

# Redesigning Healthcare Recruitment

## A Strategic Framework for Efficiency, Communication, and Retention

*White Paper, 2026*





# Introduction

Healthcare is facing a hiring crisis: a high volume of vacancies, a shortage of providers, and a recruitment process marked by inefficiencies. Across the sector, organizations face lengthy hiring cycles, inconsistent communication, and disjointed onboarding experiences. With projections estimating a shortage of up to 86,000 physicians by 2036, healthcare organizations must reexamine their recruitment strategies to compete in an increasingly talent-scarce labor market.<sup>1</sup>

This publication presents a comprehensive, evidence-informed framework for advancing recruitment practices within the healthcare sector. Drawing on internal case studies, industry thought leadership, and peer-reviewed research, we outline a strategic methodology that benefits both healthcare organizations and prospective candidates.

The approach addresses core dimensions of recruitment effectiveness, including the reduction of procedural inefficiencies, the reinforcement of clear and consistent communication across the hiring continuum, and the implementation of structured, supportive onboarding practices. Through this integrated perspective, stakeholders are equipped with practical, data-driven tools and insights to foster more effective, efficient, and equitable recruitment outcomes.

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<sup>1</sup> GlobalData Plc., The Complexities of Physician Supply and Demand: Projections From 2021 to 2036 (Washington, DC: AAMC, 2024), vi.

# Executive Summary





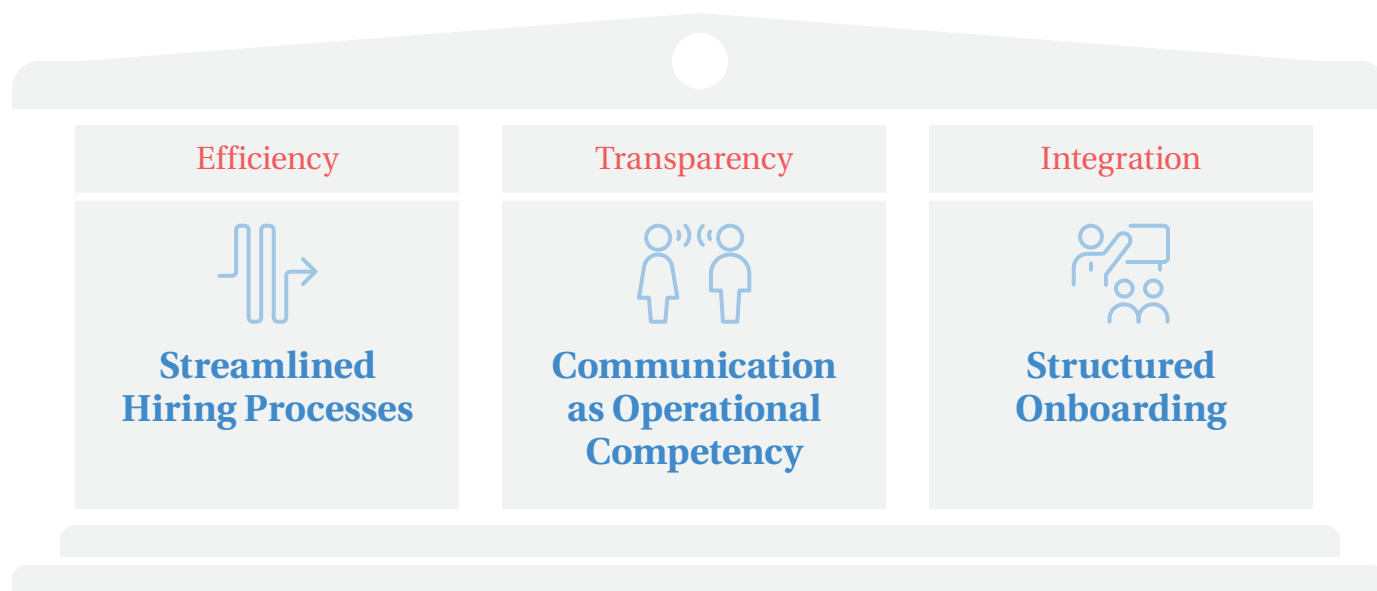
Healthcare organizations are facing one of the most difficult labor markets in modern history. With a projected shortage of up to 86,000 physicians by 2036, coupled with growing competition for advanced practice clinicians, the recruitment and retention of providers has become an urgent challenge. Legacy hiring models, marked by lengthy processes, poor communication, and inconsistent onboarding, no longer meet candidate or organizational needs. The consequences are far-reaching: unfilled vacancies slow patient access to care, organizational costs rise, and the workforce grows increasingly strained.

Grounded in both practical experience and peer-reviewed research, this paper offers an evidence-based framework to modernize healthcare recruitment strategies. At its core is a call for organizations to move from fragmented, reactive hiring toward integrated, strategic practices. Recruitment processes built for momentum and precision not only accelerate hiring timelines, but also attract top candidates, minimize inefficiencies, and instill confidence in both employers and providers.

Likewise, when communication is treated as an operational competency—transparent, consistent, and aligned with candidate expectations—recruitment transforms from a transactional exchange into a meaningful relationship-building process. Equally important is what happens after a candidate accepts an offer: structured, supportive onboarding is shown to dramatically improve engagement, retention, and long-term provider satisfaction.



Projected  
**physician shortage**  
of  
**86,000**  
by 2036



*Built on the pillars of efficiency, transparency, and integration, this framework outlines a structured approach to modernize hiring, improve communication, and strengthen onboarding practices.*



## *“Recruitment is no longer a transactional process. It is a strategic lever for shaping the future of healthcare.”*

The Medicus Firm (TMF) plays a pivotal role in enabling these strategies to succeed. Through adaptive recruitment methodology, we partner closely with healthcare organizations to reduce friction, accelerate hiring timelines, and enhance candidate alignment. Drawing on extensive experience in physician and provider recruitment nationwide, robust market data, and tailored communication strategies, The Medicus Firm helps organizations translate strategic goals into actionable outcomes.

This includes building proactive talent pipelines, ensuring salary transparency from the outset, and deploying customized onboarding solutions that align with both organizational culture and provider expectations. Thoughtful recruitment strategies can streamline hiring, improve long-term placement outcomes, and reinforce organizational performance. Ultimately, by weaving efficiency, communication, and integration throughout the recruitment lifecycle—and partnering with experts who understand the nuances of healthcare staffing—organizations can move beyond short-term problem-solving and toward long-term workforce resilience. The strategies outlined in this paper offer leaders a practical roadmap to strengthen candidate engagement, accelerate hiring, and improve retention, all of which directly influence patient access and organizational stability.

Recruitment is no longer a transactional process. It is a strategic lever for shaping the future of healthcare. The practices explored in this paper highlight how efficiency, transparency, and integration can transform the hiring journey into a powerful driver of organizational resilience. By adopting these strategies, leaders can shift from reactive problem-solving to proactive workforce planning, building environments where providers thrive and patients receive consistent, high-quality care. The result is not just filled vacancies, but a stronger, more adaptable healthcare system prepared to meet the demands of the future.

*Part 1:*

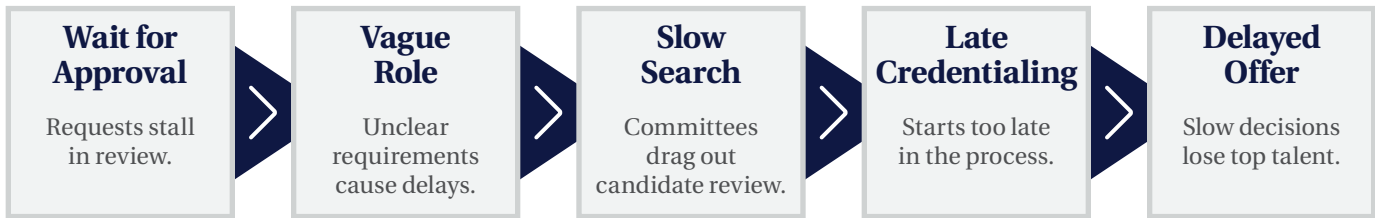
# Streamlining the Hiring Process

*Building an effective healthcare workforce begins with a clear vision and a responsive approach to recruitment. By uniting well-defined expectations, innovative practices, and candidate-centered strategies, organizations can reduce delays, attract mission-aligned providers, and create lasting workforce stability.*

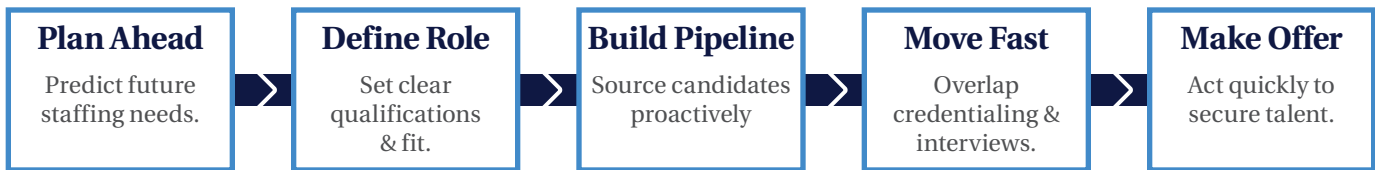


*Clarity, agility, and candidate focus transform hiring from a bottleneck into a competitive advantage.*

## Bottlenecked Hiring



## Streamlined Hiring



*A streamlined hiring process replaces delays with decisiveness. By planning ahead and aligning teams early, healthcare organizations can reduce time-to-fill and attract stronger candidates.*

## Internal Clarity and Strategic Profiles

A well-functioning hiring process begins with internal clarity. Many healthcare organizations experience bottlenecks stemming from disjointed committees, credentialing delays, and unclear job definitions.<sup>1</sup> These inefficiencies lead not only to longer time-to-fill rates, but also to missed opportunities in securing top candidates.

To address these challenges, healthcare employers must first define precise hiring profiles. This involves specifying must-have qualifications, cultural alignment, and mission fit—particularly important in specialized settings such as Federally Qualified Health Centers (FQHCs) and behavioral health clinics, where alignment with community values is critical.<sup>2</sup>

Predictive analytics and agile hiring models can further improve speed and precision. By leveraging historical hiring data, organizations can not only anticipate workforce needs but also shift from reactive to strategic hiring. This enables them to build proactive talent pipelines, reduce time-to-fill by weeks, and secure high-value candidates before the competition even initiates their search.

<sup>1</sup> The Medicus Firm, Streamlining the Healthcare Hiring Process: Best Practices for Success, January 27, 2025, <https://www.themedicusfirm.com/news/streamlining-the-healthcare-hiring-process-best-practices-for-success>.

<sup>2</sup> The Medicus Firm, “5 Effective Strategies to Optimize Healthcare Recruitment,” LinkedIn, February 6, 2024, [https://www.linkedin.com/posts/the-medicus-firm\\_5-effective-strategies-to-optimize-healthcare-activity-7161009973945131009-ROsF](https://www.linkedin.com/posts/the-medicus-firm_5-effective-strategies-to-optimize-healthcare-activity-7161009973945131009-ROsF).



Recruiters consistently observe that acting quickly in the recruitment process is critical—not only for capturing top talent, but also for preventing candidate disengagement and offer declines due to unnecessary delays.<sup>3</sup> Assigning cross-functional hiring teams to shepherd the process from requisition to offer further accelerates cycle times and ensures alignment.

### Tailored Recruitment for Community and Rural Health

On the topic of rural and underserved regions, traditional hiring models have historically failed to meet the unique needs of these communities. For example, engaging community-integrated strategies—such as embedding recruiters within rural areas, collaborating closely with community leaders, and offering family support structures—has been shown to improve provider attraction and retention outcomes in U.S. rural settings.<sup>4</sup>

Such tailored approaches—including the appointment of local champions and holistic incentives—are critical to overcoming challenges such as geographic isolation, infrastructure gaps, and limited professional development opportunities.<sup>5</sup>

### The Medicus Firm’s Adaptive Recruitment Model

A key differentiator in this approach—and a core element of The Medicus Firm’s (TMF) methodology—is its robust and highly adaptive recruitment framework. Rather than relying solely on standard sourcing tactics, TMF employs a methodical, team-based approach that leverages real-world data, recruiters with a depth of experience in community-based healthcare, and tailored communication strategies.

Through this model, TMF deeply understands the unique goals and challenges of each client, enabling recruiters to define clear expectations, assess nuanced requirements, and maintain strategic alignment throughout the search process. The ability to design and execute tailored recruitment solutions is particularly vital in complex or urgent searches, where precision and agility are essential to success.

<sup>3</sup> PracticeMatch, Why Speed Matters in Physician Recruitment: A Recruiter’s Perspective, n.d., <https://www.practicematch.com/employers/employer-resources/recruitment-articles/why-speed-matters-in-physician-recruitment-a-recruiter-s-perspective.cfm>.  
<sup>4</sup> PracticeMatch, Strengthening Rural Healthcare: Effective Recruitment Strategies for 2025, 2025, <https://www.practicematch.com/employers/recruitment-articles/strengthening-rural-healthcare-effective-recruitment-strategies-for-2025.cfm>.  
<sup>5</sup> PracticeMatch, Strengthening Rural Healthcare: Effective Recruitment Strategies for 2025, 2025, <https://www.practicematch.com/employers/recruitment-articles/strengthening-rural-healthcare-effective-recruitment-strategies-for-2025.cfm>.

### How to Improve Provider Attraction & Retention in Rural Settings:

- 1** Embed Recruiters in Communities
- 2** Partner with Local Leaders
- 3** Support Providers’ Families

### The Medicus Firm’s Adaptive Recruitment Model:



**Data-Driven**



**Team-Based**



**Customized Strategies**



When combined with community-integrated efforts, this hands-on approach has consistently produced stronger long-term placement outcomes. For example, in the case of a primary care search brought to The Medicus Firm from an FQHC in the Dallas metro area, close collaboration with the internal team enabled TMF to identify a bilingual primary care provider who matched both the clinical needs and the cultural fabric of the organization. The candidate was placed within 12 days of the position going live—a timeline significantly shorter than average for comparable roles. This personalized, community-integrated recruitment model has since informed similar efforts across multiple Southern states.<sup>6</sup>

## Case Studies: Custom Strategies with Measurable Results

This hands-on, data-informed approach is reflected across multiple case studies from The Medicus Firm, which collectively demonstrate how adaptive strategies produce measurable outcomes in a range of clinical environments. For example, in Texas, a National Medical Group leveraged a focused and collaborative strategy to fill 59 pediatric nurse practitioner and physician assistant roles in under 60 days—a timeline that contributed directly to a \$231,000 monthly revenue increase.<sup>7</sup>

Similarly, a Virginia FQHC partnered with TMF to streamline its recruitment of dental providers by revising its compensation structure and consolidating interview stages, enabling faster alignment with qualified candidates who also fit well within the client's organizational culture. These outcomes underscore the importance of designing customized strategies that respond to the operational realities and market constraints of each client.<sup>8</sup>

## Technology Integration to Accelerate Hiring

Technology also plays a crucial role in optimizing recruitment workflows and elevating the candidate experience. Applicant tracking systems (ATS) help standardize processes, streamline documentation, and ensure consistency across departments. Automated scheduling tools eliminate the friction of manual coordination, accelerating interview timelines and reducing the risk of drop-off. Meanwhile, video interviews not only improve accessibility for remote candidates but can also expedite early-stage evaluations.

<sup>6</sup> The Medicus Firm, A Methodical Approach to Quickly Finding the Ideal Provider [case study], 2023, <https://www.themedicusfirm.com/>.

<sup>7</sup> The Medicus Firm, Efficient Clinics, Satisfied Providers, Healthier Community [case study], 2022, <https://www.themedicusfirm.com/>.

<sup>8</sup> The Medicus Firm, Rapid Placement Expands Services and Increases Access to Dental Care [case study], 2024, <https://www.themedicusfirm.com/>.

# 12 days

to place a  
**bilingual provider**  
in a Dallas FQHC

# 59 roles

filled in

# 60 days

drove

# \$231,000

monthly  
revenue growth



ATS



Automated  
Scheduling



Video  
Interviews



*A Faster, Transparent,  
Candidate-Friendly  
Process*



Collectively, these tools reduce administrative burden, increase process transparency, and allow hiring teams to make data-informed decisions in real time. Importantly, they provide continuous visibility into every stage of the hiring pipeline, enabling strategic interventions when bottlenecks or delays arise—a key factor in sustaining momentum during complex or multi-phase searches.<sup>9</sup>

### The Candidate's Role in a Collaborative Process

From the candidate's perspective, success begins with preparation and responsiveness. Candidates who tailor their resume or curriculum vitae to match the role, engage with recruiters promptly, and demonstrate alignment with an organization's mission are more likely to stand out early in the process and maintain momentum through each hiring phase.

Equally important is a candidate's ability to view the hiring process as a mutual evaluation—assessing not only their fit for the role, but also the organization's culture, communication practices, and transparency. By assessing factors such as clarity in job descriptions, timeliness of responses, and overall process structure, candidates can gain critical insight into how a prospective employer values its workforce.

These behaviors can signal long-term alignment—or misalignment—with a candidate's own professional goals and communication preferences, which ultimately influences job satisfaction and can play a decisive role in minimizing future turnover.<sup>10</sup>

<sup>9</sup> The Medicus Firm, "Streamlining the Hiring Process: A Guide for Healthcare Executives and Recruiters," The Medicus Firm Blog, February 2024.

<sup>10</sup> The Medicus Firm, "5 Strategies to Accelerate Your Hiring Process," LinkedIn, February 14, 2024, [https://www.linkedin.com/posts/the-medicus-firm\\_5-strategies-to-accelerate-your-hiring-process-activity-7165782177933197312-p43](https://www.linkedin.com/posts/the-medicus-firm_5-strategies-to-accelerate-your-hiring-process-activity-7165782177933197312-p43).

### The Candidate's Role in a Collaborative Process



*Successful hiring is a two-way process. When candidates engage proactively, tailor their materials, and assess communication along the way, collaboration between recruiter and provider becomes both efficient and enduring.*



*“When employers and candidates approach hiring as a collaborative journey—marked by clarity, customization, and follow-through—organizations are better equipped to meet staffing needs efficiently.”*

Taken together, these practices reflect a modern recruitment model that aligns both strategic planning and human connection. When employers and candidates approach hiring as a collaborative journey—marked by clarity, customization, and follow-through—organizations are better equipped to meet staffing needs efficiently, retain top talent, and deliver meaningful, sustainable care.

While efficient systems lay the groundwork for effective hiring, it's communication that sustains momentum—transforming process into partnership and ensuring every stakeholder stays aligned throughout the journey.

## From Process to Performance

To transform hiring into a true driver of organizational success, healthcare leaders must focus on three critical actions:

- **Streamline and adapt:** Align internal clarity with flexible recruitment models to eliminate bottlenecks, accelerate time-to-fill, and secure mission-aligned talent.
- **Harness data and technology:** Apply predictive analytics, rural-specific strategies, and workflow automation to boost precision and efficiency.
- **Engage for sustainability:** Foster collaborative candidate relationships that drive long-term retention and elevate hiring from a transaction to a strategic advantage.

*Part 2:*

# Communication as an Operational Competency

*Communication in recruitment is more than courtesy—it's an operational competency that drives success. Clear, consistent dialogue fuels momentum, builds trust, and shapes candidate perceptions. From salary transparency to timely feedback, effective communication accelerates decisions and strengthens alignment.*



*Clear, consistent communication turns recruitment from a transaction into a trusted partnership.*



*“Even the most efficient hiring process will collapse under the weight of poor communication.”*

## The Stakes of Poor Communication in Healthcare Hiring

If streamlining the hiring process sets the stage for a successful recruitment journey, then communication is the dialogue that keeps the performance moving forward. These two elements are intrinsically linked—without clear, timely, and consistent communication, even the most efficient systems can fall apart. Communication serves as both a foundation and a differentiator in healthcare recruitment, shaping candidate perceptions, accelerating decision-making, and ensuring long-term alignment.

Even the most efficient hiring process will collapse under the weight of poor communication—without clarity and consistency, speed becomes irrelevant. Transparent, timely, and consistent communication remains a cornerstone of successful recruitment, and empirical data continues to underscore this point—in a highly competitive hiring environment where 44.9% of physicians and 49.9% of advanced practice clinicians report receiving six or more job solicitations per week, even brief lapses in communication can lead to rapid disengagement and lost opportunities for placement.<sup>1</sup>

## What Candidates Want to Hear—and When

While compensation consistently ranks as the top motivator for providers considering a job change, it and other critical details remain inconsistently shared in early outreach.<sup>2</sup> A well-crafted job posting and initial conversations should get to the point with what candidates truly value: 75.9% of physician respondents and 77.4% of advanced practice clinician respondents in The Medicus Firm’s 2025 National Physician & Healthcare Provider Preference & Insights Survey cited salary as the most sought-after detail influencing their interest in a job—ranking even higher than job location or practice type.

<sup>1</sup> The Medicus Firm, 2025 National Physician & Healthcare Provider Preference & Insights Survey, 11, 17.

<sup>2</sup> The Medicus Firm, 2025 National Physician & Healthcare Provider Preference & Insights Survey, 10, 16.



**44.9%**  
of physicians

and

**49.9%**  
of APCs

receive

**6+ job solicitations**  
each week



**75.9%**  
of physicians

and

**77.4%**  
of APCs

say

**salary**  
drives their  
interest in a job



Today's job seekers—particularly those entering or re-evaluating the workforce in a dynamic post-pandemic era—expect salary transparency, and employers that provide it up front are rewarded with stronger applicant engagement and trust. Ultimately, communication breakdowns rarely occur in a vacuum; rather, they often signal deeper systemic issues within an organization—whether misaligned leadership, unclear expectations, or fragmented processes. In this context, transparency and consistency are not just optional, but essential for securing lasting, high-quality placements.

## Keeping Candidates Engaged Through Feedback Loops

Feedback cycles are similarly critical, serving as the mechanism that sustains candidate momentum after initial interactions. Prompt and structured communication following interviews plays a pivotal role in sustaining candidate engagement. As emphasized by The Medicus Firm team, consistent follow-up demonstrates organizational reliability, reinforces candidate trust, and positions employers as thoughtful and operationally sound participants in the hiring process. When communication is delayed or absent, candidates may interpret the silence as disinterest or disorganization—leading to disengagement, increased attrition, and potential harm to the employer's reputation.<sup>3</sup>

## Understanding Candidate Motivations for Career Change

Leading motivators for career change among physicians include compensation, lack of work-life balance, and frustration with poor workplace culture.<sup>4</sup> Together, these drivers reveal not just dissatisfaction, but a growing need for recruiters to anticipate and address potential obstacles long before they manifest in contract negotiations or early turnover. This makes early and sustained communication not just beneficial, but essential. Recruiters must serve as more than facilitators—they must become trusted liaisons, proactively navigating compensation expectations, clarifying work-life structure, and advocating on behalf of the candidate. When these topics are addressed early, potential sources of dissatisfaction can be mitigated before a contract is signed, decreasing the likelihood of early turnover and helping ensure long-term alignment between provider and practice.

<sup>3</sup> The Medicus Firm, "Ask the Experts: Insights from a TMF BD Rep," LinkedIn, July 10, 2024, <https://www.linkedin.com/feed/update/urn:li:activity:7285762739774398464/>.

<sup>4</sup> The Medicus Firm, 2025 National Physician & Healthcare Provider Preference & Insights Survey, 10.



**Prompt Follow-Up**



**Structured Feedback**



**Reliable Cadence**



*Clear, Consistent,  
Momentum-Focused  
Hiring*

## Top Career Change Motivators for Physicians:

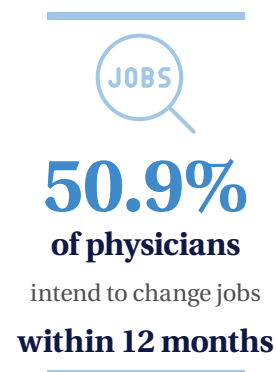
- 1 Compensation**  
(31.9%)
- 2 Work-Life Balance**  
(19.6%)
- 3 Work Environment**  
(11.6%)
- 4 Retiring**  
(10.5%)
- 5 Location**  
(10.2%)



Notably, 11.6% of physicians in The Medicus Firm’s 2025 National Physician & Healthcare Provider Preference & Insights Survey cited “work environment” as their primary motivator for changing jobs. In this case, “work environment” extends beyond onboarding and HR communication to include elements of organizational culture such as leadership relationships, team collaboration, and alignment with values. Positive leadership relationships and a supportive, collaborative team atmosphere emerged as top priorities. This reinforces the reality that breakdowns in culture—not just procedural inefficiencies—are central drivers of career transitions for a significant portion of the workforce.

With 76.9% of physician respondents receiving 3+ job solicitations weekly and over half intending to change jobs within the year,<sup>5</sup> the stakes for timely and clear communication are exceptionally high. In such a competitive environment, even minor lapses in outreach or responsiveness can quickly erode trust and cause top candidates to disengage, especially when they are juggling multiple offers or facing relocation and scheduling decisions. Employers who neglect structured communication cycles often face stalled searches, delayed decision-making, and diminished candidate enthusiasm—outcomes that are preventable with intentional, consistent outreach.

<sup>5</sup> The Medicus Firm, 2025 National Physician & Healthcare Provider Preference & Insights Survey, 10, 11.



## Mutual Evaluation in the Hiring Process

### What Employers Evaluate:



#### Skills

Clinical expertise and qualifications



#### Alignment

Mission, values, and culture fit



#### Readiness

Availability and credentialing status

### What Candidates Evaluate:



#### Compensation Transparency

Salary shared up front



#### Culture

Leadership, teamwork, and work environment



#### Clarity

Clear, timely, consistent communication

*When both sides evaluate openly, alignment lasts beyond the hire.*

Successful recruitment depends on mutual insight. Employers and candidates evaluate different—but complementary—factors that determine engagement, satisfaction, and retention.



# Communication in Rural and Culturally Specific Markets

In complex or geographically specific markets—such as rural communities or linguistically diverse regions—communication requires even greater intentionality. The use of regional recruiters who are already rooted in the local community has proved effective in bridging cultural and logistical gaps. These professionals act as essential connectors, translating community values and norms to prospective candidates, which researchers identify as a critical component of successful rural recruitment efforts in the United States.<sup>6</sup>

This intentional approach enables recruitment teams to cultivate longstanding relationships and deliver candidate matches that are not only highly qualified but also well-aligned with the values and operational realities of the communities and institutions they will serve. This geographic and contextual familiarity strengthens the lines of communication between stakeholders—enabling the recruiter to serve as a trusted intermediary who can navigate expectations, translate organizational culture, and ensure clarity from initial outreach through final offer.

While recruiters must act as interpreters and advocates, candidates too have a role to play in ensuring alignment and clarity throughout the process. High-performing candidates approach the process as a bilateral evaluation, recognizing that many career transitions—though increasingly common—still involve meaningful logistical and personal challenges.<sup>7</sup> Again, key information disclosed early in job ads—such as compensation ranges, call schedules, and benefits—empowers candidates to make more confident, better-aligned decisions and reduces the likelihood of friction later in the hiring process.

<sup>6</sup> AcademyHealth. (2017). What are effective approaches for recruiting and retaining rural primary care health professionals? (Rapid Evidence Review, p. 2). Colorado Health Foundation.

<sup>7</sup> The Medicus Firm, 2025 Physician & Healthcare Provider Preference & Insights Survey, 11.



**Candidates**



**Community-Based Recruiter**



**Organizations**



*Bridging both sides through community-rooted recruiters ensures clarity, trust, and lasting placements.*



# Candidate Expectations for Transparency and Channels

From the agency side, effective communication starts with meeting candidates where they are—and that means leveraging the platforms and sources they trust. According to The Medicus Firm’s 2025 Provider Preference & Insights Survey, the top three preferred channels for learning about new job opportunities are email, online job boards, and professional networks such as LinkedIn and Doximity. Among those who use social media for job searching, LinkedIn is the most used platform.<sup>8</sup> These insights underscore the importance of integrating targeted outreach strategies across digital and peer-networked environments to ensure that job opportunities are both visible and accessible to today’s physicians and advanced practice providers.

By leveraging these preferred sources early in the hiring process, recruitment firms can attract the right candidates with greater efficiency and authenticity. At the same time, maintaining consistent visibility across professional platforms ensures that even passive job seekers—those influenced by peer recommendations or casually scanning industry updates—remain within reach. This dual strategy maximizes exposure while aligning with candidate behavior, increasing initial engagement, and laying the groundwork for deeper, more transparent communication throughout the recruitment journey.

When candidates receive outreach through familiar and respected channels—or from a trusted personal connection—they are more likely to respond promptly, ask informed questions, and naturally align themselves with organizations that fit their needs. Where trust and clarity are paramount, using the right tools at the right moment can make all the difference in securing successful, long-term placements.<sup>9</sup>

<sup>8</sup> Ibid.  
<sup>9</sup> Ibid.

## Preferred Sources for Job Opportunities for Physicians:

- 1 Emails
- 2 Online Job Boards
- 3 Professional Network
- 4 Text Messages
- 5 Online Search Engine

*“Communication, then, must be reframed not as a soft skill, but as an operational competency fundamental to recruitment.”*



## Communication as a Core Operational Function

Communication breakdowns, particularly when repetitive or systemic, often reflect organizational misalignment. Whether it manifests in inconsistent timelines, unclear roles, or contradictory feedback, poor communication is rarely isolated. It typically points to issues in leadership alignment, procedural coherence, or institutional readiness. Communication, then, must be reframed not as a soft skill, but as an operational competency fundamental to recruitment.

Organizations that foster open, organized, and strategic dialogue will accelerate their time-to-fill, enhance candidate quality, and build reputational capital in a competitive labor market. For candidates, the ability to interpret these communication patterns provides a roadmap to better cultural fit and longer-term professional satisfaction. Ultimately, mutual transparency and responsiveness create the trust and clarity essential for lasting, successful employment relationships. Establishing reliable communication pathways from recruitment through retention shifts communication from a best practice to a strategic advantage.

## From Dialogue to Direction

To transform hiring into a true driver of organizational success, healthcare leaders must focus on three critical actions:

- **Prioritize transparency:** Share key details such as salary, schedules, and benefits early to build trust and engagement.
- **Maintain consistency:** Timely, reliable updates and structured feedback cycles keep candidates confident and committed.
- **Adapt communication:** Use trusted platforms, local expertise, and culturally aware messaging to ensure stronger alignment and fit.

*Part 3:*

# Excellence in Onboarding

*Onboarding is not a formality—it's a decisive stage that shapes satisfaction, retention, and performance. A structured process accelerates productivity, builds trust, and reduces turnover risk. Strong onboarding begins at offer acceptance and extends beyond day one, turning a new hire into a long-term success.*



*Strategic onboarding builds satisfaction, strengthens retention, and drives long-term performance.*



*“Structured onboarding correlates with increased employee engagement, faster time-to-productivity, and longer tenure.”*

## Why Onboarding Is a Strategic Inflection Point

Effective onboarding is often the most overlooked element in the recruitment lifecycle, yet its impact on retention and performance is profound. Structured onboarding correlates with increased employee engagement, faster time-to-productivity, and longer tenure. Recent findings make this connection starkly clear: 56% of providers who reported a positive onboarding experience also reported being highly satisfied with their job, compared to only 19% of those who had a negative onboarding experience.

Conversely, providers with a negative onboarding experience were six times more likely to report job dissatisfaction than those with a positive experience.<sup>1</sup> These findings show that onboarding is more than a formality; it's a strategic lever that can either solidify a provider's commitment or erode it before clinical work begins. Healthcare systems that invest in welcoming, well-structured onboarding programs are far better positioned to retain providers and cultivate lasting engagement.

## Compliance vs. Connection in Onboarding

The most effective programs are purposefully designed, ideally spanning a structured 90-day period.<sup>2</sup> Interestingly, there is often a gap between what organizations report including in their onboarding process and what new providers actually receive. Recruitment professionals cite near-universal inclusion of key elements such as HR requirements (99%), badge access (95%), credentialing (94%), and IT set-up (93%) as standard parts of onboarding. Yet physicians and clinicians report much lower actual receipt of core onboarding elements—only 79% received timely credentialing and privileging, 78% received a comprehensive facility tour, and just 67% reported having regular checkpoints with supervisors or recruiters.<sup>3</sup>

### Positive Onboarding:

**56%**

are highly satisfied  
with their job

vs.

### Negative Onboarding:

**19%**

are highly satisfied  
with their job

### What Employers Offer:

**HR Requirements** – 99%

**Badge Access** – 95%

**Credentialing** – 94%

**IT Set-Up** – 93%

### What Providers Need:

**Timely Credentialing  
& Privileging** – 79%

**Comprehensive Facility Tour** – 78%

**Regular Checkpoints with  
Supervisors or Recruiters** – 67%

*A structured  
90-day program should  
balance compliance with  
candidate needs.*

<sup>1</sup> Association for Advancing Physician and Provider Recruitment (AAPPR), 2024 Physician and Clinician Onboarding Research Report, 2.

<sup>2</sup> The Medicus Firm. (2024, February 28). Onboarding excellence in healthcare: A blueprint for retention and success (Blog). <https://www.themedicusfirm.com/news/onboarding-excellence-in-healthcare-a-blueprint-for-retention-and-success>

<sup>3</sup> AAPPR, 7.



This disconnect points to a breakdown in execution, where well-intended plans fail to fully translate into the lived experience of new hires. It highlights the importance of not just designing onboarding programs but rigorously delivering and auditing them to ensure consistency and impact. When organizations fall short in this follow-through, it can significantly weaken early engagement, diminish institutional trust, and undercut onboarding effectiveness. This is especially relevant given how providers evaluate early onboarding interactions. 63% of providers say familiarizing themselves with the facility's systems and technology is the most difficult part of starting at a new facility, while nearly half cite learning protocols and procedures as major barriers.<sup>4</sup> What do providers need most during onboarding? Clarity, structure, and support, which are often underdelivered, even when the infrastructure appears to be in place.

**63%**  
of providers cite  
**learning systems  
& technology**  
as their biggest  
**onboarding hurdle**

## Meeting Expectations in the First 90 Days

Additional data reveals similar mismatches across every onboarding phase. For instance, 85.2% of providers say that knowing where to report and who to meet on day one is a 'must-have,' and while 90.1% report receiving this information, gaps remain across other critical onboarding elements—leaving nearly 1 in 10 navigating first-day logistics without adequate direction.<sup>5</sup> Similarly, while nearly 80% of providers expect an overview of their job expectations and 73.7% want a summary of applicable protocols, availability of these resources trails expectations by 4–7 percentage points. This pattern continues across the first week: more than half of providers cite introductions to team members as essential, but nearly 20% did not receive them.<sup>6</sup>

**48%**  
of providers cite  
**learning protocols  
& procedures**  
as their biggest  
**onboarding hurdle**

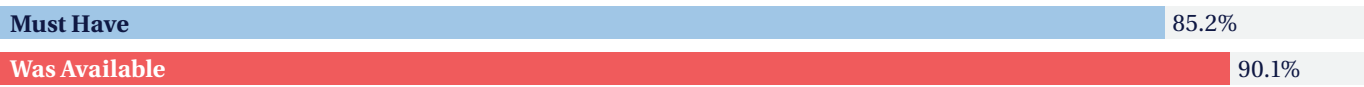
<sup>4</sup> AAPPR, 11.

<sup>5</sup> AAPPR, 19.

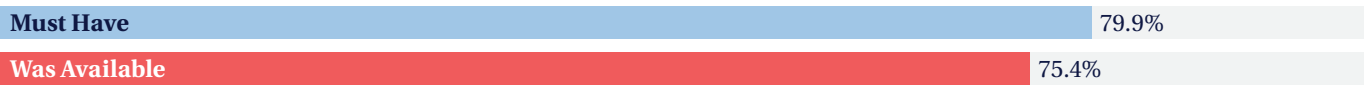
<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

## Provider Expectations vs. Onboarding Reality

### Day One: Where to report & who to meet



### Job Clarity: Overview of duties & expectations



### Protocols: Facility procedures that apply to role





The implication is clear—providers are not only evaluating what is offered, but also how reliably and thoroughly it’s delivered. Addressing these shortfalls presents a clear opportunity to improve early engagement and strengthen retention outcomes. Structured touchpoints during the first 90 days are consistently associated with reduced early attrition—an issue that remains a key concern across healthcare facilities facing tight margins and high vacancy rates.

### Low-Cost Solutions with High Impact

These programs don’t need to be resource intensive. Organizations have successfully implemented low-cost solutions such as peer buddy systems, internal learning management systems, and virtual welcome events. Additionally, guidance from the American Medical Association’s Steps Forward program underscores that effective onboarding must be more than administrative—it should establish a lasting framework of professional support. This includes early and sustained access to peer connections, formal mentorship opportunities, introductions to clinical and non-clinical leadership, and consistent reinforcement of institutional culture and values.<sup>7</sup>

These elements not only reduce the isolation new hires often feel but also foster stronger psychological safety and role clarity from the start. Providing clear visibility into available resources, guiding new hires through systems and cultural expectations, and assigning mentors who can offer hands-on advice and social support are all critical elements that shape a provider’s early impressions and longer-term engagement. These strategies create a sense of belonging without overextending limited HR resources.

And they matter—while compensation continues to dominate as the top motivator for career change, 11.6% of physicians in The Medicus Firm’s 2025 National Physician & Healthcare Provider Preference & Insights Survey cited ‘work environment’ as their primary reason for seeking a new opportunity. Compounding this challenge is the fact that 71% of providers report that their

<sup>7</sup> AMA Ed Hub. (n.d.). Onboarding Optimization: Pave the Way for New Physician Success and Satisfaction. American Medical Association. Retrieved July 22, 2025, from <https://edhub.ama-assn.org/steps-forward/module/2832726>

### Low-Cost Solutions with High Impact:

- 1 Peer Buddy System
- 2 Internal Learning Mgmt. Systems
- 3 Virtual Welcome Events

71%  
of providers say  
credentialing &  
privileging  
takes  
3–4 months

*“Effective onboarding must be more than administrative—it should establish a lasting framework of professional support.”*



credentialing and privileging process takes three to four months to complete.<sup>8</sup> These extended timelines introduce avoidable friction into the onboarding process—delaying access to care, dampening enthusiasm, and often placing providers in professional limbo during what should be a moment of momentum and connection. This category often includes elements shaped directly by onboarding experiences, such as early workplace culture impressions, administrative efficiency, and initial interactions with HR. A poorly executed or inconsistent onboarding process can unintentionally signal deeper issues, prompting candidates to disengage before their tenure even begins.

## The Risks of Delayed Onboarding

While a strong onboarding process improves engagement, logistical and procedural delays can still undermine success. Streamlined organizational processes, including internal systems used to track applicants, play a critical role in sustaining onboarding momentum and setting clear expectations from the outset. One major contributing factor is the absence of an efficient applicant tracking system (ATS). Organizations without an ATS take, on average, 21% longer to fill open positions than those that use one—demonstrating how critical these systems are to maintaining hiring momentum and minimizing costly delays. Based on an average physician salary of \$280,000 annually, a 21% delay in a typical 100-day hiring timeline equates to approximately \$16,000 in lost productivity per search, underscoring the urgent need for operational efficiency in the recruitment process.<sup>9</sup>

<sup>8</sup> AAPPR, 2024 Physician and Clinician Onboarding Research Report, 10.

<sup>9</sup> Association for Advancing Physician and Provider Recruitment, AAPPR Internal Physician and Provider Recruitment Benchmarking Report: 2023 Annual Report (Dublin, OH: Industry Insights, 2023), 35, <https://www.aappr.org/resource/reports/>.



**Organizations  
using an ATS**

fill roles

**21%**

**faster**

saving

**\$16,000**

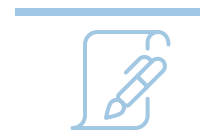
**in productivity**

per search



## Starting Onboarding at the Point of Offer Acceptance

To mitigate these risks, onboarding must begin the moment an offer is accepted. However, 61% of providers report that onboarding doesn't begin until after a contract is signed—an approach that risks missing crucial early engagement opportunities.<sup>10</sup> Onboarding should ideally begin earlier in the recruitment journey to establish trust, minimize ambiguity, and accelerate readiness. Employers should prioritize back-end coordination by aligning credentialing and licensing workflows, streamlining document requests, and preparing internal teams to welcome the new hire. Candidates, in turn, benefit from early access to training portals, team introductions, and personalized roadmaps that guide their transition from contract signing to immediate clinical productivity—unburdened by messy credentialing timelines, fragmented communication, or unexpected administrative roadblocks.



61%

of providers say

**onboarding starts  
after the contract  
is signed**

<sup>10</sup> Association for Advancing Physician and Provider Recruitment (AAPPR), 2024 Physician and Clinician Onboarding Research Report, 17.

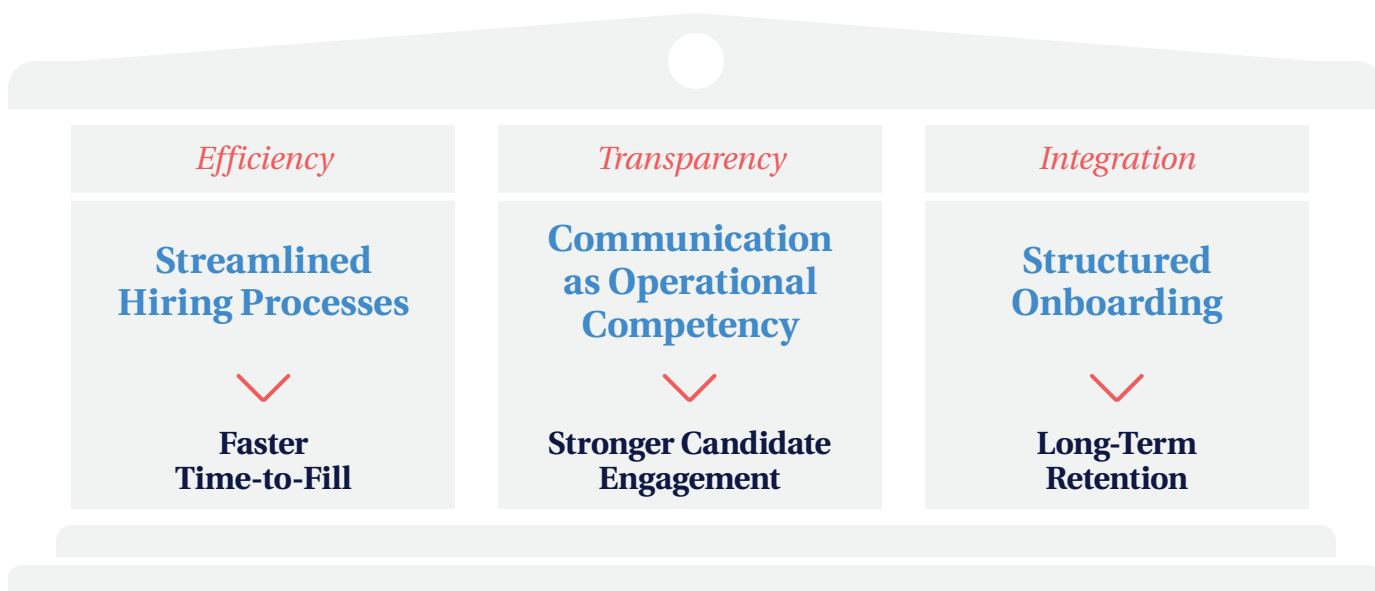
## From First Impressions to Long-Term Success

To transform hiring into a true driver of organizational success, healthcare leaders must focus on three critical actions:

- **Start early and stay consistent:** Onboarding should begin at offer acceptance, with clear timelines, proactive communication, and reliable follow-through.
- **Bridge gaps between intent and experience:** Providers often report receiving less support than organizations claim to provide—closing this gap is essential for trust and retention.
- **Prioritize connection and culture:** Peer support, mentorship, and visible alignment with organizational values reduce isolation, build belonging, and sustain long-term engagement.

# Conclusion





*When applied in practice, this framework accelerates time-to-fill, deepens candidate engagement, and supports long-term retention—laying the groundwork for a more resilient workforce.*

Healthcare recruitment stands at a pivotal crossroads. The challenges of prolonged vacancies, mounting provider shortages, and candidate disengagement are no longer isolated problems—they are systemic pressures that threaten organizational stability and patient care delivery. This paper demonstrates that these challenges, while significant, are not insurmountable. By adopting recruitment practices rooted in efficiency, clarity, and integration, healthcare leaders can move beyond short-term fixes and build a foundation for enduring resilience.

The evidence is clear: when organizations streamline processes, establish open and timely communication, and invest in structured onboarding, they not only fill positions more quickly but also attract candidates who are better aligned, more engaged, and more likely to stay. These changes do more than reduce costs or improve hiring metrics; they strengthen organizational culture, accelerate clinical productivity, and improve patient access to care. Recruitment, in this sense, becomes more than a transactional exchange—it becomes a strategic force multiplier.



*“The future of healthcare will belong to organizations that recognize recruitment as a decisive lever for competitive advantage.”*

The future of healthcare will belong to organizations that recognize recruitment as a decisive lever for competitive advantage. Those that act now to modernize their practices will lead the industry in attracting and retaining top talent, cultivating trusted relationships with providers, and building teams capable of delivering care with consistency and excellence. Those that fail to adapt risk being left behind in an increasingly unforgiving labor market.

Ultimately, the way forward is both practical and urgent. The tools, strategies, and insights outlined in this paper provide leaders with a roadmap for transforming recruitment from a pain point into a driver of success. The opportunity before healthcare organizations is to not only fill vacancies, but to define what effective, sustainable, and human-centered recruitment looks like for the next decade. Those that embrace this challenge will not just survive the workforce crisis—they will set the new standard for excellence in healthcare delivery.

# About The Medicus Firm

Established in 2001, **The Medicus Firm** is a national healthcare recruitment company with a mission to save lives through teamwork and the relentless pursuit of excellence. We focus on delivering the most efficient and effective services to hospitals and healthcare employers throughout the United States. Through our four divisions, Physician Search, Academic Search, Allied & Dental Search, and Community & Tribal Search, we are dedicated to finding the right provider or leader for all our clients. As part of the **M3 USA family**, The Medicus Firm has access to millions of active providers and leaders committed to market research, continuing education, clinical research, and professional enrichment. Our commitment to excellence has been recognized by winning **ClearlyRated's Best of Staffing® Client Award** fourteen times. To learn more, please visit **TheMedicusFirm.com**.



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