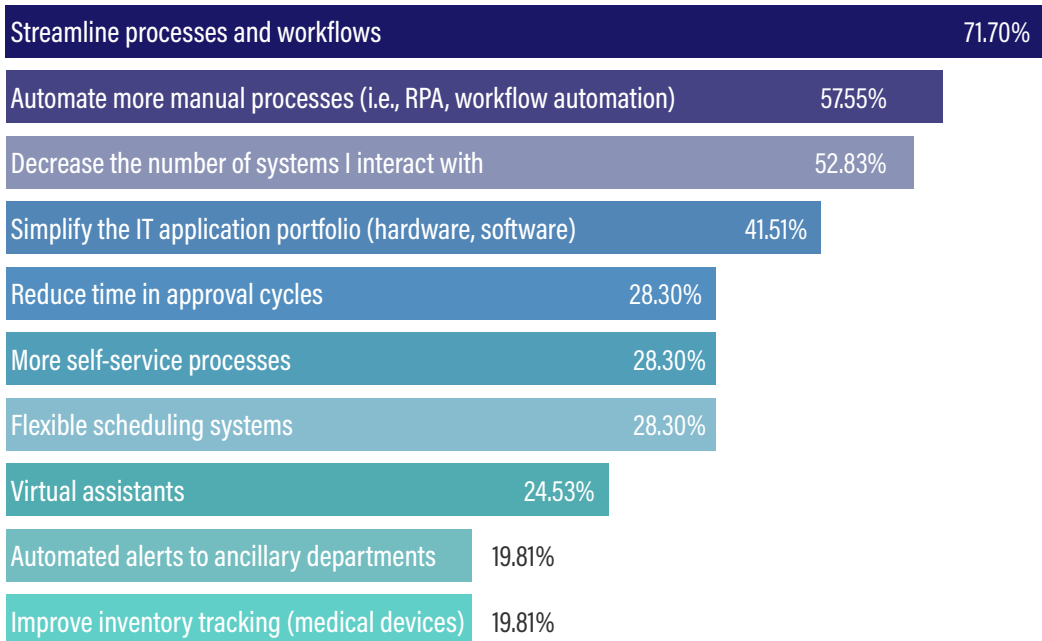
THE BREAKDOWN IS AS FOLLOWS:

1.65% NO RESPONSE

9.09% 0-30 MINUTES A DAY

27.27% 2-3 HOURS A DAY

12.40% 3-4 HOURS A DAY

23.14% 1-2 HOURS A DAY

26.45% 30-60 MINUTES A DAY

This is a huge amount of time spent looking for devices or tracking down information which takes away from time spent with patients.

So, what can organizations do to alleviate some of the burdens frontline healthcare workers are facing? When asked what their organization can do to resolve time management issues, respondents' answers are as follows:

Streamline processes and workflows	71.70%
Automate more manual processes (i.e., RPA, workflow automation)	57.55%
Decrease the number of systems I interact with	52.83%
Simplify the IT application portfolio (hardware, software)	41.51%
Reduce time in approval cycles	28.30%
More self-service processes	28.30%
Flexible scheduling systems	28.30%
Virtual assistants	24.53%
Automated alerts to ancillary departments	19.81%
Improve inventory tracking (medical devices)	19.81%

Technology doesn't replace humans, it helps give them more time for patient care

It is clear from the responses that workers want to lessen the number of manual tasks they face by automating them. Although, there is hesitation from many individuals regarding automation and, specifically, concerns automation will cause a loss of jobs. But the mindset should shift to replacing tasks with more meaningful work at the top of their skill set. Technology in general should assist individuals with what they're doing; in this case, taking care of patients. For example, many systems offer passive listening and will do the typing of the documentation so nurses can simply click a button and push it into a client's chart. There will always be a human to initiate and approve the process, but the actual task of typing could be left to automation.

There are more applications and data now than ever before in the healthcare delivery process. This causes additional challenges to the patient care process. For example, the doctor receives a set of information from a patient—whether from talking to them, looking at past medical history, researching online, reviewing lab results, etc.—all of those different data points create the input for the doctor and the diagnosis. This input helps determine the care plan that will be executed

by the doctor and/or a subset of other medical professionals—nurses, radiologists, surgeons, and potentially others. They then must collaborate to ensure the patient is informed and has access to the relevant information needed to carry on the care plan. In this process, considerable amounts of data are collected. The challenge, according to the survey results, is how individuals get access to the data they need. Logging into a multitude of systems and trying to parse out next steps is a time-consuming process.

So, how can an automation platform help an understaffed, overworked team at an organization?

Automating workflows lessens the burden on healthcare staff

Automation should be measured in terms of time savings and giving back as part of the process. Time is the critical, ultimate currency for everyone in the patient care process, specifically for doctors and nurses. Looking at tasks that can be automated in an organization in the patient care process—like passive listening for charting—that can plug into a process can save organizations time and ultimately money.

Another area that an automation platform can help within health systems and hospitals is back-office information. For example, the service request process. If an individual needs to get something, someone needs to know something, or something is broken, a nurse may need to fill out a form that says who they are, where they're coming from, what their role is, what they are doing, etc. Digital workflows can provide all this data for the nurse—the system would know who they are, where they are coming from, the location, the facility, the suite number, the floor, etc.

Digital workflows can actually predict what they're requesting based on what their patient workload is, what they're looking for and what their job function is. The system can identify that the nurse is on the fourth-floor neuro unit and there have been issues with the human resources system. An automated workflow can provide information that says it has already received a large number of tickets or requests and let the nurse know that they do not have to waste time submitting a ticket because the organization is already aware of the issue. Also, automated workflows can assist with HR requests. A system will know who the individual is, especially at big health systems, and direct them to their specific policies—paid time off, vacation, other departmental policies, etc.

Additionally, a concept like administrative decision support is prime for automation. Not only can organizations reduce the number of systems staff have to interact with, they can put them all in one place with the necessary aggregated data the individual needs to make a decision. The main system healthcare workers use is the EHR, so bringing in a request to process anything that they're doing from a service request standpoint—embedding it into their workflow instead of pivoting to a third-party system—saves time.

Moreover, based on the data that is coming in from who the individual is and what they are requesting, a system can automate where the request goes. For example, if information comes in from a kidney dialysis machine, it needs to go to the biomed team responsible for renal care treatment at that particular facility. This allows staff to get that individual lined up to reduce time trying to solve the issue.

As for non-care related tasks, automation platforms can also assist with insurance verification and completing forms, for example. Automation can go beyond care teams and align front, middle, and back-office teams.

Freeing up time to deliver care

It is clear from our research that the healthcare industry is under constant pressure to increase efficiency and improve patient outcomes, while simultaneously reducing costs. Intelligently designed process automation enables clinicians to work smarter, not harder, and can help make healthcare professionals more productive and happier. Here are three ways digital processes are transforming healthcare:

1.   Streamlined communication and collaboration

Automated processes enable healthcare professionals to share information, collaborate, and communicate in realtime. This improves the speed and accuracy of decision-making, reduces the risk of errors, and enhances patient safety. Process automation allows clinicians to easily access patient data and communicate with their colleagues, regardless of their location. This means that they can quickly and easily get the information they need to make informed decisions without wasting time on administrative tasks or chasing down information from other departments. This also reduces the risk of errors and improves the accuracy of patient records, which can lead to better patient outcomes.

2.   Increased efficiency

Intelligently orchestrated processes can automate many of the manual and time-consuming tasks that healthcare professionals face on a daily basis—from appointment scheduling to medication management. By automating these tasks, clinicians can spend more time focusing on patient care rather than administrative tasks. This not only improves productivity and increases efficiency but can also reduce burnout among healthcare professionals.

3.   Personalized care

Process automation can help clinicians deliver more personalized care to their patients. By using data analytics and machine learning algorithms, healthcare professionals can identify patterns in patient data that may indicate a specific health condition or risk factor. This can help them develop more personalized treatment plans tailored to each patient's unique needs.

Automated, digital processes have the potential to transform healthcare by making clinicians more productive and happier. By streamlining communication and collaboration, automating workflows, and enabling personalized care, process automation can improve patient outcomes, reduce costs, and enhance the overall quality of care. As the healthcare industry continues to evolve, it is clear that process automation will play an increasingly important role in shaping the future of healthcare.

servicenow.

For more details on the survey, please visit:
https://www.servicenow.com/solutions/industry/healthcare.html

ServiceNow (NYSE: NOW) makes the world of Healthcare and Life Sciences work better for everyone. Over 3,000 health systems, payers, and life sciences organizations globally use ServiceNow's cloud-based platform and solutions to intelligently automate processes and services across their businesses. So Healthcare and Life Science organizations can future-proof their customer experiences, employee engagements, risk management, security, and technology innovation. And we can all create the future of Healthcare and Life Sciences that we imagine.

For more information, visit:
www.servicenow.com/products/healthcare-life-sciences.

healthcare innovation
PEOPLE. PROCESS. TECHNOLOGY TRANSFORMATION.

servicenow.