

"Building a Thriving Workforce"

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Hospitals are facing a need for caregivers and support staff that will only grow worse as the labor force ages. The healthcare industry also faces a long-term labor shortage due to shifting demographics, a difference in career expectations and increased worker dissatisfaction. A 2002 report released by the American Hospital Association's (AHA) Commission on Workforce Hospitals and Health Systems recommends that hospitals design all aspects of work around patients to give employees a sense of meaning in their jobs. **Hospital executives also must take steps to create a culture in which hospital workers believe they are valued**, either by allowing them to participate in policy decisions or offering reward and recognition programs. Healthcare organizations need to expand the pool of potential candidates and recruit a diversified work force. One way to accomplish this is to work with other hospitals, professional associations and educational institutions to attract people who may not have considered a career in healthcare. Additionally, hospitals need to build a support network to retain a qualified work force, which can encompass adequate payment rates, funding for information technology and regulatory reforms that promote quality care. Five years after the initial AHA report, healthcare executives were shown to have made some progress; but they must develop new work models, gain CEO support for human capital programs and target the Hispanic population for potential employees.